

Role of Home Management Education in Promoting Agricultural Produces Processing and Entrepreneurship Among Youth in Enugu State, Nigeria

By

Ogboru, Justina Oghenerioborue (Ph.D)

tinaogboru1@gmail.com

Department of Home Economics,
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo City, Ondo State, Nigeria
&

Bassey, Njorkun Ndubuisi (Ph.D)

Agricultural Education Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

bassey.ndubuisi@unn.edu.ng

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3301-8250>

Corresponding Author: Bassey N. Ndubuisi bassey.ndubuisi@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The study investigated the role of Home Management Education (HME) in promoting agricultural produces processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development, the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State, and the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. Three research questions in line with objectives guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and it was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population for this study was 302 respondents, which consisted of 30 Home Management Educators, 42 Agricultural Education lecturers, 150 HME graduates and 80 Agricultural Education graduates selected from public universities in Enugu State. There was no need for sampling since the entire was small and manageable. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Data collection was carried out by the researchers and three research assistants. Descriptive statistics was used for data analyze. The findings identified eleven (11) viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The result also identified thirteen (13) challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State. The findings further revealed ten (10) roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. Based on the findings, it was concluded that, by equipping young individuals with essential skills and knowledge, HME can significantly reduce challenges faced in agro-processing ventures. The study therefore recommended among other things that Government should implement policies that promote funding and support for youth-led agro-processing initiatives.

Keywords: Home Management Education, Agricultural Produce, Promoting, Processing, Youth, Entrepreneurship, Enugu State.

Introduction

Youth unemployment and food insecurity remain pressing challenges in Nigeria, with Enugu State experiencing high rates of graduate unemployment and underutilization of agricultural resources. The agricultural sector, particularly agro-processing, has been identified as a viable pathway for wealth creation and job generation of young people when they are equipped with the right skills. This is where Home Management Education (HME) becomes critical especially with the increasing youth population in Nigeria,

which presents both challenges and opportunities in the quest for sustainable economic development. In Enugu State, a region rich in agricultural resources, there exists a pressing need to harness these resources through agro-processing and entrepreneurship. Home management education has emerged as a pivotal tool in equipping young individuals with the necessary skills to engage in agro-based enterprises, thereby promoting economic empowerment and sustainability.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of agricultural innovation in addressing food security and economic resilience (Ogunleye & Olowookere, 2023). However, despite the potential of the agro-processing sector, youth participation remains low due to various barriers, including lack of knowledge, skills, and access to resources (Adebayo et al., 2023). Home management education can bridge this gap by providing practical skills and knowledge that are essential for effective management of agro-based processing enterprises.

Home management education encompasses a broad range of topics, including financial literacy, resource management, and entrepreneurship skills, all of which are crucial for the successful operation of agro-processing businesses (Ogunbiyi & Akinyemi, 2023). It is a discipline under Home Economics that focuses on resource management, food processing, nutrition, budgeting, entrepreneurship, and sustainable household practices. It equips learners with competencies to transform raw agricultural produce into value-added products, manage small-scale enterprises, and ensure efficient use of household and community resources. In the context of agriculture, it bridges the gap between primary production and market-ready goods by teaching skills in food preservation, packaging, branding, and financial management. By integrating these educational components, young people can be empowered to transform raw agricultural products into value-added goods, which not only enhances their economic prospects but also contributes to local food systems and job creation (Umeh & Igbokwe, 2023).

Moreover, the role of home management education extends beyond individual entrepreneurship; it fosters community resilience by promoting collective efforts in agro-processing initiatives. Research indicates that communities with strong educational frameworks in home management are better positioned to innovate and adapt to economic changes, thereby enhancing overall community well-being (Nwankwo & Obasi, 2023). There is no doubt that the integration of home management education into the youth development agenda in Enugu State is critical for fostering agro-processing and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, recent efforts in Enugu State and Nigeria at large show increasing recognition of youth-focused agro-business training. For example, SMEDAN announced plans to train 5,000 Enugu youths in agro businesses and skill acquisition, with soft loans provided afterward to establish small-scale agro enterprises (Punch Newspapers, 2024). Similarly, the Enugu Agro-Tech Training Programme 2026 targets young Nigerians with practical skills in smart farming, greenhouse systems, solar-powered irrigation, and cold chain logistics to reduce post-harvest losses (Leadership Newspaper, 2025). These initiatives align with the objectives of Home Management Education, which emphasizes practical skills for self-reliance rather than white-collar job dependence.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist. Anoke (2022) found that graduates hesitate to enter agribusiness due to limited access to farmland, insufficient funds, and inadequate government support. Edokpolor et al (2023) also noted difficulties in obtaining startup capital because of collateral requirements and high interest rates. This suggests that beyond technical training, HME must also address financial literacy, business planning, and risk management to enable youth engage fully in sustainable agro-processing ventures in Enugu State.

In Enugu State, where agriculture forms a major part of the rural economy, integrating Home Management Education into youth empowerment programs can promote value addition to crops like cassava, rice, palm oil, and vegetables (Adeyanju et' al. 2024). It can also strengthen food security and reduce post-harvest losses through training in processing, storage, and packaging. Therefore, examining the role of Home Management Education in promoting agro-processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State is timely for policy and curriculum development aimed at reducing unemployment and enhancing rural livelihoods. This is the gap the study geared to achieve.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of education in empowering youth, especially in developing regions like Enugu State, Nigeria. Despite significant agricultural potential and a rich cultural heritage of food processing, many young individuals lack the necessary skills and knowledge to engage effectively in agro-processing and entrepreneurship. Home management education, which encompasses the teaching of practical skills, financial literacy, and resource management, has the potential to bridge this gap. However, its specific impact on promoting agro-processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State remains underexplored.

Previous studies have highlighted various factors influencing youth engagement in agro-processing. For instance, Omokanye et al. (2023) found that inadequate access to training programs significantly impedes youth participation in agro-business initiatives. Similarly, Nwosu and Eze (2023) reported a direct correlation between financial literacy and successful entrepreneurship among young people in agro-processing enterprises. Nwosu and Eze (2023) found that youth with higher levels of financial literacy are more likely to succeed in entrepreneurship. Their research indicates a strong link between educational programs focusing on financial management and entrepreneurial success. Omokanye et al. (2023) noted that access to comprehensive training is crucial for youth engagement in agro-processing. They emphasized the need for tailored educational programs that address specific local agricultural practices. In addition, a study by Okeke et al. (2022) highlighted the influence of cultural perceptions on youth's willingness to pursue agricultural careers. They found that negative stereotypes about farming careers deterred youth from engaging in agro-processing.

Despite these insights from previous study, gaps remain in understanding how HME can cultivate critical skills and promote entrepreneurial mindsets among youth in Enugu State in the area of agro-processing. Furthermore, previous researches have not thoroughly examined how HME can be specifically leveraged to enhance agro-processing skills among youth. Also, there is a need for studies that consider the unique socio-cultural context of Enugu State and how HME can be adapted to resonate with local youth. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the role of HME in promoting agricultural produces processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the role of Home Management Education in promoting agricultural produces processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. identified viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State;
2. identified challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State; and
3. assessed the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State?
2. What are the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State?
3. What are the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate for this study because the research sought to assess the opinions and perceptions of Home Management Educators and Agricultural Education lecturers on the role of Home Management Education in promoting agro-processing and entrepreneurship among youth in Enugu State. The design allowed the researcher to collect large amounts of data within a short time, and the findings can be generalized to the

entire population. It is also suitable because the study did not manipulate any variable but only described the existing situation as it is.

The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State is one of the five states in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It is bounded by Benue and Kogi States to the North, Abia and Imo States to the South, Ebonyi State to the East, and Anambra State to the West. The state has 17 Local Government Areas with Enugu city as the capital. Enugu State has a predominantly agrarian economy. Agriculture is a major source of livelihood for over 70% of the rural population, with major crops including yam, cassava, rice, maize, vegetables, and palm oil. In recent years, the state government has shown commitment to youth empowerment in agriculture through initiatives such as the SMEDAN plan to train 5,000 Enugu youths in agro businesses and skill acquisition with provision of soft loans for startup. Also, the Enugu Agro-Tech Training Programme 2026 was launched to equip young Nigerians with practical, technology-driven skills in greenhouse farming, solar-powered irrigation, digital farm monitoring, and cold chain logistics to reduce post-harvest losses. Universities in the state, such as the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) also run compulsory entrepreneurship programs and Home Economics Education programs. All these justified the need to conduct this study in Enugu State, Nigeria.

The population of the study was 302 respondents, which consisted of 30 Home Management Educators, 42 Agricultural Education lecturers, 150 HME graduates and 80 Agricultural Education graduates from public universities in Enugu State. The universities are UNN and ESUT. This group is relevant because they are directly involved in the education and training of youth in home management and agricultural practices, thereby influencing entrepreneurial skills and agro-processing knowledge. Also, graduates of Home Economics Education and Agricultural Education were also studied because, they are the youth that do engage in agro-processing. The information about the population was obtained in the Administrative offices of Home Economics Education and Agricultural Education from the both institution institutions (UNN and ESUT). There was no need for sampling since the entire population is small and manageable. So, all the population was studied.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part 1 was designed to collect data on personal information about the respondents while Part 2 was divided into three different sections (A, B and C). Section A collected data on the viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State; Section B collected data on the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State; while Section C obtained data on the impacts of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The questionnaire items had a four-point response option of Strongly Agree (S.A), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from Home Management Education while one expert from the Department of Agricultural Education, all from UNN. The reliability of the instrument was also determined. The validated instrument was trial tested on 30 respondents (5 HME lecturers, 5 Agricultural Education Lecturers, 10 Home Economics Education graduates and 10 Agricultural Education graduates), all from Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used and the result revealed 0.88 reliability coefficient value was recorded. This indicated that the instrument was reliable.

Data collection was carried out by the researcher and three research assistants. The researcher and the research assistants were fully involved in administering and retrieving of the questionnaires from the respondents. A total of 302 questionnaires were produced and administered to the respondents. For Home Economics Education and Agricultural Education lecturers, the administration of the instrument was done by one on one contact. For Home Economics Education and Agricultural Education graduates, the administration of the instrument was done via Goggle form and it was sent via the graduates' emails. After the questionnaire were collated, it was observed that some were not properly rated or ticked. Only the responses of 285 respondents were used for data analysis. This implied that 17 of the questionnaire were not used for data analysis.

Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistic. Mean was used to answer the three research questions; standard deviation was used to determine how close or far the respondents

were to the mean, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level significance. The cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision-making for the mean. Any item with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was accepted while any item less than 2.50 was rejected. Similarly, the decision rule for the hypotheses is that any null hypothesis whose t-value is less than 0.05 level of significance was rejected and regarded as significant, whereas any null hypothesis whose t-value is equal to or greater than 0.05 level of significance was upheld and regarded as not significant. All the data analyses were carried out with the help of statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 version.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State

S/N	Items Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Fish processing - smoking, drying, filleting, packaging	3.20	0.99	Agreed
2	Cashew processing - roasting, packaging, oil extraction etc.	3.00	0.76	Agreed
3	Palm oil processing - crude oil, refined oil, kernel oil etc.	3.23	0.81	Agreed
4	Fruit juice and beverage production - orange, pineapple, zobo, ginger	3.11	0.77	Agreed
5	Dairy (milk) processing into yogurt, cheese, milk powder, ice cream	3.13	0.78	Agreed
6	Cereal processing into maize flour, oats, pap, custard	3.01	0.78	Agreed
7	Honey processing and packaging	3.10	0.82	Agreed
8	Soybean processing into soymilk, tofu, flour, oil	3.13	0.79	Agreed
9	Plantain and yam processing into chips, flour, porridge packs	3.13	0.99	Agreed
10	Cassava processing into garri, fufu, and cassava flour	3.01	0.88	Agreed
11	Snacks and confectionery - meat pie, chin chin, cookies from local grains	3.00	0.50	Agreed

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 285

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the mean responses of the respondents on the viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The result showed that all the 11 items obtained mean responses above 2.50 cut of point indicating that the respondents agreed that the items are the viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The corresponding standard deviation to each of the items ranged from 0.50 to 0.99, showing that the opinions of the respondents were very close to each other.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State

S/N	Items Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Inadequate start-up capital and inability to meet loan requirements	3.10	0.81	Agreed
2	High cost of processing equipment	3.33	0.89	Agreed
3	Inadequate technical skills and training	3.37	0.74	Agreed
4	Poor infrastructure and logistics	3.13	0.51	Agreed
5	Difficulty in sourcing quality raw materials	3.03	0.90	Agreed
6	Negative perception of agriculture	3.36	0.68	Agreed
7	High competition from established businesses	3.21	0.75	Agreed
8	Risk of food safety issues	3.30	0.73	Agreed
9	Lack of innovation and creativity in processes	3.38	0.77	Agreed
10	Weak market linkages - no ready buyers for processed goods	2.90	0.55	Agreed
11	NAFDAC/SON certification bottlenecks and time-consuming	3.08	0.99	Agreed
12	Limited access to information on new technologies and markets	3.08	0.80	Agreed
13	Insecurity in rural areas	3.02	0.77	Agreed

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 285

The data in Table 2 showed the mean responses of the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State. From the result, it revealed that all the 13 items had mean values ranging from 2.90 to 3.37 which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed that all the items are the challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State. The supporting standard deviation to each of the items ranged from 0.51 to 0.99, showing that the opinions of the respondents were very close to each other.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State.

S/N	Items Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Teaches food processing techniques - drying, milling, fermentation	3.10	0.78	Agreed
2	Improves product packaging skills - labelling, branding, shelf life	3.11	0.90	Agreed
3	Provides food safety and hygiene knowledge to ensure NAFDAC compliance	3.00	0.81	Agreed
4	Promotes nutrition education by producing healthy, value-added foods	3.04	0.49	Agreed
5	Teaches resource management - budgeting, cost control, waste reduction	3.00	0.78	Agreed
6	Trains youth on preservation methods - canning, smoking, solar drying	3.19	0.80	Agreed
7	Promotes agro-waste utilization by turning waste to feed, compost	3.06	0.46	Agreed
8	Teaches quality control and standardization of products	3.10	0.90	Agreed
9	Teaches risk management such as planning for losses, insurance	3.12	0.69	Agreed
10	Enhances digital marketing skills in youth for agro processing	2.42	0.48	Disagreed
11	Teachers financial literacy for effective financial management	3.10	1.04	Agreed

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 285

The result presented in Table 3 showed the mean responses on the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The result showed that 10 items out of the 11 items got mean response above cut of point of 2.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed that the 10 items are the roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The supporting standard deviation to each of the items ranged from 0.46 to 0.1.04, showing that the opinions of the respondents were not far from the mean.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings in Table 1 identified eleven (11) viable areas of agro-processing available for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. They are fish processing - smoking, drying, filleting, packaging; cashew processing - roasting, packaging, oil extraction; palm oil processing - crude oil, refined oil, kernel oil; fruit juice and beverage production - orange, pineapple, zobo, ginger; dairy (milk) processing into yogurt, cheese, milk powder, ice cream; cereal processing into maize flour, oats, pap, custard; honey processing and packaging; soybean processing into soymilk, tofu, flour, oil; plantain and yam processing into chips, flour, porridge packs; cassava processing into garri, fufu, and cassava flour and snacks and confectionery - meat pie, chin chin, cookies from local grains. The finding is in line with Akinola and Yekinni (2022), who maintained cassava is a major staple crop in Nigeria and has various products such as garri, fufu, and cassava flour. According to the authors, youth can engage in processing these products, creating value-added opportunities. The establishment of small-scale cassava processing facilities can help reduce post-harvest losses and increase income. The finding also show support to Ibe and Okafor (2022), who opined that the fruit juice market is booming in Nigeria. Youth can capitalize on the local abundance of fruits by establishing juice processing businesses. This can promote healthy consumption while providing jobs. The result on honey processing and packaging aligns with the finding of Eze and Ifeoma (2023), who contended that beekeeping and honey processing present a unique opportunity, and youth can engage in apiary management and produce various honey products, including royal jelly and beeswax, which have health benefits. The finding on dairy (milk) processing into yogurt, cheese, milk powder, ice cream agrees with Nwachukwu and Ibe (2023), who buttressed that investing in dairy processing, including

the production of milk, cheese, and yogurt, can greatly benefit the youth. The demand for dairy products is rising, and local production can meet this need.

Table 2 result revealed thirteen (13) challenges faced by youth in agro-processing in Enugu State. These challenges are inadequate start-up capital and inability to meet loan requirements; high cost of processing equipment; inadequate technical skills and training; poor infrastructure and logistics; difficulty in sourcing quality raw materials; negative perception of agriculture; high competition from established businesses; risk of food safety issues; lack of innovation and creativity in processes; weak market linkages - no ready buyers for processed goods; NAFDAC/SON certification bottlenecks and time-consuming; limited access to information on new technologies and markets; and insecurity in rural areas. The result on inadequate start-up capital and inability to meet loan requirements conforms with Okwu and Okwu (2022), who noted that many young entrepreneurs in agro-processing struggle to secure funding for their ventures. The authors further stated that the traditional banks often view agricultural businesses as high-risk and are reluctant to provide loans. Without adequate financing, youth cannot acquire necessary equipment or raw materials, stifling growth. The finding on inadequate technical skills and training aligns with Nwankwo and Okafor (2023), who opined that many youths lack the necessary technical skills required for efficient agro-processing. This gap in knowledge can lead to poor product quality, inefficient operations, and ultimately, business failure. Training programs and workshops are often limited or unavailable. Furthermore, the outcome on poor infrastructure and logistics is in line with Uzochukwu (2022), who pointed out that the agro-processing sector is heavily reliant on infrastructure such as processing and storage facilities as well as good roads, electricity, and water supply. In Enugu State, poor infrastructure makes it difficult for youth to transport goods, access markets, and maintain consistent production.

The outcome in Table 3 revealed ten (10) roles of HME in enhancing sustainable agro-processing for youth entrepreneurship development in Enugu State. The roles are HME: teaches food processing techniques - drying, milling, fermentation; improves product packaging skills - labelling, branding, shelf life; provides food safety and hygiene knowledge to ensure NAFDAC compliance; promotes nutrition education by producing healthy, value-added foods; teaches resource management - budgeting, cost control, waste reduction; trains youth on preservation methods - canning, smoking, solar drying; promotes agro-waste utilization by turning waste to feed, compost; teaches quality control and standardization of products; teaches risk management such as planning for losses, insurance; and teaches financial literacy for effective financial management. The finding is in support of Okwu and Nwodo (2021), who stated that Home Management Education provides youths with essential skills and knowledge in agro food processing techniques, such as preservation, packaging, and quality control. This knowledge helps them create value-added products from raw agricultural outputs, thereby increasing their marketability and profitability. Also, the finding is consistent with Igbokwe et al. (2021), who noted that Home Management education equips youths with the necessary skills to manage their finances effectively. Understanding budgeting, investment, and cash flow is crucial for running a successful agro-processing business.

Conclusion

Home Management Education has the potential to serve as a catalyst for reducing youth unemployment and enhancing food security in Enugu State through agro-processing and entrepreneurship. By equipping youth with competencies in food processing, resource management, budgeting, and small business management, Home Management Education can transform agricultural produce into value-added products and create sustainable livelihoods. However, for this potential to be fully realized, there is need for improved curriculum delivery, access to capital, infrastructure, and supportive policies. If properly harnessed, Home Management Education can position Enugu youth as key drivers of agro-industrial development and self-reliance in the state. In conclusion, by equipping young individuals with essential skills and knowledge, HME can significantly reduce challenges faced in agro-processing ventures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Organize workshops and training sessions for youths in Enugu State focused on agro-processing techniques that incorporate principles of home management.
2. Encourage partnerships between educational institutions and agro-processing industries to provide practical exposure and mentorship for youth.
3. State Government should implement policies that promote funding and support for youth-led agro-processing initiatives, emphasizing the role of home management education.
4. Government need to establish community-based support groups for youth in agro-processing to facilitate knowledge exchange and problem-solving.

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