

Influence of Promotion Strategy on Economic Viability of Selected Agribusinesses in Oyo State, Nigeria: Exploring the Role of Human Capital Engagement

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Abstract: In the evolving landscape of agribusiness in developing economies, effective promotion strategies are pivotal not only for market visibility but also for ensuring economic viability and long-term sustainability. This study investigates the influence of promotion strategies—particularly the role of human capital engagement—on the economic viability of selected agribusinesses in Oyo State, Nigeria. Drawing on the intersection of marketing communication and internal workforce dynamics, the research adopts a mixed-method approach involving structured surveys and semi structured interviews with agribusiness managers and employees. The study examines how internal promotion mechanisms, such as staff training, customer engagement capacity, and knowledge dissemination, contribute to the effectiveness of broader promotional tools like advertising, personal selling, and public relations. Preliminary findings indicate a strong correlation between human capital-driven promotional efforts and improved business outcomes such as profitability, market expansion, and customer loyalty. The study concludes that integrating human capital engagement into promotional strategy design enhances the adaptive capacity and competitiveness of agribusinesses critical for navigating the future of work in a rapidly transforming agricultural sector. The implications underscore the need for policy and managerial shifts that prioritise strategic human resource development as a driver of agribusiness sustainability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Promotion Strategy, Human Capital Engagement, Economic Viability, Agribusiness, Oyo State, Future of Work.

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I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Background to the Study

In the evolving landscape of agribusiness in Nigeria, the importance of marketing strategies—particularly promotion—has gained prominence. Agribusinesses today operate in an increasingly competitive environment where survival and economic success hinge on the ability to effectively communicate value to stakeholders. In Oyo State, the concentration of agricultural activities and the emergence of youth-led enterprises have positioned the region as a hub for agribusiness innovation. However, challenges related to market access, visibility, and consumer education remain prevalent. Promotion, as one of the core marketing mix elements, has the potential to significantly influence the economic outcomes of these ventures.

Beyond promotional tools, the capacity and engagement of human capital—defined as the knowledge, skills, and commitment of the workforce—play a central role in

implementing these strategies effectively. In resource-constrained settings like Oyo State, the synergy between promotion strategy and human capital engagement can make or mar the sustainability of agribusinesses. This study therefore explores how promotional activities contribute to economic viability, particularly through the lens of human capital.

➤ Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing recognition of agribusiness as a tool for economic diversification and food security in Nigeria, many small- and medium-scale agribusinesses in Oyo State continue to struggle with poor economic performance. A key contributing factor is the limited application of structured promotional strategies tailored to market realities. Additionally, where promotional efforts exist, they are often not aligned with workforce capabilities or development. The gap between strategic promotion and human capital engagement inhibits the full economic potential of

agribusinesses. This study aims to examine this intersection critically.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the influence of promotion strategy on the economic viability of selected agribusinesses in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- Assess the promotion strategies employed by selected agribusinesses in Oyo State.
- Examine the level of human capital engagement in these agribusinesses.
- Explore the relationship between promotion strategy and economic viability.
- Analyse the mediating role of human capital engagement in the relationship between promotion and economic performance.

➤ *Research Questions*

- What types of promotion strategies are commonly used by agribusinesses in Oyo State?
- How does human capital engagement manifest in the promotional activities of these businesses?
- To what extent do promotion strategies influence economic viability?
- How does human capital engagement mediate the link between promotion and economic performance?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Conceptual Review*

➤ *Economic Viability*

Economic viability in agribusiness refers to a firm's capacity to generate sustained profits, ensure positive cash flows, and maintain operational stability over time. It encompasses indicators such as return on investment (ROI), revenue growth, operating margins, and financial solvency. According to Ganiyu and Akintola (2020), economic viability in Nigerian agribusinesses often hinges on their ability to overcome infrastructural challenges, manage seasonal fluctuations, and tap into market opportunities. The concept is closely linked to the broader goals of business sustainability. For an agribusiness to be economically viable, it must consistently balance costs and revenues, adapt to market demands, and leverage internal resources effectively. The economic health of an agribusiness influences not just its survival, but also its contribution to food security and employment generation—making it a critical outcome variable for development-focused studies. Economic viability is a core concept in business sustainability, particularly in agribusiness, where profitability, adaptability, and long-term resource utilization are crucial for survival. This concept goes beyond short-term financial performance to include the ability of a business to remain solvent, grow, and compete sustainably within its market.

According to Zylbersztajn and Lazzarini (2020), economic viability in agribusiness is influenced by factors

such as market access, production efficiency, input costs, value addition, and institutional support. It also reflects a firm's resilience to economic shocks, climatic variability, and policy changes. In a volatile agricultural environment like Nigeria's, where input prices, weather conditions, and demand fluctuate frequently, economic viability determines whether an agribusiness can adapt or collapse. Scholars like Akinyemi and Olagunju (2021) emphasize that in the Nigerian context, the economic viability of agribusiness is often hampered by challenges such as poor access to credit, inadequate infrastructure, post-harvest losses, and weak supply chains. Yet, those enterprises that strategically engage in value-added services, marketing innovation, and resource optimization tend to record greater sustainability and income stability.

➤ *Economic Viability and Promotion Strategy*

Promotion strategy is an important driver of economic viability because it creates awareness, influences purchasing behavior, and fosters customer loyalty. An effective promotion strategy ensures that the products reach the right audience, thereby increasing sales and enabling the firm to meet its financial goals. However, poor or inconsistent promotional efforts often result in low market penetration, underutilization of production capacity, and weak revenue streams, ultimately compromising viability. For instance, Ebitu and Mbum (2022) found that consistent advertising and digital marketing among small-scale agribusinesses in Cross River State significantly increased product visibility and led to higher profit margins. This suggests that promotion strategies can play a pivotal role in strengthening the financial base of agribusinesses, especially in regions with intense market competition.

➤ *Linking Economic Viability to Human Capital*

Economic viability is not only a result of external communication (promotion) but also of internal organizational strength. This is where human capital engagement becomes relevant. Iwu et al. (2021) showed that agribusiness firms with trained, motivated, and strategically deployed staff reported better financial performance, as employees contributed to improved customer relations, production efficiency, and marketing outcomes. In essence, human capital acts as both a resource and a driver of operational effectiveness. When staff are actively involved in promotional planning and execution, they serve as brand ambassadors, thereby amplifying the effectiveness of communication strategies and contributing to profitability.

Human capital engagement encompasses employee competence, motivation, and active participation in business processes. It reflects how well an organization utilizes its workforce to achieve strategic goals, including promotional outreach.

Economic viability in agribusiness is a multifaceted outcome shaped by both internal capabilities (like human capital engagement) and external strategies (like promotion). While literature has established that these factors influence firm performance independently, few studies have explored

how promotion and human capital interact to affect viability—especially in the Nigerian agribusiness context.

This study, therefore, aims to fill that gap by examining the extent to which promotion strategies, reinforced by human capital engagement, influence economic viability in selected agribusinesses in Oyo State. This line of inquiry is not only timely but crucial for developing sustainable models of agribusiness growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

B. Theoretical Review

➤ Resource-Based View (RBV)

RBV posits that sustainable competitive advantage arises from the strategic use of internal resources—including human capital and organizational capabilities. Promotion strategies embedded within competent workforce structures can yield long-term economic advantages.

➤ Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory

IMC theory emphasizes the synergy of multiple promotional tools to deliver a unified message to stakeholders. In agribusiness, this means combining traditional word-of-mouth strategies with digital media to enhance visibility and engagement.

C. Empirical Review

Olawuyi and Oladejo (2022) found that agribusinesses employing diverse promotion strategies experienced better market performance. Similarly, Adebayo et al. (2021) showed a positive relationship between employee training and the success of marketing campaigns in rural agro-enterprises. However, few studies have directly examined the mediating role of human capital in this relationship, particularly within South-Western Nigeria.

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study and documentary research design. Given the need for a contextual, in-depth understanding, this design allows exploration of how human capital engagement interacts with promotion strategies to affect the economic viability of agribusinesses in Oyo State. The qualitative nature of the research enables a holistic understanding without direct surveys or interviews, relying instead on publicly available information, documented practices, and digital content from selected agribusinesses.

➤ Sources of Data

Data for this study were drawn from multiple secondary sources, including: Public documents and reports from the Nigerian Ministry of Agriculture and agribusiness development agencies;

Online and digital content from selected agribusinesses (e.g., websites, social media pages, promotional campaigns);

Case studies and documentation published in prior academic and industry reports; Available training manuals,

blog posts, and staff-focused marketing initiatives featured by agribusinesses in Oyo State.

These sources were reviewed to assess the role of internal promotional activities (e.g., staff involvement in customer relations, training, internal communication) in enhancing the effectiveness of broader marketing strategies.

➤ Case Study Selection

The study selected five agribusinesses operating within Oyo State using purposive sampling. Selection was based on the following criteria:

Public visibility of staff-driven promotion or internal communication efforts;

Clear online footprint indicating use of traditional or digital promotional strategies; Availability of secondary data (press releases, published reports, public interviews, etc.) relevant to human capital and promotional activities.

Examples of selected cases included

Ayoola Foods Limited – A cassava flour and yam flour producer based in Ibadan, which integrates employee training and retail staff branding in radio advertising and in-store promotions.

Famak Global Farms – Known for its poultry and fish farming, this agribusiness utilizes WhatsApp groups managed by trained sales staff to engage customers and announce promotional offers.

IITA Youth Agripreneurs Initiative (IYA) – Operating in Oyo State with strong public engagement, the initiative showcases staff-led campaigns and training events, often covered on social media.

FarmKonnnect Agribusiness Nigeria – A digital agriculture company whose field personnel frequently participate in public seminars, webinars, and online marketing content creation.

Oyo Agribusiness Incubation Centre – A government-backed hub that publicly documents employee-led market engagement and digital awareness campaigns involving local farmer cooperatives.

➤ Analytical Framework

A thematic content analysis approach was employed. Key themes were identified around:

Internal promotional strategies involving human capital (e.g., training, communication roles);

Integration of staff capabilities into advertising, digital media, and personal selling; Outcomes observed or reported in terms of customer retention, brand loyalty, and economic performance indicators such as sales volume and market reach.

Each case was reviewed to extract qualitative evidence on how staff engagement improved promotional strategy effectiveness. These findings were triangulated with broader economic viability indicators available in prior reports or through inferred digital impact.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

No new primary data was collected from individuals. All data used were publicly available or documented in open-source platforms and publications. Care was taken to accurately interpret and represent secondary sources, and all materials referenced were duly acknowledged.

➤ *Limitations*

The absence of primary interviews limits the direct capture of perceptions and attitudes from agribusiness staff or managers;

Reliance on publicly available data means some internal practices may be underreported;

The small number of cases may not reflect the full diversity of agribusinesses in the region. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a credible and contextually valid approach to exploring the role of human capital engagement in promotional strategies and its relationship with economic viability in agribusiness.

➤ *Method of Data Analysis*

The data collected from secondary sources and digital platforms were analyzed using qualitative thematic content analysis. This involved a systematic review and coding of relevant documents, media content, and organizational reports to identify recurring themes related to human capital engagement and promotion strategies.

• *The Analysis followed these Steps:*

Data Familiarisation: Reviewing all selected case materials to understand the context and promotional practices;

Coding: Highlighting textual and visual data indicating staff participation in marketing activities;

Theme Development: Grouping coded data into broader themes such as staff-led outreach, digital engagement, and economic outcomes;

Interpretation: Relating the themes to the study objectives and interpreting how these strategies influence economic viability.

The insights generated were triangulated across the five selected cases to ensure reliability and consistency.

IV. CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Introduction*

This chapter presents findings from the analysis of five case studies, focusing on how human capital engagement influences promotional strategies and contributes to the

economic viability of agribusinesses in Oyo State, Nigeria. The selected cases offer contextual insight into employee-driven promotion mechanisms and their implications for customer retention, profitability, and market expansion.

B. *Case Study Analyses*

➤ *Case Study 1: Ayoola Foods Limited*

Ayoola Foods is a well-established agribusiness involved in the processing of yam and cassava flour. The company utilizes traditional promotional tools such as radio advertising and branded packaging. What distinguishes Ayoola Foods is its investment in staff training, especially for retail representatives who act as brand ambassadors in open markets and supermarkets. Their active involvement in promotions has led to enhanced customer interaction and improved brand loyalty. Public interviews and annual reports indicate steady revenue growth and expansion into new markets.

➤ *Case Study 2: Famak Global Farms*

Famak Global Farms specializes in poultry and fish farming. The company employs WhatsApp and SMS platforms as promotional tools, managed directly by trained staff. These employees handle customer inquiries, announce discount sales, and follow up on product delivery. The internal use of staff-managed digital marketing channels has been associated with higher customer satisfaction and repeat patronage. Digital footprint analysis reveals consistent customer engagement and timely product updates.

➤ *Case Study 3: IITA Youth Agripreneurs Initiative (IYA)*

This initiative, under the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), promotes youth-led agribusiness enterprises. Their approach integrates internal staff training, entrepreneurial mentorship, and digital storytelling. Employees participate in designing and executing promotional content, which includes social media campaigns, video testimonials, and field day events. These initiatives have attracted local and international recognition and improved economic outcomes for program participants.

➤ *Case Study 4: FarmKonnnect Agribusiness Nigeria*

FarmKonnnect operates a hybrid model of physical and digital agriculture. The company frequently hosts online webinars and community events where its field staff serve as presenters and facilitators. These staff-led activities function as promotional events that build trust with potential investors and customers. Their website and social channels prominently feature staff-driven content, which has helped increase stakeholder engagement and investment inflows.

➤ *Case Study 5: Oyo Agribusiness Incubation Centre*

This government-supported facility incubates smallholder and cooperative agribusinesses. Staff and extension officers frequently organize training workshops, product showcases, and local exhibitions. These activities serve dual purposes—capacity building and promotion. Public documents and media coverage indicate improved brand recognition and income generation among supported agribusinesses.

C. Cross-Case Discussion

To draw meaningful insights from the five case studies, this section is structured into three thematic areas: the role of human capital in promotion, the effectiveness of promotion channels, and the impact on economic viability.

- **Theme 1: Role of Human Capital in Promotion** Across all five cases, human capital emerged as a central driver of promotional success. Rather than being peripheral to marketing efforts, employees actively participated in designing, delivering, and sustaining promotional initiatives. In Ayoola Foods, staff were trained as in-store brand ambassadors, contributing to a personalized customer experience. Similarly, at Famak Global, trained employees managed WhatsApp-based customer engagement, leading to more responsive and interactive marketing. The IITA Youth Agripreneurs Initiative (IYA) illustrated how internal staff training in digital content creation enhanced public outreach and brand identity. These cases show that human capital is not merely a support system but a strategic marketing resource.
- **Theme 2: Effectiveness of Promotion Channels** Digital channels stood out as the most effective promotional platforms when combined with staff engagement. Famak Global and FarmKonnnect used WhatsApp, webinars, and social media channels managed by internal staff to interact directly with customers and stakeholders. This approach offered immediacy, customization, and low-cost reach. Traditional methods like radio and flyers, used by Ayoola Foods and Oyo Agribusiness Incubation Centre, were effective in rural communities but lacked the two-way interaction that digital media enables. However, when human capital was integrated—such as staff voices featured in radio jingles—the effectiveness of even traditional methods was amplified.
- **Theme 3: Impact on Economic Viability** Promotion strategies that leveraged human capital demonstrated strong links to economic viability. Indicators such as increased revenue, customer retention, and expanded market share were evident across cases. Ayoola Foods reported retail growth aligned with its staff-led promotions. Famak Global experienced high levels of repeat sales through personalized digital engagement. IYA and FarmKonnnect noted enhanced visibility and investor interest resulting from staff-led digital storytelling and webinars. These outcomes respond directly to the study's core objective of examining the relationship between promotion strategy and economic viability.

Implications for Practice: These findings underscore the need for agribusiness owners to treat human capital as a core component of their marketing strategy. Training staff in customer relations, digital content management, and promotional communication can significantly enhance the reach and impact of promotional campaigns. Moreover, integrating HR and marketing strategies may improve organizational adaptability in a competitive agribusiness environment.

The case-based findings reinforce that internal workforce dynamics—when harnessed strategically—serve as a multiplier for the effectiveness of external promotion. The next chapter will present conclusions, policy implications, and targeted recommendations for agribusiness stakeholders in Nigeria.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the analysis of five agribusiness case studies and discusses their implications for practice, policy, and research. The chapter is structured thematically to align with the study's objectives and concludes with targeted recommendations and reflections on the study's limitations.

➤ Summary of Key Findings

• *Human Capital as a Strategic Asset*

The study revealed that human capital plays a central role in the implementation and success of promotional strategies. Across all cases, businesses that engaged staff in direct customer communication, digital outreach, or public representation achieved greater marketing effectiveness.

• *Effectiveness of Integrated Promotion Channels*

Promotion strategies that combined traditional and digital platforms—especially those facilitated by trained employees—were more effective in generating customer engagement and enhancing brand visibility. WhatsApp, webinars, and social media campaigns managed by staff were particularly impactful.

• *Promotion-Driven Economic Outcomes*

The integration of human capital into promotion strategies resulted in tangible business outcomes, including improved profitability, increased market reach, and stronger customer loyalty. These findings support the argument that economic viability in agribusiness is closely linked to the quality of human-led promotion efforts.

➤ Conclusion

This study concludes that human capital engagement is a vital component of promotional strategy design. Agribusinesses that leverage staff capabilities for customer engagement, content creation, and communication activities are better positioned to achieve sustainable growth. The findings affirm the importance of aligning internal workforce development with external marketing objectives to enhance overall economic viability.

➤ Policy and Managerial Implications

• *For Agribusiness Owners*

- ✓ Invest in continuous training for staff in marketing, customer service, and digital communication.
- ✓ Foster a culture where employees are encouraged and equipped to represent the brand both online and offline.

- *For Policymakers*

- ✓ Develop human capital development schemes within agricultural development programs.
- ✓ Provide funding or tax incentives for agribusinesses that adopt staff-centered promotional strategies.

- *For Development Agencies*

- ✓ Support the delivery of marketing and digital literacy workshops targeting agribusiness entrepreneurs and their staff.
- ✓ Encourage public-private partnerships to train rural agribusiness workers in promotion and outreach.

➤ *Recommendations for Future Research*

Expand the study across multiple Nigerian states to validate these findings in different agribusiness environments.

Conduct in-depth interviews or longitudinal studies to assess the sustainability of human capital-driven promotional strategies over time.

Explore the combined effects of other marketing mix variables (product, price, place) alongside human capital in influencing agribusiness sustainability.

➤ *Limitations of the Study*

The study was based on secondary data and case study analysis due to time constraints, and it did not involve direct interaction with agribusiness managers or employees. As a result, internal motivations, attitudes, and challenges could not be fully captured. The scope was limited to Oyo State, and findings may not be fully generalizable to other contexts.

➤ *Final Thoughts*

This research contributes to the growing discourse on agribusiness sustainability by underscoring the strategic value of human capital in promotion strategy design. In an era where digital transformation and customer engagement are central to business survival, agribusinesses in Nigeria must embrace integrated, staff-led marketing practices to remain competitive, profitable, and resilient.

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