

Developing Basic Agribusiness Skills in Marketing toward Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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Abstract— Agribusiness plays a crucial role in Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to employment, revenue, and food security. However, the sector faces challenges such as limited market accessibility, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of basic marketing skills. This study emphasizes the importance of developing basic agribusiness skills in marketing to increase competitiveness, improve market accessibility, and achieve sustainable development goals. The study identifies essential skills required for agribusiness marketing, including market research, product development, pricing, promotion, distribution, digital marketing, and sustainability marketing. It also provides recommendations for agribusiness owners, research institutes, and the government to support the development of these skills. The study's findings highlight the potential of agribusiness to contribute to Nigeria's sustainable development, particularly in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 8, and 12. By acquiring basic agribusiness skills in marketing, agribusiness owners can increase their competitiveness, improve market accessibility, and contribute to Nigeria's economic development. This study provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the agribusiness sector, policymakers, and researchers.

Keywords— Agribusiness, Skill, Marketing, Sustainable Development Goals, Nigeria, Small and Medium Enterprises, Agricultural marketing, Capacity building, Rural development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agribusiness is the commercial activities involved in the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products. It comprises different firms and farm activities, such as food processing, manufacturing, marketing, farming, ranching, fishing, forestry, etc. It plays a crucial role in contributing to Nigeria's economy. It has the potential to promote employment opportunities and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In other words, it has the potential to promote economic growth, reduce poverty through job creation and increase revenue, and improve food and environmental security.

Despite its importance to Nigeria's economy, it confronts a series of setbacks, including limited market accessibility, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate or limited basic marketing skills. The majority of agribusinesses lack the skills and knowledge to identify target market segments, develop and brand products that meet consumer needs, and promote their products effectively. These challenges reduced the ability of entrepreneurs or Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in agribusiness to compete effectively in the market, limited market accessibility, reduced profitability, and their contribution to sustainable development. Adamu (2020) stated that any agribusiness aiming to thrive in a competitive market must employ strategic marketing tactics.

Skill is a learned ability that allows an individual to perform specific tasks, which can be acquired through education, training, and experience. So, agribusiness skills refer to the ability acquired by an individual to perform their duties or business activities towards meeting market competitiveness in a profitable manner.

Marketing involves understanding consumer needs, creating value for the products produced by entrepreneurs, and communicating the usage benefits to the consumer with effective and positive results.

Sustainable development is a social-ecological process characterized by the fulfillment of human needs while maintaining the quality of the natural environment.

II. CONCEPT OF AGRIBUSINESS, SKILLS, MARKETING, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Agribusiness includes all farms and firms involved in producing, harvesting, packaging, processing, preserving, distributing, marketing, and disposing of food and non-food agricultural products (Mghenyi et al., 2022). Davies and Goldberg (2021) stated that agribusiness is the total of all the operations (economic activities) involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm commodity items made from them. Oseme and Susan (2023) also explained agribusiness as the sum totality of all operations involved in the production and distribution of farm products in raw or processed forms or both. Agribusiness is the application of theories and practices of business management towards engaging in agriculture and agricultural-related products and services (Van Fleet, 2015). Agribusiness includes several key components that work together to create a food supply (Todd, 2024). Agribusiness involves harnessing agricultural science theories, practice, and application of business management principles towards creating valuable products, creating quality, and a conducive environment. It is a process of managing agricultural enterprises through the application of relevant business management principles towards sustaining quality and a conducive environment.

Skill is an individual's ability to perform specific tasks or solve a problem at a high level of proficiency (Rick, 2024). Merriam-Webster (2025) explained skills as the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution. Skill is the ability to apply knowledge and use it to complete tasks and solve useful problems.

Agribusiness skills are the ability to apply knowledge acquired in agricultural science and business management in managing Small and Medium Enterprises. It is an application of the learned ability to operate Small and Medium Enterprises related to agricultural products and services efficiently and effectively toward contributing to a peaceful and stable society.

Marketing is the set of activities engaged by Small and Medium Enterprises towards processing and creating valuable products for consumers profitably. It involves understanding customer needs, creating valuable products that meet consumer needs, communicating the usefulness of the product in a way that yields good results, and creating a healthy society. Burgess (2019) stated that marketing is the process by which a firm's profitability translates customer needs into revenue. It is a process used by companies to communicate with consumers and make them knowledgeable about the various features of the products and services (Oladunjoye and Alli, 2023). AMA (2018), as cited in Akinyiola and Dosunmu (2024), explained marketing as a set of activities, institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers. Julie (2019) opined that marketing skills are traditionally how an organization communicates to connect with and engage its target audience to convey value and ultimately sell products and services. Bloomberg (2018) also stated that marketing skills meet the needs of the customer at a profit.

Sustainable development is concerned with the general improvement of living conditions for human beings, without undermining the biosphere's ability to regulate and evolve (Makhrout and Aithbibi, 2023). The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2022) explained sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is expected to bring lasting socio-economic benefits to all people and the environment (Szymanska, 2021).

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable Development Goals were designed and adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and are to be achieved by 2030. The goals are seventeen (17) in number, which are:

- 1) No Poverty
- 2) Zero Hunger
- 3) Good Health and Well-being
- 4) Quality Education
- 5) Gender Equality

- 6) Clean Water and Sanitation
- 7) Affordable and Clean Energy
- 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth
- 9) Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- 10) Reduced Inequality
- 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 12) Responsible Consumption and Production
- 13) Climate Action
- 14) Life Below Water
- 15) Life on Land
- 16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
- 17) Partnerships for the Goals

IV. BASIC AGRIBUSINESS SKILLS IN MARKETING

Basic agribusiness skills in marketing are required to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. There are some skills essential for agribusiness in marketing that can promote sustainability and contribute to Nigeria's economic development. These are some of the essential skills for agribusiness.

4.1 Market Research/Analysis Skills

Marketing research/analysis is the process of evaluating the viability of a new service or product through research conducted directly with potential customers. It comprises:

- Ability to analyze market, consumer behavior, and competitors (market analysis skills)
- Ability to position products or services with market (market positioning skills)
- Ability to identify target and specific markets (market segmentation skills)

4.2 Product Development Skills

Product development is the creation and launch of products to meet customer needs. It is used for new products or to improve existing products or to rebrand the products. Product development skills include:

- Ability to design products that meet customer needs (product design skills)
- Ability to test products and ensure they meet quality and safety standards (product testing skills)
- Ability to develop brands that are recognized and attractive to consumers (product branding skills)

4.3 Pricing Skills

Pricing is the amount of money charged for a product or the sum of value the customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product. It involves:

- Ability to develop pricing strategies in order to maintain balance between profitability and competitiveness (pricing strategies skills)
- Ability to analyze costs and develop pricing strategies that allow for profit (cost analysis skills)
- Ability to develop pricing strategies based on the value of products and services offered to consumers (value-based pricing skills)

4.4 Promotion Skills

Promotion is a way of creating awareness of a particular brand of products, creating interest, and generating sales. It consists of the following skills:

- Ability to develop and execute advertising campaigns that reach the target market (advertising skills)
- Ability to develop and execute sales promotion campaigns that increase sales (sales promotion skills)
- Ability to develop and maintain relationships with stakeholders (consumers, suppliers, and government agencies) (public relations skills)

4.5 Distribution Skills

Distribution is the process of making products or services available to the consumer. It embraces the following skills:

- Ability to manage supply chains to allow efficient and effective distribution of goods and services (supply chain management skills)
- Ability to manage logistics to guarantee timely and cost-effective delivery of goods and services (logistics management skills)
- Ability to manage inventory to ensure adequate stock levels and reduce waste (inventory management skills)

4.6 Digital or Online Marketing Skills

Digital marketing is a way of using digital channels to connect with customers, such as websites, social media, and mobile. It contains the following skills:

- Ability to develop and execute social media marketing campaigns that reach the target market (social media marketing skills)
- Ability to develop and execute email marketing campaigns that increase sales (email marketing skills)
- Ability to optimize websites to improve search engine rankings (search engine optimization skills)

4.7 Sustainability Marketing Skills

Sustainability marketing involves the promotion of environmentally and socially responsible products, practices, and brand values. It entails the following skills:

- Ability to develop marketing strategies that promote sustainability and reduce environmental impact (sustainable marketing skills)
- Ability to analyze environmental impact and develop strategies to reduce them (environmental analysis skills)
- Ability to develop marketing strategies that promote social responsibility and ethical business practices (social responsibility marketing skills)

V. TYPES OF AGRIBUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

Farm-based Agribusiness: This involves farming and ranching operations that produce agricultural products for sale.

Non-farm Agribusiness: This involves businesses that transform raw agricultural products for farmers, such as input suppliers, equipment manufacturers, and agricultural consultants.

Food Processing Agribusiness: This involves businesses that transform raw agricultural products into consumable goods, such as food manufacturers and processors.

Agricultural Service Agribusiness: This involves businesses that provide services to farmers, such as crop protection, irrigation, and veterinary services.

VI. IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING BASIC AGRIBUSINESS SKILLS IN MARKETING TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Developing basic agribusiness skills in marketing is very crucial to achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Some of the importance of it are:

- 1) It is important to reduce poverty among rural dwellers through job creation and increased revenue. This is crucial in achieving Sustainable Development Goal number 1, which states that there should be no poverty among the populace.
- 2) It is important to guarantee food security through the production and distribution of food products to consumers. This works towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals number 2 and 12, which stated that there should be zero hunger and responsible consumption and production.
- 3) It promotes economic growth through job creation, income generation, and foreign exchange earnings. This leads to achieving Sustainable Development Goal number 8, which is decent work and economic growth.
- 4) It promotes environmental sustainability by adopting sustainable agricultural practices and reducing waste. This is related to Sustainable Development Goal number 11, which is sustainable cities and communities.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

To develop basic agribusiness skills in marketing towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Agribusiness owners and the government should invest in training and capacity building to develop marketing skills.
- 2) Agribusiness owners should adopt digital or online marketing technologies, such as social media and online advertising, to reach new markets and other customers.
- 3) Agribusiness owners should partner with other stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, and private sector companies, to access markets and customers.
- 4) Research institutes related to agribusiness need to embark on sensitization programs through different channels for the masses to know their duties and responsibilities, such as the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI) and the Nigeria Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI).
- 5) The government needs to provide more funds to the research institutes related to agribusiness in Nigeria to perform their duties and responsibilities.
- 6) The bureaucratic process that serves as the bottleneck to accessing financial aid through the Bank of Industry and other financial institutions by agribusiness owners should be removed or minimized. This would allow agribusiness owners to secure the financial aid required to invest in new technologies and expand their business.
- 7) Agricultural institutions should integrate marketing skills training into their curricula to prepare future agribusiness professionals.
- 8) Mentorship programs should be established to connect experienced agribusiness owners with new entrepreneurs to share knowledge and best practices.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Developing basic agribusiness skills in marketing is essential for increasing the competitiveness of agribusiness, improving market accessibility, and contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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