

Introduction

- The Department of Caldas, located in the Western Central region of Colombia, has experienced decades of post-conflict transformation and the economic crisis of the agricultural sector.
- The socio-economic conditions resulted rural youth not being interested in the agricultural sector because there are few opportunities for jobs and personal development.
- Dual-credit programs provide the opportunity for rural students to engage in entrepreneurship activities through agricultural education.
- Students who participate in dual-credit programs show a desire to start new rural business and to adopt new technologies, which create opportunities for the development of the agricultural sector in Caldas.
- Entrepreneurship is an important strategy for long-term economic growth and initiative, invention and overall entrepreneurial spirit needs to be developed in young people (Stefanovic, Rankovic & Provic, 2011).
- Education fosters student entrepreneurship and supports them to start their own business (Yildirim, Cakir & Askun, 2016).
- To address agricultural issues, it is necessary to motivate rural college students in agriculture and entrepreneurship address 21st century challenges, such as food security, water scarcity, climate change and rural development by bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas.

Purpose & Objectives

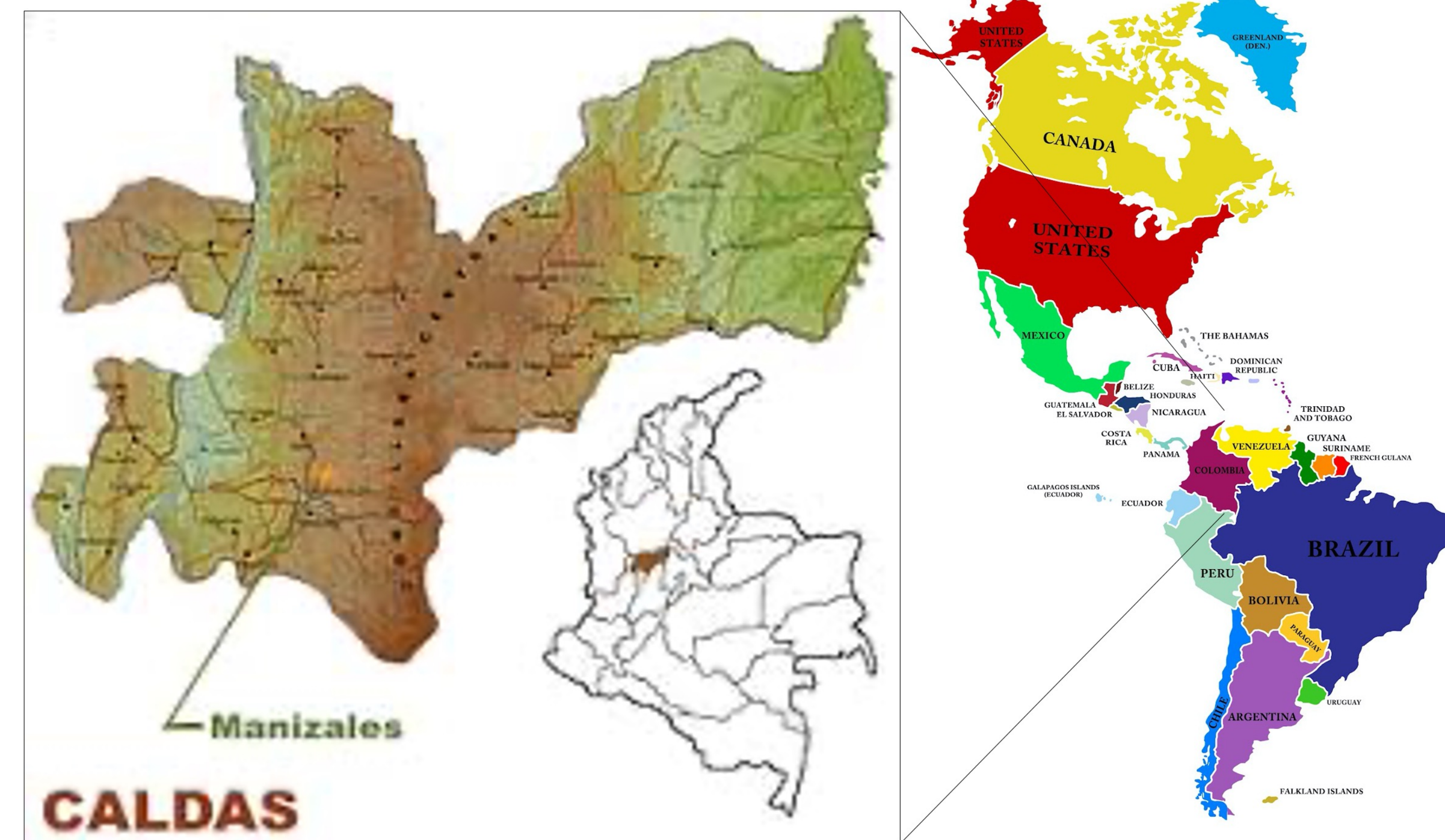
The goal of this exploratory study was to describe college students' motivations of their rural youth experiences in the Caldas Department (Colombia), and what they perceived as barriers and opportunities to participating in entrepreneurship development in a rural coffee region. The following questions were used to guide the study:

- What were students' motivations to develop entrepreneurs' activities?
- What were perceived barriers to develop rural entrepreneurship?
- What were perceived opportunities to develop rural entrepreneurship?

Methods & Procedure

- Exploratory study was conducted with 100 students enrolled in a dual-credit program in Caldas Department, Colombia.
- A survey was used to collect data during March and April 2019 using an online Qualtrics questionnaire.
- 82 rural youth responded to the questionnaire in a five-week period.
- The questionnaire used in the study was adapted from existing questionnaires (Zimmerman & Chu, 2013; Stefanovic, Prokic & Rankovic, 2010; Marinic, Zathurecky & Spicak, 2015).
- The questionnaire consisted of 42 items organized into three sections: (1) students' motivations to develop entrepreneurs' activities; (2) perceived barriers to develop rural entrepreneurship; and, (3) perceived opportunities to develop rural entrepreneurship.
- A five-point anchored rating scale was used to measure the three variables: (1) not important; (2) low importance; (3) some importance; (4) important; (5) very important.
- The questionnaire was translated into Spanish and results were translated into English.
- SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the data.

Location



Results & Discussion

Table 1. Frequencies of the Top Three Motivations

Motivations	Percentage Agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
For my own satisfaction and growth	0	1	19	16	64
To be my own boss	0	6	13	20	61
To build a business to pass on the family	0	4	17	21	58

Table 2. Frequencies of the Top Three Barriers

Barriers	Percentage Agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
Obtaining short-term financial capital	0	4	32	37	27
Obtaining long-term financial capital	0	6	27	41	26
Weak economy	2	10	25	32	31

Table 3. Frequencies of the Top Three Opportunities

Opportunities	Percentage Agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge about maintenance of accurate records of sales/expenses	0	3	20	18	59
Good general management skills	0	6	13	20	61
Honest reputation	1	3	16	21	59

Scale: (1) Not Important; (2) Low Importance; (3) Some Importance; (4) Important; (5) Very Important

- These results suggest a motivated entrepreneur is more likely to be creative, innovative and loyal, which is fundamental for the development of agricultural entrepreneurship activities (Papageorgiou, Giorgalli, & Petrou, 2013).
- Additionally, these results support it is difficult for farmers to obtain loans from the banking system in the rural areas.
- These results support the importance of managerial skills and education to develop entrepreneurship and potentially successful businesses (Zimmermen & Chu, 2013).

Conclusions

- College students were motivated to be entrepreneurs and identified economic and financial barriers and human capacity development as opportunities to be future agricultural entrepreneurs in rural Colombia.
- Although dual-credit students are struggling with high rate of unemployment and low opportunities in the rural areas, college students showed a desire to start their own businesses and generate a project that improves their living conditions and those of future generations.
- Colleges of Agriculture can play an important role developed the necessary skills to face the business world, such as working in a company, leading a business or entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

Future studies should investigate: (1) the relationships among motivation, perceived challenges, and perceived opportunities, and unpack college students' understandings and motivations to be entrepreneurs, and (2) educational programs to develop entrepreneurship motivations and skills.