Development of Entrepreneurship Skill Training Module for Youths Participation in Fish Preservation and Marketing Occupation

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Abstract: The study developed entrepreneurship skill training modules for empowering youths that want to venture into fish preservation and marketing occupation. The study was conducted in Bayelsa. The design used for the study is research and Development design. The sample was forty (40, consisting 30 agricultural extension agents, which were randomly selected and 10 university teachers, which were selected through purposive sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire, which adapted a four-point rating scale, was employed. The data collected was analyzed by mean and standard deviation. The result revealed that twenty-seven (27) entrepreneurial skills are needed for the development of training module for fish preservation and marketing occupation. The study therefore recommended that fish farmers should be given credit facilities to enable them provide storage and processing facilities for themselves to avoid wastage, extension officers should trained periodically to enhance their performance, and training should be organized for fish farmers already in the business and intending fish farmers.

Key words: Development, entrepreneurship skill, fish preservation, marketing occupation, training module

INTRODUCTION

Fish preservation and marketing has been an age long practice and trade among artisanal fishermen. Methods such as smoking, sun drying, salting and steaming have been in use to keep or preserve fish products safe for consumption. According to Akegbejo (2007) fish preservation is a method of keeping fish from changes in texture, taste and appearance. Fish spoilage, be it bacteria or autolytic are biological processes which operates only under certain optimum conditions. The alternative of these conditions can provide ways of preventing or reducing spoilage (Williams, 2006). Among these, fishermen most commonly use smoking. Smoking is the process through which volatiles from thermal combustion of wood penetrate meat or fish (Simko, 1991) and also cause reduction in the moisture content of the fish through heating and evaporation.

However, current environmental practices discourage the felling of trees as it exposes the soil to excessive solar radiation and erosion, reduce oxygen supply and the burning of fuel wood emits gases that are injurious to human health. Also the sussing of fuel wood is time consuming and energy sapping, and for those who could not suss fuel wood, huge sums of money spent to purchase it for use. For this reason, smoke drying may be discouraged for more environmental friendly methods of fish preservation.

Rapid urbanization and influx of large number of persons into cities has caused problems of access to fresh fish in urban areas and surplus at point of production. These products (fish) need to be supplied in their natural state for those who prefer fresh fish to smoke-dried or frozen ones. Njai (2000) and Regenstein (2007) confirmed that fresh is generally more valuable and much preferred by consumers and usually brings better returns to fishermen. Fresh fish may be more preferred because of some losses in quality taste or digestibility that accompanies smoking. According to Stroud (1988) smoking can result in some losses of thiamin, 2-25%, and minor losses in niacin and riboflavin, attributed to heating effects. In addition smoking affects the nutritional value of fish mainly by reducing the biological availability of protein. For the aquaculturist, it is almost always preferable to keep the product fresh.

Noting that people in urban areas have a higher purchasing power, exploit this and for the fact that sales of fresh fish brings better returns, fish farmers need to be adequately equipped with the necessary entrepreneurial skills in preservation and marketing to be able to exploit these advantages. In Nigeria, many youths are grappling with unemployment and underemployment, which have kept them in perpetual bondage of economic frustration. This is confirmed by Idoko (2010) who states that the scale of the unemployment crises is highlighted by anecdotal evidence that there is currently an estimated
60% of the 80% Nigerian youths population that are unemployed. To this end, entrepreneurial skill training through the use of an articulated and developed module becomes necessary. Rao (1996) state that skill training is critical for sustainable industrialization and poverty reduction in terms of creating a critical mass of technically and entrepreneurial qualified people who are able to stimulate investment opportunities, create job and increase production. The essence of this research therefore is to provide a module that would be used in training youths and fish farmers in preservation, handling and marketing to improve their technical know-how to keep them gainfully employed and enhance the development of the fish trade.

Purpose of the study: The general objective of this study is to develop entrepreneurship skill modules for youths participation in fish preservation and marking occupation. Specifically the study intends to identify:

- The skills required in planning of fish preservation /marketing
- The skills required for fish preservation.
- The skills required in Marking of fish and fish products

Research questions:
The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the skills required for the development of entrepreneurship skill modules for the planning
- What are the skills required for the development of entrepreneurship skill modules in training fish farmers on fish preservation.
- What are the skills required for the development of entrepreneurship skill modules in training youths on marketing of fish and fish products.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted research and development (R&D). Gall et al. (2003), explained R&D as an industry based approach involving the use of research findings to design and develop new programme and material to assist in improving knowledge and skills. This design therefore is appropriate because it will help to identify skills fisheries industries, agricultural extension agents, and fisheries expert for use in the development of training module on fish preservation and marketing. The study was conducted in 2009, in Bayelsa, Nigeria, which is situated between Latitude 4.30ºN of the Equator and Longitude 6.00ºE of the Greenwich Meridian (Dada et al., 2009).

The study has a population of 63 which comprises of 53 extension officers and 10 university teachers. A sample of 40 consisting of 30 agricultural extension officers were randomly selected and 10 university teachers in the department of fisheries technology of the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa, Nigeria were selected through purposive sampling technique. A structured questionnaire, which adapted a four-point rating scale, was employed. The questionnaire consists of three (3) sections namely. Entrepreneurial skills for fish preservation planning, fish preservation and marketing of fish and fish products. Entrepreneurial skills on planning fish preservation and marketing consist of Eleven (11) items, Entrepreneurial skill for fish preservation consists of ten (10) entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurial skill for fish and fish products marketing consists of 6 items. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in Table 1 reveals that all the items on the skills required for the development of entrepreneurship skill modules for youths in planning fish preservation have their mean scores above 2.50 bench mark, which indicates that they all are relevant skills for development of entrepreneurship skill training modules in fish preservation. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.50463 to 0.7547, implying that the respondents’ responses were very close to one another.

This indicates that all the items are required for the development of Entrepreneurship module and are deemed relevant for the planning of fish preservation. This agrees with Etuk (1993), view that the first stage of fish preservation is planning and it is done to avoid bad management practices that would show later in form of financial loss. Malcolm (1998) on his part opined that entrepreneurs should produce clean fish of correct sizes, colour, taste and aroma of fish and that its products should be correctly package in an acceptable container and appropriately labeled.

The results in Table 2 reveals that all the items on the skill required for development of entrepreneurship skill modules for youths in fish preservation and processing have their mean scores above the bench mark of 2.50 which indicates that they are relevant skills for the development of entrepreneurship skills training modules in fish preservation and marketing. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.6595 to 0.9565, implying that the respondents responses were very close to each one another.

This confirms the opinion of Akegbejo (2007) that describes preservation as a method of keeping fish in a fresh state so that changes in taste, texture and appearance is minimized. Fish spoilage, be it bacteria or autolytic are biological process which operate only under certain optimum conditions. In support of this, Williams (2006) states that alteration of these conditions can provide ways of reduction or preventing spoilage.

The results presented in Table 3 reveals that all the items on the skill required for the development of
entrepreneurial skill modules for marketing fish and fish products have their mean scores above the benchmark 2.50 which indicates that they are relevant skills for the development of entrepreneurship skills training modules in fish preservation and marketing. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.4713 to 0.7418 implying that the respondent’s responses were very close to one another.

This is in conformity with Kotler (2001) opinion who outlined skills required for effective marketing to include ability to identify market channels, sort and grade harvested products, create awareness of their existence as well as market fish in line with approved standard from fish industries.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The result reveals that three major clusters of skills are relevant for the development of entrepreneurship skills training module for youth participation in fish preservation and marketing. These include planning, processing and preservation and marketing. Planning for preservation of fish consists of 11 basic skills, preservation and processing has 10 relevant skills and marketing also consists of 6 skills. The findings are particularly important because the acquired skills in fish preservation and processing would help to reduce the shortage in supply of fish that would be occasioned by spoilage, make fish and fish products available to consumers in any form desired by them as a result of enhanced marketing skills as well as create jobs for better earning to raise the farmer’s family above subsistence.

The following recommendations are made:
- Extension officers and training should be organized to get them well equipped with entrepreneurial skills in fish preservation and marketing.
- Government and private investors should provide modern storage and processing facilities to ease the problems of fishermen.
- Training and Retraining programmes be provided for those already in fish farming or intending fish farmers.
- Loans with low interest rate be made available to encourage fish farmers

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