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DEVELOPING AN ONLINE AGRIBUSINESS CERTIFICATE FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By Jeremy Slade and Stephen
McGary

Student Research Assistants
Garret Nelson and Avery Robertson

- Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the one of the highest regional levels of food insecurities and poverty in the world (FAO).
- Improvements in the access and delivery of tertiary agribusiness education can play a vital role in addressing the twin challenges of food insecurity and poverty in SSA.
- Between 60-80 percent of the population in SSA work in the agribusiness industry (World Bank).

Agribusiness Educational Challenges in SSA

- There is a disconnect between the skills needed by industry and those provided by graduates.
- Reasons for this disconnect:
 - Past focus on producing government employees
 - Narrow focus on science and technological skills
 - Over reliance on rote memorization of facts
 - Lack of local context
 - Limited industry participation in curriculum development
 - Graduates lacked practical experience

(Chakeredza et al. 2008)

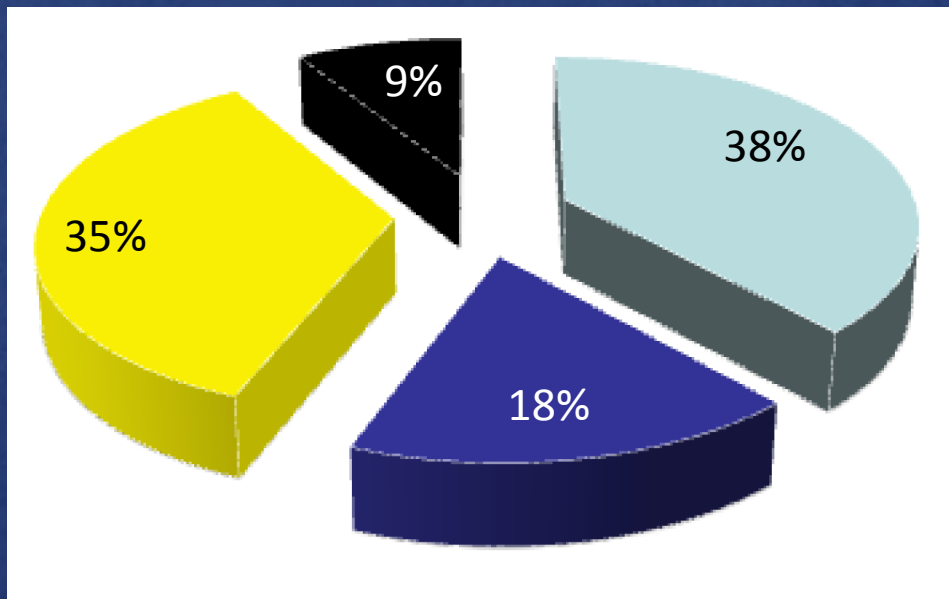
Purpose of the Study and Objectives:

- First, identify the perceived benefits of an online university level certificate on employment and wages.
- Second, gain input from the agribusinesses industry participants regarding the skills needed for success by entry level managers and small agribusiness owners.

Procedures/Methods

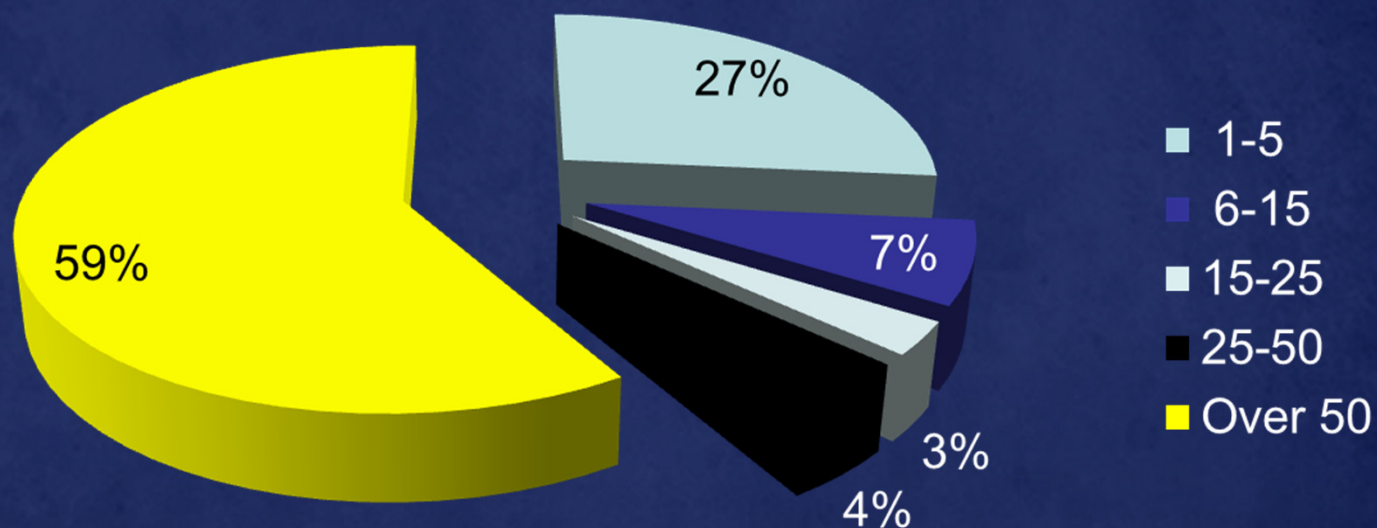
- Conducted a modified Agribusiness Management Aptitude Skills Survey (**AGRI-MASS**) in 2014 utilizing local Ghanaian contractors familiar with the agribusiness industry.
- Respondents used a five point Likert scale to rank the importance of 61 different parameters:
 - *business and economic skills*
 - *technical skills*
 - *communication skills*
 - *computer and quantitative skills*
 - *personal qualities*
 - *employment and work experience*
- Additional questions were asked regarding the perceived effect on wages and employment of graduates following the completion of an online university level certificate.

Survey Respondents by Industry

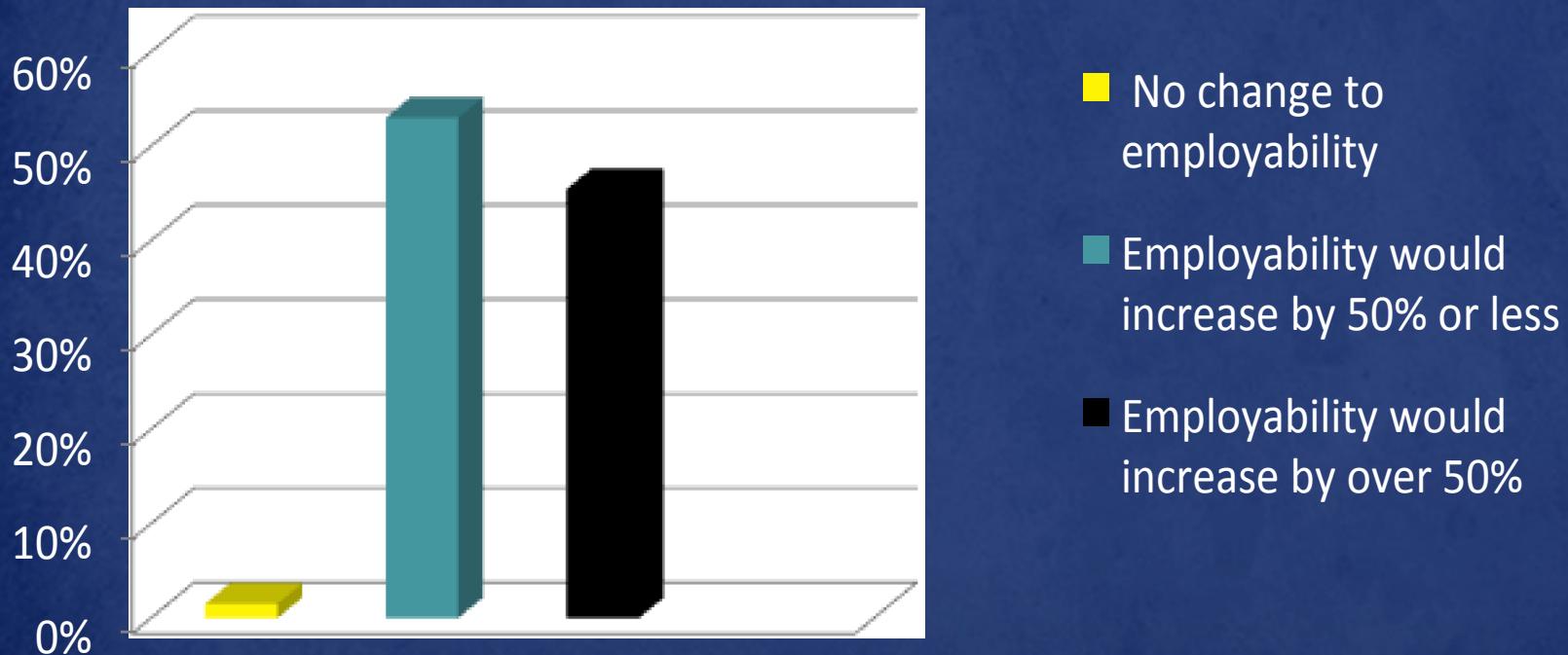


- Production Agriculture
- Agribusiness/Food Processing
- Government/Education
- Other

Number of Employees of Surveyed Institutions

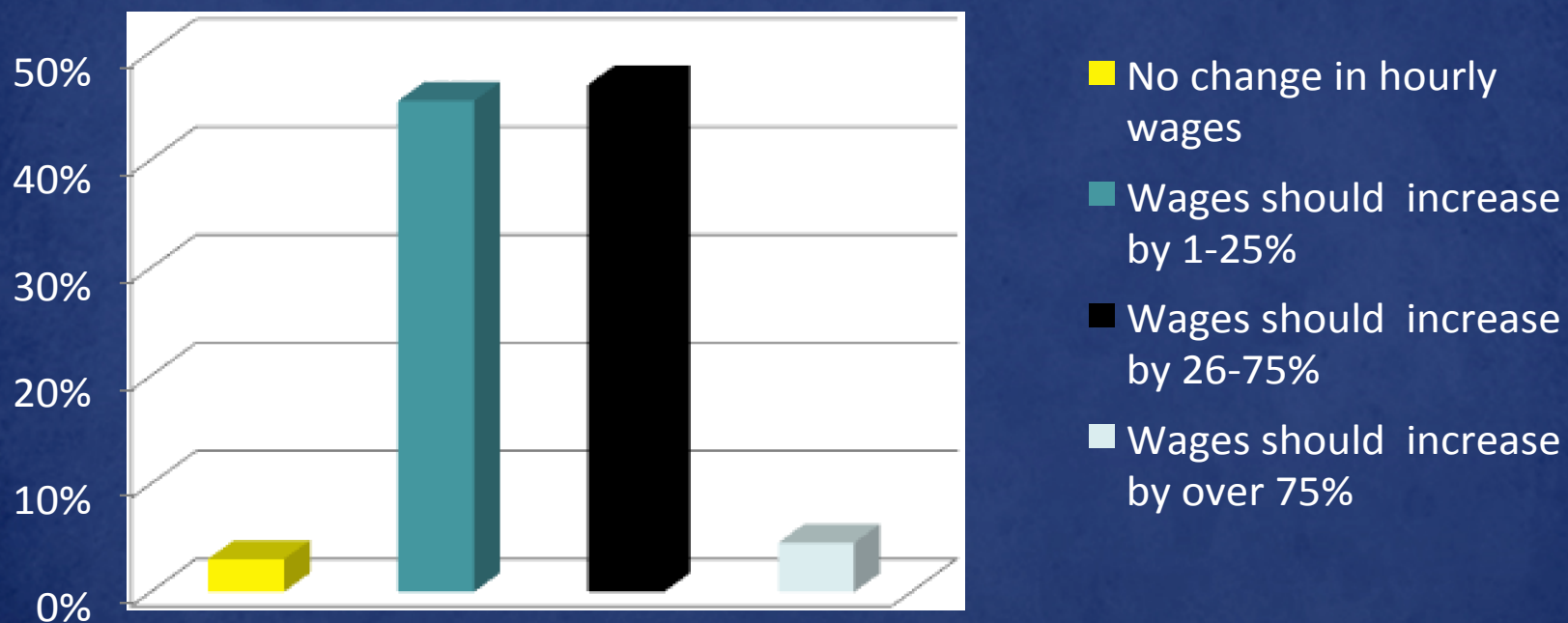


Perceived Benefit of Completing an Online Certificate on Employment



“Employability” implies or is defined as.... *Enhanced employment opportunities in entry level positions, promotion to higher level of management, or ownership...*

Perceived Benefits of Completing an Online Certificate on Wages



Ranking of Six Categories in Order of Importance by Survey Respondents

General Skills Category	Average Score	Rank
Personal Qualities	4.02	1
Communication Skills	3.54	2
Business and Economic Skills	3.33	3
Computer and Quantitative Skills	3.21	4
Technical Skills	3.04	5
Employment and Work Experience	2.22	6

The Top 10 Most Important Skills Desired by Survey Respondents	Average Score	Rank
Positive work attitude/personality/ability to work hard	4.30	1
Loyalty to the organization	4.11	2
Work with others and be a team player	4.08	3
Problem solver	4.07	4
Speak clearly and concisely on technical information	4.02	5
High moral/ethical standards	4.01	6
Read and understand specific technical information	3.98	7
Self-motivation	3.95	8
Give clear and concise instructions to others	3.94	9
Provide leadership and make decision	3.92	10

The 10 Least Desired Individual Skills Desired by Survey Respondents	Average Score	Rank
Accrual accounting concepts and procedures	2.83	52
Understanding of engineering	2.63	53
Employment with a domestic firm	2.42	54
Employment in a wholesale business	2.32	55
Employment in government/public affairs	2.23	56
Foreign language skills	2.04	57
Employment with a manufacturing firm	1.98	58
Employment with a retail business	1.94	59
Employment with a financial institution	1.48	60
Employment with an international firm	1.45	61

Most Important Business Skills Desired by Survey Respondents (AGRI-MASS 2014)



Implications/Conclusions

- The results of this research are being used to develop curriculum for a new online certificate in agribusiness that will be piloted in Ghana in the Fall of 2015 and Winter of 2016.
- The current pilot target audience for this certificate are BYUI *Pathway* graduate.
- The BYUI *Pathway* program is a low-cost educational opportunity that combines online courses with local gatherings and is aimed at helping individuals in disadvantaged educational circumstances prepare for higher education.

Implications/Conclusions (Continued)

- The certificate will include the following courses:
 - Introduction: Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness
 - Introduction: Economics and Budgeting Principles
 - Introduction: Cash Accounting Concepts and Applications
 - Introduction: Marketing Concepts and Applications
 - Human Resource & Personal Management
 - Agribusiness Practicum
- Each course's content will focus on topics relevant to developing nations.
- All course will incorporate activities to help develop personal qualities and communication skills identified as important.
- It will make use of BYU-I student mentors via Skype.
- This certificate could be utilize as a component of other BYU-I online degrees.

