



## **Exploring the Need for an Agro-Incubation Hub to Promote Agribusiness Participation for Food Security**

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### **Introduction**

In Nigeria, the youth population is expanding rapidly, with increasing demand for sustainable livelihood opportunities as a result of unemployment. As agriculture is gradually transitioning from traditional practices to a more innovative form with an entrepreneurial approach, this study investigates the necessity and potential impact of establishing agro-incubation hubs within polytechnics, to foster awareness, idea generation, staff and students' participation in agro-business and promote sustainable food security within the polytechnic campuses and host communities.

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and the population comprised staff, students and agro entrepreneurs in the host community. A mixed-methods research approach, incorporating quantitative data and qualitative insights, was used. Through a multi-stage sampling technique, 300 participants (students, teaching and non-teaching staff) and 30 agripreneurs from the host community were surveyed, complemented by interviews and focus group discussions. A structured Likert questionnaire and an interview guide were utilised for quantitative and qualitative data collection, respectively.

### **Results and discussion**

Data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics as well as thematic analysis of the qualitative data. The findings reveal a high general awareness of agro-business benefits and a relatively low awareness of any agro-incubation hub within the polytechnic and the host community. The results show a significant relationship of perceived need for agro-incubation hub with staff and students' participation in agro-businesses ( $R=0.685$ ;  $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.467$ ) and that the establishment of agro-incubation hub will significantly strengthen agro-business awareness and feasibility ( $P=0.001<0.05$ ) and also facilitate the participation of members of the Polytechnic and host communities in agro-business activities ( $P=0.003<0.05$ ). The results point to the need for the establishment of agro-incubation in the polytechnic community, and that such a hub, when created, will create awareness on agro-businesses and engender the interest and participation of staff, students and other members of the polytechnic and its host communities in agro-businesses.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that there is a strong need for the creation of an agro-incubation hub in the polytechnic, with emphasis on awareness creation towards achieving sustainable staff and students' participation in agripreneurship and fostering food security within the polytechnic and the host community.

**Keywords:** Agro-business, Agro-incubation hub, Agripreneurship