

Hear the Heroes: Agri-entrepreneurial Progress of Sub-Saharan Africans Ten Years After a US Fellowship Exchange Program

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Introduction

With few exceptions, international longitudinal studies of Agri-entrepreneurial fellowships are scarce and obstructed by barriers, including difficulties in accessing global entrepreneurs, costs, and lack of valid, published data (Thomas & Mueller, 2000).

Purpose

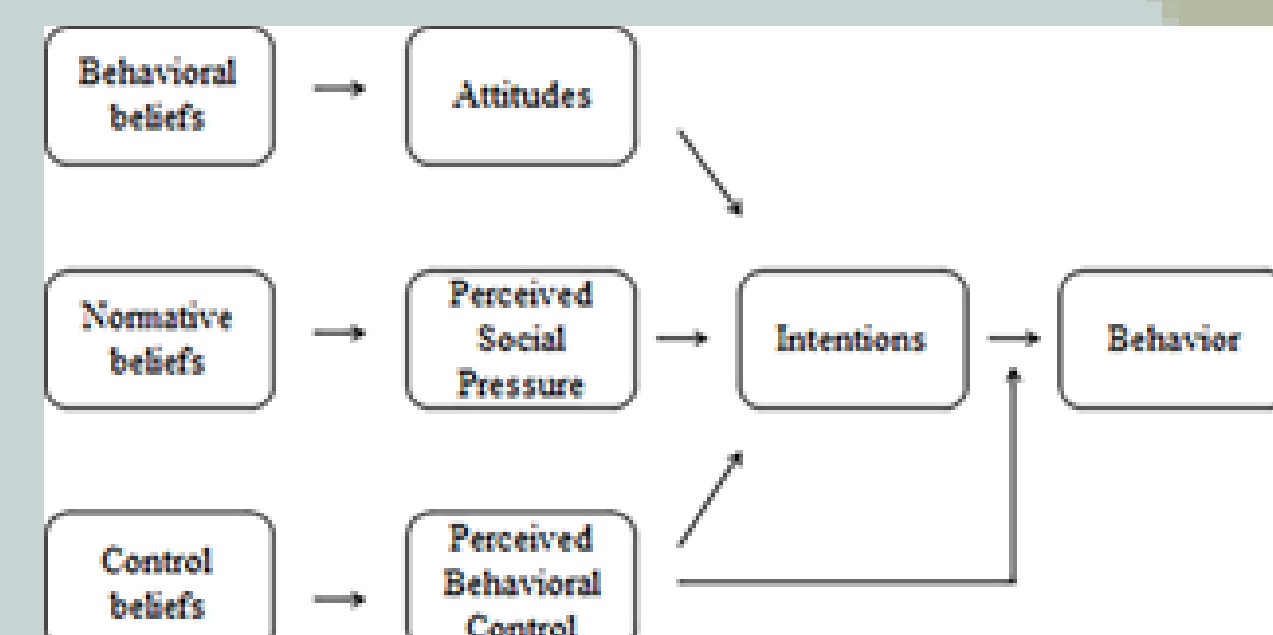
The purpose of this study is to assess the long-term impacts of Agri-entrepreneurship exchange programs on entrepreneurial behaviors and experiences of the first four participants ten years after they experienced a five-week USDOS funded fellowship—1-week OK training, 3-week OK internships/ job shadowing & 1-week DC event.

Theoretical Framework

Our study was guided by the **theory of planned behavior** (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). We posited and observed:

- Intentions to perform various behaviors can be predicted by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and
- These intentions, together with perceptions of actual behavioral control, explain real behaviors (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Ajzen's three kinds of salient beliefs (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Our adaptation of the theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 5(2), 179-211.



"I wanted to grow my businesses," [reflecting intentions], "so I received entrepreneur training from the past [fellowship] and we learned that you don't need to actually get physical --you establish systems here and there and hire people to help you" [normative influence]. P14 also stated "[Now] I go to the farm once a week on Sunday. . . . Then the rest of the stores sometimes I pass and actually don't even stop. I just drive by to see if it's open" [real behavior] (P14 Interview).



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Primary Reference

Stake, R. E. (2006). Multiple case study analysis. Guilford.

Methodology

Research Design	Quality Longitudinal Qualitative Multiple Case Study Ten Years After 2014-15 US DOS Funded Agri-Entrepreneurial Fellowship Exchange, Stillwater, OK
Participants	First four of 15 Agri-entrepreneurs – Farmers, Ag Consultants, Extension Researchers, Large and Small Livestock Producers, Food, Fiber, & Fabric Purveyors
Tools & Techniques	Quality Multiple Case Study Zoom Interviews & NVIVO Software Use (QSR, 2016)
Data Analysis	Open, Axial, & Selective Coding and Categorical Themeing (Saldaña, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

Results/Findings

Five themes that emerged when we analyzed the transcripts and their data:

Theme	Examples
Empowerment	Two Awarded PhDs, Four Mentoring Community and Global Citizens
Intentional Entrepreneurial Ambitions	Establishment of Two New Farms, Seven Businesses Currently Being Conducted, Ongoing Promotion of Entrepreneurship
Youth & Farmer Entrepreneurial Development	All Four AEFs Mentoring Youth and/or Community Agri-entrepreneurs, Meat Goat Raising Promotion
Strategic Agility	Four AEFs Changed Professional Goals
Financial Constraints	Two Businesses Closed Due to Lack of Profits to Pay Owners Living Wages

Conclusions & Implications

The AEFs indicated positive outcomes from the OSU Fellowship Exchange program. One major gap was:

- Ongoing entrepreneurial networking and sessions focused on management, marketing, funding and problem solving with trainers, mentors and other AEFs.

This finding aligns with business training research, suggesting continued monitoring promotes sustained changes in entrepreneurial behavior, resulting in long-term [Agri-]entrepreneurial success rather than a single entrepreneurial action (Mensmann & Frese, 2018).