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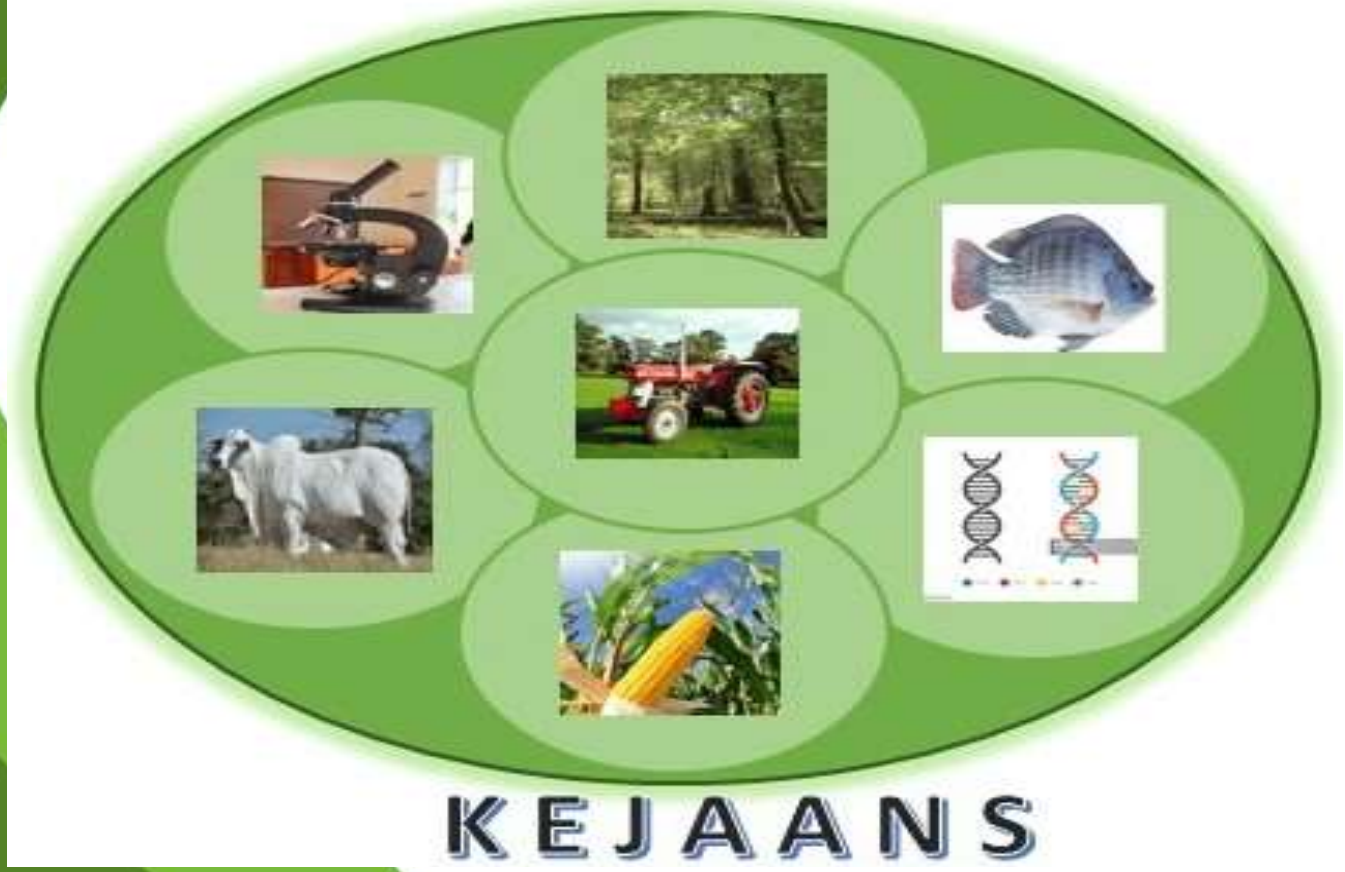

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The Kebbi Journal of Agriculture and Natural Sciences has the sole aim of providing an intellectual platform and ideas for scholars, by promoting interdisciplinary studies related to agriculture and natural science through publishing the latest scientific research findings that are of direct policy implications and beneficial to the research community. Consequently, the journal covers all aspects of Crop Science, Animal Science, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Food Science, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Biotechnology, Soil Science and Agricultural Engineering, Forestry and Environment, Wildlife, Agricultural Education, Agro-allied Industries as well as all Natural Science researches related to Agriculture.

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ANALYSIS OF SMART TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) NEEDS AMONG AGRICULTURAL GRADUATING STUDENTS IN NIGERIA HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in South Western and North Central Nigeria. The study evaluates the level of agropreneurial practices and determines the specific smart TVET needs of students. The study employed multistage sampling procedures to select 400 respondents using a well-structured questionnaire. T-testing was carried out to achieve these objectives. The results of the student level of agropreneurial practices indicated a moderate level of student's engagement in the study area. Animal husbandry had moderately high level of practice among graduates with (Mean = 2.69 and p < .000) while Snailery breeding, crop processing had low practice among graduates with mean value of (1.71, and p-value <0.000). In the case of specific smart TVET needs of students, the result revealed that Students rate fishery most important as SMART needs of Students clearly value of (Mean Difference= 0.335, t=4.312) and significant at p-value of 0.000. The study concluded that fishery as the most felt need TVET program should be taught properly by trainers and placed priority in order to prepared students to be launched into agribusiness after graduation.

Keywords: Agropreneurial, Graduates, Practices, Smart TVET.

Introduction

The agriculture sector has been for centuries and still remains to be the most important economic sector to the human race. Youth unemployment is a major macroeconomic challenge facing Nigeria. According to the (Safadekun *et al.*, 2025; National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), over 63% of Nigeria's youth are either unemployed or underemployed (Obi, 2015). This is because the high unemployment rate has caused the youth of Nigeria to become increasingly frustrated. Fortunately, the nation

has huge potential to meet its expanding food demand while addressing the issue of youth unemployment thanks to its 74 million hectares of fertile land (Ikebuaku, 2021). Agriculture can be used to increase job prospects for young people in Nigeria (Maisule *et al.,* 2023), though the sector's expansion has been hampered by issues with production. For instance, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) stated that Nigeria loses over 10 billion dollars in export potential each year from groundnut, palm oil, cotton, and cocoa alone as a result of the continual decline in their production (Obayelu *et al.* ,2024). Additionally, due to its underdeveloped agro-industrial sector, Nigeria imports completed items and exports raw agricultural commodities. On the other hand, the challenges of the agricultural sector indicate massive opportunities for young entrepreneurs to step in, identify market frictions, and convert them into business opportunities, thereby enhancing productivity and job creation. Agriculture can be better positioned and restructured to an industry of higher productivity and growth, through innovation and entrepreneurship (Sokolova, & Litvinenko, 2020).

Okonkwo *et al.* (2023) defined agripreneurship as the integration of entrepreneurial and innovative business ideas and skills into agriculture to produce better results. The scholars further pointed out that it involves innovative ways of cultivation, planting, application of fertilizer, processing of harvested farm produce and converting such into finished products and conveying them to the point of sales with the use of unique promotional efforts. It is without any doubt that the future of agriculture rests on sound knowledge and skills in innovative agripreneurship. Though the youth are expected to replace the aging farmers, they are less engaged in farming as they do not perceive farming as a profitable and dignified venture as they lack innovative and technical agripreneurship skills (Recha *et al.,* 2025). Agropreneurship is said to have a positive impact on students' lives, whether they are agropreneurs or not. Introduction to entrepreneurship education at the higher educational institutions (HEIs) has helped to eliminate the frustration of many parties, especially students and parents in producing more job creators than job seekers. Agropreneurship education in TVET can contribute effectively to the increasing entrepreneurial mindset of the people and enhance their intention to become agropreneurs, which is the brain behind the success of the most developed and sustained economies (Ambad & Rafiki, 2025).

Fortunately, the challenges of the agricultural sector indicate massive opportunities for young entrepreneurs to step in, identify market frictions and convert them into business opportunities that translate to productivity and job creation (Ikebuaku & Dinbabo, 2023). However, it has been observed that the sector is often subjected to constant harassment and by prolong youth apathy which arises from the adversative perception and poor judgments of Nigerian youth towards the agricultural sector in general. Arising from the array of challenges militating against the development of agriculture in Nigeria, the sector appears unattractive and non-lucrative to many youths, thus discouraging the smooth absorption of the youth into strategic agricultural undertakings in Nigeria and Africa in general (Ikebuaku, 2021). These issues are accumulated by a mismatch between agricultural training and practical training needs of the labour market (kaki *et al.*, 2022). Technical and vocational education and Training (TVET), is expected to address this gap by equipping students with relevant, hands-on skills. Many Institutions in Nigeria lacks infrastructures to engage

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students in SMART TVET programmes (Okanya, 2023). In order address these challenges, this study will analyse smart Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) needs among agricultural graduating students in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to evaluate the level of agropreneurial practice among graduates and determine the specific SMART TVET needs of students.

Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in South-West and North- Central States of Nigeria. The South-western plains and ranges of Nigeria with majority generally situated between 300 and 600 meters above sea level (Oyeyemi *et al.*, 2015). The North-central plain is normally raised between 300 and 700 meters above sea level. Multistage sampling procedures were used in the investigation. The first stage involves the purposeful selection of two geopolitical zones in Nigeria (Southwest and North Central). The subsequent stage involved a random selection of one university, one polytechnic, and one college of education. Random selection of 10 percent of students at faculty of Agriculture of each institution from the list of graduating students totaling to 400 students used and sampled for this study. During the course of this study the College of Education of Ekiti state was upgraded to University.

T-testing and Likert Rating Scale

T-test were used to analysed objectives of the study were to evaluate the level of agro-preneurial practice among graduating students were measured on 3-Likert rating scale of high=3, medium=2 and low=1 while to determine the specific SMART TVET needs of students was measured on 5-Likert rating scale as Very Important=5, Important=4, Neutral=3, Unimportant= 2, Very unimportant=1. Shobharani *et al.,* (2022) used these 5 Likert possible responses to investigate the youth's perception towards agricultural entrepreneurship in their study area. T-test given as below;

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

Where;
$\bar{x}$ =observed mean of sample
μ=assumed mean
s= standard deviation
n=sample size

Results and Discussion

Level of Agropreneurial Practice among Graduates

Table 1 was analysed on a three Likert scale of high, medium/moderate and low. The tables indicated across all the agropreneurial practices assessed were significantly lower than the mean score of three.

Fish breeding and Snail Breeding

Fish breeding had moderate level of engagement among graduates and is significant at (Mean=2.30 and p-value of 0.000) in the study area while snail breading item 2 had moderate level of practice among students with (mean 1.71, and significant at p < .000). Therefore, both fish and snail breeding agropreneurial practices needs more encouragement and inclusion in student's TVET curriculum as supported by the study of (Tui *et al.,* 2024).

Food and Crop Processing

Food and crop processing is one of the goals of agrifood to have chains of production in agriculture that will encourage value with chains and several actors in agribusiness (Barrett *et al.,* 2022). This result reveals that food processing was significant with the (mean

of 2.13 and p-value of 0.000) this implies that there was moderate practice of food processing among the students compared to crop processing with (mean of 2.44 and significant at p-value of 0.000) and high level of practice among the students.

Fishery and Poultry Production

Fishery agropreneurial practice were highly practice and significant among students with (Mean = 2.41 p < 0.000) while Poultry production was also practiced at high level with (mean of 2.45 p-value 0.000) in the study. This result of high practice of fishery indicated high level of practice among students which is perfect for launching student's to become future agropreneurs and this was line with study of (Rasheed *et al.*, 2023).

Animal Husbandry and Snailery

The result on table 2 indicated that animal husbandry were highly practised and significant with (mean of 2.69 and p-value of 0.000 while Snailery production had a moderate practice with (mean 2.29 at p-value of 0.000. this results means that students had low aware level of Snailery compared to animal husbandry. It is necessary for institutions in Nigeria to introduce more area of agribusiness to students rather than crop and animal production as a move from norms (Osagiede, 2024).

Crop Production and Apiary

Crop production among students were moderately practiced with (mean of 1.87 and p-value of 0.000) which is not encouraging as this is very important if the nation will reduce its level of food insecurity. The moderate practice could be as results of drudgery associated to crop production and lack of capital to embark on mechanized farming. Apiary (bee-keeping) had a high level of practice and is significant with a (mean of 2.50 and p-value of 0.000). This can be associated with high demand for honey because of its medicinal properties and cosmetics use for both home and industrial use (Kowalczuk *et al.*, 2023).

Other practices not specified such as hydroponic and greenhouse practices were revealed to have moderate results among students with mean of 2.05. Generally, the table shows average moderate practice among students which might result from limited access to resources, inadequate training, insufficient institutional support, or lack of interest in certain agro-based venture.

The result on table 2 revealed that specific SMART TVET needs that students felt as most important for institutions to put into their curriculum to increase student's participation in agropreneurship. This Objective was rated on 5-likert rating scale and analysed with T-test

Animal breeding

Table 2 revealed that Students rate animal breeding significantly above neutral with (Mean of 3.25 and p-value of 0.002), as moderately important for SMART TVET for graduating students at the faculty of agriculture. Institution should made effort to include this SMART TVET into their curriculum.

Product Processing

There is strong support for product processing among graduating students with (Mean of 3.32 with p-value of 0.000) which tends toward how important the SMART TVET is to the students and wish to engage in agricultural product processing. Students believed if they are adequately trained on agricultural product processing it would boast their skills and knowledge of to be an agropreneur in that field. Product processing, including cassava flour, garri, and packaged yam flour, is essential for

value addition and post-harvest loss reduction. Students' strong interest in this area mirrors the recommendation Acheampong & Von Abubakari (2024) which encourages rural youth to adopt processing techniques to increase income and improve food shelf life.

Fishery

This is the most strongly endorsed SMART needs of Students clearly ranked first with a (mean of 3.34 with p-value of 0.000). Aquaculture is gaining traction among youth due to its comparative profitability and increasing demand for fish in urban diets. However, challenges like access to water and quality feed can limit entry (Henriksson *et al.*, 2021).

Poultry Production

Poultry production is significant and rated positive with (Mean of 3.25 and p-value of 0.002). It was ranked 6th. Poultry production is seen to be above neutral therefore is very important for institutions to engage students in this smart needs practice to be self-employed after graduation. Poultry farming is likely prioritized due to its short production cycle, moderate startup capital, and high market demand in both rural and urban Nigeria (Oloruntoba *et al.*, 2024). Poultry remains a major source of protein and income for many agropreneurs, especially young people seeking fast economic returns

Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry is positive and significant with a (Mean of 3.29 at p-value 0.000) was ranked 4th positive as smart TVET needs of graduating students. Students find animal husbandry as important needs to be more promoted among graduating students. Animal husbandry was important, but less appealing to graduates possibly due to land constraints, long production cycles, and cultural preferences.

Table 1: Level of Agropreneurial Practice among Graduating Students

S/N	Agro-preneurial Practice	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Mean	95% Confidence Interval		Remarks
1	Fish Breeding	-21.179	399	0.000***	-0.703	2.30	-0.77	-0.64	Medium
2	Snail Breeding	-37.222	399	0.000***	-1.295	1.71	-1.36	-1.23	Medium
3	Food Processing	-23.264	399	0.000***	-0.873	2.13	-0.95	-0.80	Medium
4	Crop Processing	-17.827	399	0.000***	-0.565	2.44	-0.63	-0.50	High
5	Fishery	-15.794	399	0.000***	-0.563	2.44	-0.63	-0.49	High
6	Poultry	-16.984	399	0.000***	-0.553	2.45	-0.62	-0.49	High
7	Animal Husbandry	-11.349	399	0.000***	-0.308	2.69	-0.36	-0.25	High
8	Snailery	-21.380	399	0.000***	-0.708	2.29	-0.77	-0.64	Medium
9	Crop Production	-32.653	399	0.000***	-1.133	1.87	-1.20	-1.06	medium
10	Apiary (Beekeeping)	-16.073	399	0.000***	-0.503	2.50	-0.56	-0.44	High
11	Others (Specify)	-22.956	399	0.000***	-0.947	2.05	-1.03	-0.87	Medium

Key Decision: High =2.35-3.00, Medium=1.68-2.34, Low= 1.00-1.67

Source: Author's Computation, 2025.

Specific SMART TVET needs of Students

Snailery
Snailery is moderately important and significant with (Mean 3.19 and p-value of 0.013). It is relevant and students may not be considered a core need, suggesting students find it somewhat useful. Snail farming lucrative was underexploited agribusiness in Nigeria. The low ranking of Snailery may be attributed to lack of awareness, limited visibility in training institutions, and technical misconceptions

Apiary
The result on table 17 also shows that apiary was statistically insignificant with (Mean of 3.11 with p-value of 0.132). Students remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or lack of exposure to this aspect because little or no attention was giving to apiary. This TVET needs is very lucrative with less number of producers in the country where graduates may start to look inward to start producing if properly trained on it.

Crop Production
Crop production was highly ranked as 3rd most important SMART TVET needs among students with a (mean of 3.32 and p-value of 0.000). Strong support suggests it involves tools or strategies that students find essential. This means that crop production is very important for students to lunch themselves agribusiness. Crop production has remained the backbone of Nigerian agriculture. The interest of students in this area aligns with national efforts to boost food security and substitute for imports of staple crops like rice, maize, and cassava (Bello *et al.,* 2024). The widespread familiarity with basic crop farming among Nigerian households might also explain the high relevance attached to this skill.

Horticulture
This result revealed that horticulture was considered and ranked 7th important smart TVET needs but with slightly less intensity with (Mean of 3.29 and p-value of 0.007 and not significant). It might include market linkages or soft skills. Despite the global push for horticulture due to urban dietary changes and high market value, it remains relatively overlooked by students, potentially due to the technical expertise and labor intensity required(Khan *et al.,* 2020). Therefore, if students viewed it as smart TVET needs it should be incorporated in the institution vocational training programmes and it should hands on.

Others Specify
Other items not listed and ticked by the students indicated a negative and insignificant at (mean of 2.91 with p-value of 0.239). Students were indifferent to this item, possibly indicating irrelevance or poor delivery of other vocations in agriculture apart from the listed vocations.

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Table 2: Specific SMART TVET needs of Students

S/N	Items	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Remarks	Ranks
1	Animal breeding	3.164	399	0.002*	.248	3.25	.09	.40	Neutral	5th
2	Product processing	3.971	399	0.000***	.315	3.32	.16	.47	Neutral	2nd
3	Fishery	4.312	399	0.000***	.335	3.34	.18	.49	Neutral	1st
4	Poultry	3.065	399	0.002*	.252	3.25	.09	.41	Neutral	6th
5	Animal husbandry	3.594	399	0.000***	.285	3.29	.13	.44	Neutral	4th
6	Snailery	2.494	399	0.013*	.185	3.19	.04	.33	Neutral	8th
7	Apiary	1.509	399	0.132	.107	3.11	-.03	.25	Neutral	9th
8	Crop production	3.925	399	0.000***	.320	3.32	.16	.48	Neutral	3rd
9	Horticulture	2.719	399	0.007**	.205	3.21	.06	.35	Neutral	7th
10	Others specify (organic farming, etc.)	-1.180	399	0.239	-.087	2.91	-.23	.06	Neutral	10th

Significance levels: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Key decision: Very Important=4.21-5.00, Important=3.41-4.20, Neutral=2.61-3.40, Unimportant= 1.81-2.60, Very unimportant=1.00-1.80

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025.

Conclusion

The findings from the study shows that students are already engaged in various agropreneurial practices at different levels. Animal husbandry had a mean of 2.69 ranked highest followed by apiary, poultry, fishery while others were practised at medium and low level of practice. Those least ranked practices suggested where students require more skills and support. The study also revealed that the most pressing SMART TVET needs of students were fishery, product processing and crop production were significant while the least SMART TVET were apiary and others not specify were insignificant. This means students were more skillful in livestock, fisheries and crop related agribusinesses, reflecting marketing relevance and job creation potential. The study concluded that TVET training geared towards agricultural enterprise especially in the area of fishery, product processing and crop production should be encouraged. Also, agropreneurial support services to graduating students with access to finance, mentorship and agricultural incubation programs should be expanded to help graduating students upscale their agropreneurial ventures.

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