



## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, Moronkeji Gabriel Kolawole student number 22176555, hereby declare that this thesis entitled: Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Development Programme in the Agribusiness Sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria is my work and that it has not been submitted in part or in full to any other degree or any other institution for other purposes. Subsequently, all sources used or referred to have been documented and acknowledged accordingly.

**Mr. M.G. KOLAWOLE**

**22 November 2024**

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**Name:**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Youth Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness Support (YEASA) program in the agribusiness sector of Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, focusing on its contributions to local economic activities between 2017 and 2020. With a response rate of 96.15% (125 valid responses out of 130 distributed questionnaires), the study provides reliable insights into the program's impact. Employing descriptive statistics, one-sample t-tests, and reliability analyses using SPSS Version 29, the findings are structured around three specific objectives: assessing improvements in quality of life, examining employment generation, and evaluating contributions to local economic development. Demographic analysis revealed that 66.4% of participants were aged 26-40, with nearly equal gender representation (52% male, 48% female). Educational attainment was high, with 72.8% holding at least a bachelor's degree. Motivational factors primarily included improving income prospects and achieving better long-term futures. Participants reported significant improvements in well-being, with increased confidence and living standards. Employment generation was a notable success, as 94% acknowledged YEASA's contribution to job creation. YEASA also contributed to local economic growth, with 84.2% agreeing it improves economic development. However, government support remains insufficient, with participants expressing dissatisfaction regarding funding and loans. These findings highlight YEASA's positive impact while underscoring the critical need for policy enhancements, particularly in providing targeted financial support and creating a more enabling regulatory environment, to fully unlock the program's potential.

**Keywords: Agribusiness, Entrepreneurship Development, Youth Employment, YEASA, Local Economic Development, Nigeria.**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the grace and strength bestowed on me throughout this study and to the memory of my Late Mother, Mrs Veronica Kolawole.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction and Background to the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the background and context of the study. It includes the problem statement, the research questions, the purpose and objectives of the study. This chapter also highlights the significance of the study and its potential contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship development and the agribusiness sector in Nigeria. The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the rest of the study and provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the research context and its objectives.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

Economic development, as defined by Georgewill and Akpomi (2021), represents a steady evolution of an economy from a stagnant state to one characterised by growth and prosperity. This transition is marked by a shift from low to high-income levels, ultimately addressing the issues of extreme poverty. Ugoani (2015) posits that the economic and social progress of any nation relies on the strength and vitality of its private sector, which is predominantly fuelled by entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, developing entrepreneurial skills is a key strategy in the battle against poverty. This approach provides a means to generate income and create job opportunities, particularly in developing countries.

Furthermore, Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018) stress the significance of fostering entrepreneurial skills to create a favourable business environment. They argue that this development involves enhancing the capacity of both institutions and individuals, especially in rural regions. The focus is on building support systems that encourage the growth of local businesses. As a result, these initiatives aim to empower rural residents to participate in the economic development process actively.

In addition, it is important to recognise that entrepreneurial skill development offers a practical solution to economic challenges. By creating avenues for income generation and employment, these skills help address issues related to poverty. Consequently, the role of entrepreneurship in economic development becomes

increasingly evident. This approach not only fosters individual growth but also contributes to the broader economic advancement of a nation. Moreover, enhancing entrepreneurial skills aligns with broader economic strategies that improve livelihoods in developing regions. Building a supportive business environment, as highlighted by Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018), is crucial for stimulating local enterprise growth. Many countries have adopted entrepreneurship development programs to foster sustainable economic growth. These programs aim to encourage the growth of a diverse private sector within both manufacturing and service industries. To illustrate, these initiatives focus on enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and supporting the establishment of new businesses (Adelekan, Majekodunmi, & Omotayo, 2018). Several scholars have explored the impact of entrepreneurship development programs on economic growth. One is Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018) who emphasise that these programs play a key role in promoting a dynamic private sector, particularly within the manufacturing and service sectors. Furthermore, Adenutsi (2023) supports this view by noting that such programs are vital in nurturing a vibrant economic environment. The main objective of these initiatives is to boost the competitiveness of existing SMEs and facilitate the growth of new enterprises. This focus is evident as programs are designed to improve the operational efficiency and market presence of small businesses, which in turn supports overall economic development. Specifically, by strengthening SMEs, these programs help create a more resilient and competitive business environment.

When discussing the concept of entrepreneurship, it is important to recognise its broad scope. This concept spans a variety of business activities, ranging from micro and small enterprises to medium and large businesses. Additionally, it encompasses both new startups and established companies. Furthermore, it includes for-profit organizations as well as not-for-profit entities, such as voluntary sector organizations, charitable institutions, and government bodies (Clifford, 2016). Entrepreneurship is often recognised as a driving force behind economic development, especially in more developed economies. Aladejebi (2020) points out the crucial function of entrepreneurship in fostering industrialization and enhancing overall economic progress. Entrepreneurs play a vital role by creating new businesses and generating employment opportunities.

Consequently, their efforts contribute significantly to a nation's economic growth and prosperity. Entrepreneurship fuels industrial expansion. New ventures introduce innovative products and services and stimulate competition, improving quality and efficiency, which benefit consumers and drive further economic activity (Rezaei et al., 2020; Dabić et al., 2024). When jobs are created, entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rates and increase disposable income, boosting economic stability. The role of entrepreneurship in job creation is crucial. Startups and growing businesses generate employment opportunities across various industries, reducing job shortages and supporting the economic health of a community. Small businesses account for a significant portion of job creation in many regions, demonstrating their essential role in the labour market (BLS, 2025; U.S. Treasury, 2024; U.S. SBA, 2022).

Moreover, entrepreneurs contribute to economic development by introducing novel products, services, and technologies, thereby address existing market gaps and meet emerging consumer needs (Andrews et al., 2024). This innovation leads to increased productivity and economic growth. Technology startups have revolutionised industries such as information technology and telecommunications, showcasing the impact of entrepreneurial innovation on economic advancement (Andrews et al., 2024).

Noteworthy is that entrepreneurship supports economic resilience. In times of economic downturns or crises, entrepreneurs adapt quickly to changing conditions, offering new solutions and opportunities. This adaptability can help stabilize the economy and drive recovery. Entrepreneurs can tackle issues such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to essential services through their ventures. Focusing on social enterprises or community-based projects can make a positive impact on society while achieving economic success (Wiley, 2024).

The significance of small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) in driving Nigeria's economic growth cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, these businesses have been the bedrock of the nation's economy for several years. In support of this assertion, a recent report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2022 revealed the substantial contribution of MSMEs, accounting for 46.31% of the nation's GDP over the past five years. MSMEs have been instrumental in job creation, contributing to a remarkable 50% of industrial jobs nationwide. To put this into

perspective, these enterprises have been the primary engine of employment in the industrial sector. Their dominance in the manufacturing sector is impressive, as they constitute approximately 91% of all enterprises in this vital sector. It is evident from these statistics that MSMEs are the lifeblood of the Nigerian economy (NBS/SMEDAN 2022).

Recognising the crucial role of entrepreneurship in propelling Nigeria's economic growth, the government has taken proactive steps to foster a conducive environment for budding entrepreneurs through various policies and programs implemented to establish institutions and organizations dedicated to support entrepreneurial endeavours. Adelekan and Tijani (2017) showed the proliferation of such initiatives, citing the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), and the Subsidy Reinvestment Program (SURE-P). These government-backed bodies are instrumental in providing a platform for aspiring entrepreneurs to access essential resources and guidance.

Furthermore, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN) program, the Better Life Program, and the People's Bank represent additional government efforts to women and youth to venture into entrepreneurship. These initiatives have been designed to provide financial support, training, and mentorship.

The National Agency for Poverty Eradication (NAPEP) has been at the forefront of combating poverty through entrepreneurship development programs. Equipping disadvantaged individuals with the necessary skills and resources, the government's commitment to entrepreneurship development is further evidenced by the establishment of the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, which provides on-the-job training opportunities for youth. The Graduate Job Creation Loan Guarantee Scheme offers financial incentives to graduates who embark on entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, the Agricultural Sector Employment Program specifically targets the agricultural sector, recognising its potential for job creation and economic growth. To address the various challenges faced by entrepreneurs, the government has implemented comprehensive strategies. The Social Investment Program (N-Power), the Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP), and the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) are examples of initiatives aimed at providing youth with opportunities to acquire skills, gain work experience, and start their businesses. These programs have been instrumental in creating a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurship. Recognising

the importance of a coordinated approach, the government has also introduced strategic frameworks at different levels of governance. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) provides a blueprint for national development, with a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship. At the state level, the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) aligns with the national agenda while tailoring interventions to specific regional needs. Similarly, the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) focuses on grassroots development, empowering communities to drive economic growth through entrepreneurship (Adelekan and Tijani, 2017). These aforementioned institutions were initiated with the hope that the development of self-employment and small enterprise initiatives would serve as a measure to unlock the economic potentials of the youths, increase the capacity to empower and equip individuals in society to participate and benefit from their national economy as well as facilitates economic development which forms the bases for transformation (Idam, 2014; Adelekan, and Tijani, 2017).

Despite the increase in entrepreneurial programs, their effectiveness has not always met expectations. For instance, as Georgewill and Akpomi (2021) pointed out, these programs have often fallen short of achieving their intended goals. This shortfall is particularly evident in Nigeria, where Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have faced difficulties making a substantial impact on the nation's economic development, as detailed by Idris, Adekalu and Genty (2014).

Several reasons contribute to the limited success of SMEs in Nigeria. Firstly, one major challenge faced by entrepreneurs in the country is the multitude of obstacles that impede their progress. These obstacles include inadequate infrastructure and restricted access to financial resources, which have significantly affected the growth and sustainability of numerous businesses.

Furthermore, Nigeria's employment situation has exacerbated these issues. The country is dealing with a persistent mismatch between the ambitions of its expanding educated workforce and the actual job opportunities available. According to Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018), this mismatch has created a notable disparity between the demand for jobs and the supply of available positions. As a result, many people have resorted to entrepreneurship as an alternative means of

earning a living. However, this shift often occurs without the necessary preparation or support, making it challenging for new businesses to thrive.

Ado Ekiti, a city in Nigeria, has a strong agribusiness sector that plays a vital role in its economy. However, the area faces a significant challenge with unemployment, particularly among youth. To tackle this issue, there is a growing belief that entrepreneurship programs could assist in boosting the local economy and providing job opportunities within the agribusiness sector. These initiatives aim to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and support to either start or expand their agricultural businesses.

The goal of these entrepreneurship programs is to educate participants and provide them with assistance in various aspects of business development. By imparting new knowledge and offering resources, these programs can lead to the creation of new jobs, enhance the local economy, and contribute to the overall development of Ado Ekiti. This study will explore the effects of one specific entrepreneurship program on the local economy and the employment situation for youth in the agribusiness sector.

Though many studies highlight the significance of small businesses in driving economic growth and job creation, challenges remain that hinder their success. Key issues such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited business management knowledge can impede small enterprises. Without addressing these barriers, it can be difficult for such businesses to thrive. The agribusiness sector holds substantial potential for generating employment and fostering economic development, yet there is a lack of research on the influence of entrepreneurship programs within this sector in Nigeria. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining the impact of a specific program in Ado Ekiti, aiming to identify effective practices and areas for improvement to better support future agribusiness initiatives.

A program that stands out is the Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) program in Ekiti State. This program was set up to help youth to start agribusinesses. It focuses on modern farming methods that are good for the environment. By teaching youth new skills and giving them support, YEASA hopes to help them become successful agribusiness owners. To achieve its goals, YEASA offers training on modern farming methods, business management, financing, and market access. This study assessed the YEASA program by analysing its activities

and their effects on youth. The goal is to identify what works and what does not, ultimately improving the program to better support rural youth in agriculture and related enterprises.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

The main reason for starting entrepreneurship programs is to teach people how to take risks and turn their business ideas into real businesses (Ado, 2016). But it appears unlikely that these programs will be able to provide the requisite number of jobs.

In the face of Nigeria's acute economic challenges, headline inflation surged to **33.88% in October 2024** (Stears, 2024; Reuters, 2024). Youth unemployment remained a concern, with **8.4% in Q1 2024** (Trading Economics, 2024; Proshare, 2024). Meanwhile, the poverty rate reached **38.9% in 2023**, affecting about **87 million Nigerians** (World Bank, 2024; Intelpoint, 2024).

Aun and others (2018), noted that numerous entrepreneurial development attempts in Nigeria have failed to replace them and/or carry out their functions in economic development. About 80% of the small firms in Nigeria fail within the first five years due to their inability to compete favourably with larger firms (Turner and Akinremi, 2020). This is no great news for small businesses and the whole economy. Because of these challenges, it is important to find out what works and what does not in entrepreneurship programs. Studying these programs can reveal how to improve them and help more people succeed in business. This study evaluated entrepreneurship programs in Ado Ekiti's agribusiness sector, which is crucial for Nigeria's economy but faces challenges like limited funding and poor infrastructure. It examined how these programs offer training, financial support, and advice to help individuals overcome these obstacles. The aim is to enhance these programs and support the development of Ado Ekiti.

Furthermore, it has been observed that limited training and support hinder aspiring entrepreneurs from acquiring essential skills and resources. Effective entrepreneurship development programs are needed to stimulate local economic activity and youth employment in agribusiness (Adeyanju et al. 2021; Ikuemonisan et al. 2022). This study evaluated the impact of such programs and identified challenges to improve their effectiveness (Manyong et al. 2023).

While the role of entrepreneurship is widely studied, a significant gap remains in the literature concerning the effectiveness of development programs within the agribusiness sector, specifically in Ekiti State Nigeria, a context with unique economic and cultural dynamics. This study aims to fill this void by evaluating the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programs on economic development in Ekiti state, specifically using the Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) as a case study.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The study assessed the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programs in promoting local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector to inform the design of similar programs in other regions. The study aims to contribute to the discourse on entrepreneurship and economic development in Nigeria and support a more vibrant and sustainable local economy in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

With YEASA as a case study, the primary research goal is to evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship development programs on boosting local economic activity in Ekiti state.

The specific objectives of the study include.

1. To determine if YEASA entrepreneurial development program help to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Ekiti State.
2. To examine the effectiveness of the employment generated through YEASA program in Ekiti State
3. To examine the contribution of YEASA entrepreneurial development program on local economic activities and development in Ekiti State.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

Based on the research objectives, this study seek answers to the following questions:

- Does YEASA entrepreneurial development program help to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Ekiti State?
- How effective is the employment generated through YEASA program in Ekiti State?
- What are the benefits derived from YEASA entrepreneurial development program on local economic activities and development in Ekiti State?

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study has the potential to contribute to the development of local economic activities and the promotion of youth employment in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. The study aims to explore the impact of an entrepreneurship development program on local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector.

The agribusiness sector in Nigeria has strong growth potential. Promoting entrepreneurship can diversify the economy and create jobs for youth, especially in Ado Ekiti. This study evaluated an entrepreneurship development program in Ado Ekiti to determine its impact on local economic activities and youth employment. The findings will aid state policymakers in designing effective strategies and inform national policies. The goal is to support a sustainable local economy in Ado Ekiti and enhance job opportunities for young people in agribusiness.

### **1.8 Justification of the Research Area**

Ekiti State, located in southwestern Nigeria, is surrounded by several other states, creating a diverse regional environment. To the north, it shares a border with Kwara State; to the northeast, it is adjacent to Kogi State; while to the south and southeast, it is bordered by Ondo State. To the west, Ekiti State is neighbouring Osun State. With a population exceeding three million people, Ekiti State has a rich historical background, predominantly inhabited by the Ekiti people, who belong to the Yoruba ethnic group. There are smaller communities from the Akoko Yoruba subgroup.

The Ekiti State's population practices Christianity, accounting for approximately 85% of residents. Muslim and traditionalist communities are about 10% and 5% of the population respectively (Eze, Chiwendu & Bello, 2021). This religious distribution reflects the state's diverse cultural values. The Ekiti State government has sought to stimulate growth through various initiatives. The Ekiti State Development and

Investment Agency has established several entrepreneurship development programs to foster and coordinate investment activities within the state. These programs boost the local economy by promoting entrepreneurship and investment. The state's commitment to economic advancement is evident through these efforts, setting up dedicated agencies and creating a supportive environment for business activities. These initiatives are crucial for encouraging local and external investments, contributing to economic growth and job creation.

Despite the efforts of the Ekiti State government to boost economic growth by setting up entrepreneurship development agencies, their effect on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment reduction, and poverty alleviation has been limited. According to the Ekiti State Development and Investment Agency, the government's initiatives have not yet made an impact. Notably, the overall contribution of these efforts to the state's economy remains relatively minor (Opafunso & Adepoju, 2014). Unemployment rates in the state are still high, and a significant portion of the population continues to experience poverty. To bridge this gap, private organizations have stepped in to support economic development in Ekiti State. They have introduced various strategies and programs complementing the government's initiatives. Consequently, these private efforts are crucial in addressing the shortcomings of the public sector's approach.

### **1.9 Definition of Key terms**

- **Agribusiness Sector:** The economic sector that encompasses all aspects of agriculture, including production, processing, marketing, and distribution of agricultural products.
- **Youth Employment:** The state of being employed or actively seeking employment among individuals in the age group of 15 to 24 years.
- **Local Economic Activities:** The economic activities that take place within a specific geographic area, such as a city or region.
- **Entrepreneurship Development Programmes:** Government or privately-run initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the development of new businesses and enterprises.

- **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** Businesses with fewer than 250 employees and limited capital, which play a significant role in creating employment opportunities and driving economic growth.
- **Business Incubation:** A process of providing support services, such as training, mentoring, and access to capital, to new and early-stage businesses to help them grow and become successful.
- **Innovation:** The process of creating new ideas and products, or improving existing ones, to meet market needs and drive economic growth.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The process of enabling individuals and communities to gain greater control over their economic lives and to participate more fully in the economy.
- **Financing:** The process of providing capital and funding to businesses and organizations to support their growth and development.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** A collaborative relationship between the public and private sectors, typically aimed at improving the delivery of public goods and services or promoting economic development.

### 1.10 Ethical Issues

The following are common ethical issues that may arise in conducting research and how the researcher can adhere to ethical guidelines:

**Informed consent:** Participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of the study, and they voluntarily agree to participate.

**Confidentiality and data protection:** The researcher ensured that participant information is kept confidential and not shared with unauthorized parties.

**Deception:** The researcher did not mislead participants or conceal information that could influence their decision to participate in the study.

**Risk of harm:** The researcher ensured that the study did not cause harm or distress to participants.

**Right to withdraw:** Participants had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

To adhere to these ethical principles, the researcher developed a detailed ethical protocol, sought approval from an ethics review board, and obtain informed consent

from participants. Additionally, the researcher implemented strict confidentiality measures, such as using pseudonyms and secure storage of data, and continuously monitor the study to minimize harm to participants. By adhering to these ethical principles, the researcher ensured that the study is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

### **1.11 Structure of the Study**

**Chapter One-Introduction:** This chapter provides the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the research, research questions, and the scope of the study, the significance of the study as well as the conceptualization of key terms or words.

**Chapter Two-Literature review:** This chapter reviewed literature on past research studies conducted on entrepreneurship development programmes. It presents information on the concept of Entrepreneurship Development, Entrepreneurship Development and Economic Growth, Entrepreneurship Development and Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship Development in the Agribusiness Sector, and Entrepreneurship Development Programmes in Nigeria. It also discussed the theories that form a foundation for this research.

**Chapter Three-Methodology:** This chapter focused on research methodology which has to do with study population, sampling techniques and procedure for data collection. This chapter dealt with research methodology that is, how the researcher identified the population to carry on the research, the procedure followed. The researcher also stated the research design for the study, the sampling method, procedures and data analysis were used.

**Chapter Four-Data analysis:** This chapter presented result from all data collected.

**Chapter Five-Summary and Conclusion:** This chapter contained the summary of the key findings, contributions to knowledge, revealed recommendations for future research and conclusion of the study.

### **1.12 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter emphasized the importance and it's potential to contribute to a better understanding of the role of entrepreneurship development programmes

in promoting local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter carefully outlines the key literature and theoretical framework that form the foundation of this study. To achieve this, it provides a detailed exploration of existing research on entrepreneurship development, economic growth, and youth employment, particularly within the agribusiness sector in Nigeria. It also delves into various theories and concepts tied to entrepreneurship development and youth employment, linking them directly to the study's objectives and research questions. Through this structured review, the chapter builds a clear connection between the study's focus and the existing body of knowledge.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Review**

This section takes a closer look at the existing body of literature that examines entrepreneurship development, economic growth, and youth employment, while also exploring how these areas intersect within Nigeria's agribusiness sector. The objective here is to identify and clarify the critical concepts that are most relevant to this research topic. By doing so, this section aims to provide a strong conceptual foundation for understanding the study's scope and direction.

##### **2.2.1 Concept of Entrepreneurship Development**

Entrepreneurship development plays a vital role in providing individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to start and grow thriving businesses. Signalizing this importance, Igbari (2019) explains that the process involves various essential components, including training programs, financial assistance, and mentorship. Such components serve as foundational pillars that equip entrepreneurs for success. Moreover, entrepreneurship development is not just about individual success but also serves as a catalyst for innovation and creativity. To strengthen this perspective, Joshua and Andow (2013) highlight that fostering research and development is a central part of this process. These authors emphasize that promoting research encourages the creation of new ideas and products, which are integral to driving business success and economic growth.

Entrepreneurship Development focuses on equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources required to launch and sustain successful businesses. As Igbari (2019) notes, this process involves training programs, financial support, and mentorship, which are essential in laying a strong foundation for entrepreneurs. This approach is not limited to starting businesses; rather, it drives innovation and creativity, as highlighted by Joshua and Andow (2013), who stress that research and development are vital components. Consequently, entrepreneurship development fosters an environment where businesses can emerge and thrive, creating job opportunities for the unemployed youth. By equipping them with tools and support, these programs significantly improve career prospects and contribute to economic stability. Furthermore, the emphasis on fostering an ecosystem that supports long-term economic growth aligns with the broader goals of enhancing living standards and reducing unemployment. Entrepreneurship development, therefore, transcends mere business creation, aiming to build a robust economic structure where innovation and job creation flourish. In this regard, the integration of financial assistance, mentorship, and skill-building initiatives plays a pivotal role in shaping a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem, ensuring that participants are well-prepared to tackle business challenges and contribute to economic development.

Entrepreneurship Development is instrumental in driving economic growth by supporting entrepreneurial initiatives and empowering individuals. According to Metu and Nwokoye (2014), these programs stimulate job creation and enhance overall well-being by fostering a conducive environment for business startups. Similarly, Adenutsi (2023) emphasizes that financial support and training are key components that enable individuals to overcome challenges and embark on entrepreneurial journeys. Farayibi (2015) further highlights the importance of fostering a supportive entrepreneurial culture and implementing policies that encourage innovation and business development. Metu and Nwokoye (2014) argue that entrepreneurship programs contribute to economic prosperity by creating opportunities for new businesses and strengthening regional economic structures. Addressing barriers such as access to capital and training is essential, as noted by Adenutsi (2023), who advocates for comprehensive programs that empower entrepreneurs to navigate financial and educational constraints. These initiatives play a vital role in building a

stable economy by equipping individuals with the resources and knowledge needed to establish and sustain businesses. Thus, entrepreneurship development programs act as catalysts for economic stability and growth, paving the way for inclusive prosperity.

Removing obstacles to entrepreneurship is critical for empowering individuals to achieve business success. This includes providing access to resources and support systems that address financial, educational, and cultural barriers, as highlighted by Adenutsi (2023). Farayibi (2015) underscores the importance of a cultural shift that promotes innovation and entrepreneurial activities beyond financial assistance. Establishing supportive networks and policies that nurture business growth creates an environment where new ideas can thrive. Additionally, fostering a culture that values entrepreneurship encourages a mindset of creativity and resilience among aspiring entrepreneurs. Farayibi's (2015) perspective emphasizes that entrepreneurial success is not solely dependent on financial resources but also hinges on cultural and policy frameworks that support innovation. These strategies enable the development of an ecosystem conducive to sustainable business growth, making it possible for entrepreneurs to overcome barriers and maximize opportunities. By addressing these challenges, entrepreneurship development programs empower individuals to contribute to the broader economic landscape, ensuring that their ventures are not only viable but also impactful in driving innovation and growth. This integrated approach underscores the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship and its potential for societal transformation.

Various strategies are essential for fostering entrepreneurship, each offering distinct advantages to aspiring business owners. Education and training are foundational elements, as Egwu (2014) explains, providing knowledge on core competencies like business planning, marketing, and financial management. Practical training, coupled with theoretical insights, equips entrepreneurs to apply their knowledge effectively. These programs also serve as platforms for networking, allowing entrepreneurs to connect with peers and industry experts, thus gaining valuable insights. Alongside education, financial accessibility is a critical factor. Carol (2019) points out that

funding is a common challenge for entrepreneurs, and addressing this issue requires more than financial assistance. Programs must also offer guidance on financial management to ensure the sustainability of ventures. Financial support enables entrepreneurs to invest in their ideas and weather the initial challenges of starting a business. Furthermore, mentorship, as noted by Aladejebi (2018), is a vital component. Experienced mentors provide practical guidance, share personal experiences, and offer emotional support, helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and maintain resilience. These elements collectively create a holistic framework for entrepreneurship development, ensuring that aspiring entrepreneurs have the tools, resources, and support needed to succeed.

Government policies play a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape by creating a supportive regulatory environment. Metu and Nwokoye (2014) observe that streamlining bureaucratic processes, such as simplifying registration and licensing, reduces administrative burdens and lowers barriers to market entry. These measures encourage the establishment of new ventures by providing a seamless process for entrepreneurs to formalize their businesses. Additionally, tax incentives are instrumental in fostering innovation by offering financial rewards that help entrepreneurs secure capital for business expansion. These incentives not only support individual businesses but also contribute to job creation and economic stability. A thriving entrepreneurial environment requires collaboration between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and entrepreneurs themselves. This synergy ensures that policies are well-aligned with the practical needs of entrepreneurs, creating an ecosystem where businesses can flourish.

### **2.2.2. Entrepreneurship, Livelihoods and Quality of Life**

Entrepreneurship training and support programmes have repeatedly been linked to improvements in participants' livelihoods. For example, Adeyanju *et al.* (2023) found that youths who engaged in a government entrepreneurship programme (NDE in Kano State) experienced significantly better livelihood outcomes – measured by income and self-assessed living conditions – compared to non-entrepreneur (Adeyanju *et al.*, 2024). Psychological Capital theory holds that interventions which boost self-efficacy, hope and optimism lead to better performance and personal well-

being(Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). This is consistent with Luthans and Youssef-Morgan's finding that the core PsyCap resources (hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism) "have impact on attitudes, behaviors, performance and well-being" (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). In agribusiness contexts, higher confidence and optimism from training tend to translate into more proactive business action and improved living standards. For instance, Okonkwo *et al.* (2023) note that agriprenurship programmes build capacity and drive wealth creation along the agricultural value chain, which underpins improved quality of life(Okonkwo et al., 2023).

Other authors also show direct links between entrepreneurship training and well-being. An empirical study in Uganda found that agribusiness training significantly increased youth income and food security(Adeyanju et al., 2023). Similarly, Obanle *et al.* (2020) report that motivations for rural entrepreneurship (e.g. self-sufficiency and family tradition) were accompanied by measurable poverty reduction among participants. Taken together, the literature indicates that when entrepreneurship programmes equip youths with skills and resources, beneficiaries typically report higher incomes, greater economic stability, and subjective life improvements.

### **2.2.3 The Concept of Entrepreneurship Development and Economic Growth**

Zubair (2014) describes entrepreneurship as a dynamic and evolving process that involves the creation and growth of new businesses. This process is widely recognized as a driver of economic transformation, particularly in areas such as job creation, innovation, and wealth generation. Supporting this view, Afolabi (2015) highlights the critical importance of establishing favourable conditions that encourage the establishment and growth of businesses.

Entrepreneurship, however, goes beyond economic benefits. It also acts as a powerful agent of societal change by creating job opportunities that help to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. Entrepreneurs who succeed often become role models, inspiring others to explore similar ventures. In this way, the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth becomes symbiotic—while entrepreneurship stimulates economic growth through innovation, employment, and

wealth creation, a growing economy, in turn, creates an enabling environment for entrepreneurs to thrive.

It is crucial to understand that this relationship is not one-directional. For entrepreneurship to have its full impact on economic growth, there must be a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. As Zubair (2014) notes, such an ecosystem requires access to financial resources, reliable infrastructure, and quality education. These factors collectively create a fertile ground for entrepreneurship to flourish and contribute to economic progress.

Entrepreneurs are also pivotal in driving innovation, which helps economies meet changing consumer needs and open up new opportunities. By establishing new businesses and scaling existing ones, they significantly contribute to reducing unemployment rates and enhancing labour force participation (Oyewale, Adeyemo, & Ogunleye, 2013). As a result, entrepreneurship is often seen as a cornerstone of economic growth. It not only fosters innovation but also creates jobs and broadens market reach, which ultimately drives prosperity.

The complexity of the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth, however, cannot be overlooked. Shallangwa (2022) cautions that while entrepreneurship is a potent driver of growth, its impact is influenced by several factors, including the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programs, government policies, and the overall business environment. A supportive business climate, including clear regulations, accessible financial resources, and a skilled workforce, is essential for entrepreneurial ventures to succeed. Without these elements, the potential of entrepreneurship to reduce poverty and create sustainable economic growth may not be fully realized.

The African Development Bank Report (2011) provides an insightful framework for understanding entrepreneurship development. It defines this concept as a systematic process aimed at improving entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through training and institutional support. The ultimate goal is to boost the number of entrepreneurs and encourage the establishment of new businesses. Building on this, Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018) stress the importance of entrepreneurship

development programs in stimulating private-sector growth. Such programs often focus on enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and nurturing the emergence of new businesses.

Farayibi (2015) aligns with this perspective, describing entrepreneurship as a vital component of economic progress. Interestingly, this impact transcends geographical and economic classifications. Both developed and emerging economies benefit significantly from entrepreneurship, underscoring its universal role in driving growth and development. Entrepreneurship development programs play a strategic role in creating dynamic business environments. By equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge, and by offering institutional support, these programs empower people to establish successful businesses that generate jobs and stimulate economic growth.

In examining the broader impact of entrepreneurship, Opafunso and Adepoju (2014) point out its role as a key indicator of a nation's economic health. Metrics such as industrialization, employment levels, income distribution, and overall quality of life are all closely tied to entrepreneurial activity. This underscores the importance of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic well-being. Entrepreneurs are often characterized as risk-takers who identify opportunities and transform them into viable business ventures. Matthew, Haruna, Ameh, and Maisamari (2020) emphasize that the entrepreneurial spirit, which embraces calculated risks, is a critical force for economic advancement.

To fully harness the potential of entrepreneurship, the need for supportive policies, resources, and a conducive business climate cannot be overstated. As noted earlier, these factors determine whether entrepreneurial efforts will result in sustainable growth and poverty alleviation. In essence, entrepreneurship is not just an economic activity; it is a transformative process that affects various dimensions of societal progress.

### **2.2.3.1 Global, Regional, and Local Dimension of Entrepreneurial and Economic Development**

Globally, there has been a growing recognition of how entrepreneurship drives economic and social progress. To illustrate this relationship, researchers have explored its impact in various regions. For example, Stoical, Roman, and Rusu (2020) conducted a comparative study on entrepreneurship and economic growth in European countries. Their findings revealed that different types of entrepreneurship—particularly opportunity-driven and early-stage ventures—contribute significantly to economic expansion in these nations. This suggests that innovative businesses and new ventures that capitalize on market opportunities are essential for driving growth. Hence, fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports such businesses becomes critical for sustained economic development.

Similarly, research has consistently demonstrated that entrepreneurship serves as a key driver of economic growth, innovation, and social development across the globe. This recognition has heightened the demand for entrepreneurial graduates who can create jobs and generate innovative solutions. In Ghana, Denanyoh, Adjei, and Nyemkye (2015) examined factors shaping entrepreneurial intentions among tertiary students. They discovered that educational, community, and family support systems play pivotal roles in influencing students' aspirations toward entrepreneurship. These findings underscore the importance of creating policies that nurture entrepreneurial interest among young people.

Furthermore, Peprah and Adekoya (2020) extended the discourse to entrepreneurship in developing economies, particularly Africa. They highlighted a significant research gap, noting that studies on entrepreneurship and economic growth are more prevalent in advanced economies, while the African context remains underexplored. Using data from ten African countries, their study demonstrated that entrepreneurship positively impacts economic growth. In simple terms, when entrepreneurs succeed in establishing new businesses, it boosts overall economic performance. Moreover, they noted that investor confidence is closely

linked to economic prospects. This implies that a supportive business climate is crucial for attracting investments and stimulating growth.

In Nigeria, several studies have focused on the interplay between entrepreneurship and economic development. Adelekan, Majekodunmi, and Omotayo (2018) investigated the effect of entrepreneurship development programs on economic growth in Lagos State. They found that government-led initiatives significantly influence job creation and economic productivity. Specifically, job creation was linked to increased entrepreneurial productivity, contributing to the state's overall development. These insights provide a useful framework for understanding the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth in Nigeria.

Building on this, Ibiloye (2020) examined the evolution of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and emphasized its importance in fostering economic growth through job creation and the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Conversely, Ayegba and Omale (2016) explored the barriers hindering entrepreneurial growth in the country. Their findings highlighted critical challenges, including unreliable power supply, poor infrastructure, corruption, skill shortages, limited credit access, ineffective policies, and security issues. These barriers have far-reaching consequences, reducing investment inflows, limiting job opportunities, and hindering poverty alleviation. To unlock Nigeria's entrepreneurial potential, addressing these systemic issues is imperative.

Additionally, Adelekan and Tijani (2017) shed light on how support mechanisms—such as financial aid, technical training, and educational initiatives—can enhance entrepreneurial success in Nigeria. Their research underscored that entrepreneurship not only drives individual economic advancement but also catalyzes broader national growth. Agu and Ayogu (2015) similarly examined challenges faced by Nigerian entrepreneurs, pointing to issues like multiple taxes, lack of technological knowledge, and unfair competition from larger corporations. These hurdles often stifle the growth of small businesses and make it difficult for entrepreneurs to operate effectively.

Despite these obstacles, technology presents an opportunity to transform entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Agu and Ayogu (2015) argued that leveraging digital tools can streamline business processes, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster competitiveness. This underscores the need for entrepreneurs to embrace technology as a tool for growth. Moreover, government interventions, such as providing technical support and establishing research hubs, play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurship. These initiatives can equip entrepreneurs with the skills and resources needed to thrive.

The interplay between entrepreneurship and the external environment has also been explored extensively. Adelekan and Tijani (2017) highlighted that factors like economic policies, resource availability, and market conditions significantly influence entrepreneurial activities. They noted that a supportive policy environment could enhance access to resources, whereas restrictive regulations could hinder success. Ogunade (2019) further emphasized that external factors shape the nature and outcomes of entrepreneurial ventures. For instance, regions with accessible funding, training, and mentorship experience a rise in innovative entrepreneurial activities, while areas lacking support tend to have necessity-driven ventures.

Moreover, entrepreneurs who can identify and adapt to opportunities within their environment are more likely to succeed. Adelekan and Tijani (2017) pointed out that adapting to changes—such as shifts in consumer behavior or technological advancements—helps businesses remain competitive. Ogunade (2019) also stressed that entrepreneurial activities influence the broader environment, creating a dynamic interplay between businesses and their operational contexts. This dynamic relationship highlights the importance of creating favorable conditions for entrepreneurship to flourish.

#### **2.2.4 The Concept of Entrepreneurship Development and Youth Employment**

In many countries, including Nigeria, youth unemployment remains a pressing issue despite numerous efforts to create jobs. According to Adenutsi (2023), the persistent

nature of youth unemployment has drawn attention to the need for alternative solutions, especially in economies with limited traditional job opportunities. One such solution is entrepreneurship development, which offers young people the opportunity to create employment for themselves by establishing and expanding their businesses. This approach not only helps individuals escape unemployment but also contributes to economic growth and local development (Orji & Opualla-Charles, 2022).

Transitioning to the Nigerian context, entrepreneurship is particularly vital given the country's constrained job market. As Orji and Opualla-Charles (2022) emphasize, young entrepreneurs have the potential to drive sustainable and inclusive economic activities by fostering innovation and creating jobs. This underscores the broader economic benefits of entrepreneurship, as it serves as a catalyst for growth at both individual and national levels. However, this pathway is not without challenges. Limited access to finance, for instance, remains a significant barrier. Financial institutions often perceive young entrepreneurs as high-risk borrowers, which makes securing funding difficult. This issue hampers the ability of many aspiring entrepreneurs to actualize their business ideas, thus limiting the overall impact of entrepreneurship on youth employment (Adenutsi, 2023).

Entrepreneurship development programs have emerged as critical tools for addressing these barriers and promoting entrepreneurial activity among young people. Nkwatoh (2015) highlights that such programs equip youth with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to start and manage businesses. This intervention fosters the growth of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, which is essential for sustainable economic development. Similarly, Okoye (2021: 60) argues that these programs play a significant role in driving innovation and preparing young entrepreneurs to navigate the complexities of business management.

To further support young entrepreneurs, many countries, including Nigeria, have initiated programs that address key challenges. These initiatives often provide access to finance, training, and mentorship. Adenutsi (2023) points out that beyond imparting technical skills, these programs also promote an entrepreneurial mindset.

By building confidence and encouraging creativity, such interventions help young people view entrepreneurship as a viable and rewarding career path. This, in turn, benefits not only the individuals involved but also the broader economy through the creation of new businesses and job opportunities.

As Okoye (2021) observes, entrepreneurship development programs are particularly crucial in regions where traditional employment options are scarce. These programs are designed to empower young entrepreneurs with essential skills and provide the mentorship needed to overcome common challenges. Furthermore, as emphasized by Nkwatoh (2015), these initiatives help reshape societal perceptions of entrepreneurship. They promote a culture that respects and supports entrepreneurial endeavors, thus fostering an enabling environment for business development. Such a cultural shift is essential for sustaining the momentum of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth.

Recognizing the strategic importance of entrepreneurship development, policymakers and stakeholders in Nigeria have increasingly focused on enhancing these programs. By addressing barriers such as inadequate financing and limited access to training, these initiatives aim to maximize the impact of entrepreneurship on youth employment. As noted by Afolabi (2015), the provision of targeted support can significantly improve the success rate of young entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to broader economic objectives.

In summary, entrepreneurship development offers a promising pathway for addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria. By equipping young people with the skills, resources, and mindset needed to establish successful businesses, these programs play a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and reducing unemployment. However, for these efforts to be truly effective, it is crucial to address the systemic barriers that hinder young entrepreneurs, such as access to finance and societal perceptions. With continued investment in entrepreneurship development, Nigeria can harness the potential of its youth to drive sustainable and inclusive economic progress.

### **2.2.5 The Concept of Government Policies and Entrepreneurship Development**

The connection between entrepreneurship development and government policies has sparked ongoing debates among researchers and policymakers. On one hand, advocates for government involvement argue that such interventions are crucial in equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary resources and support to establish and grow their businesses. Akinyemi and Adejumo (2018) emphasize that these resources often include access to capital, training programs, and education. Additionally, other forms of support, such as tax incentives, subsidies, and grants, are seen as critical in reducing the financial burdens entrepreneurs face. This perspective underscores the idea that government policies can create an enabling environment where entrepreneurial ventures thrive. The underlying belief is that without this intervention, many aspiring entrepreneurs may lack the tools or opportunities to achieve success.

However, not everyone agrees with this optimistic view. Critics of government intervention in entrepreneurship development highlight its potential downsides. Farayibi (2015) argues that such policies can inadvertently foster a culture of dependency, where entrepreneurs grow excessively reliant on government support. This over-reliance, according to Farayibi, can weaken the entrepreneurial spirit, reducing individuals' motivation to take risks or innovate independently. The concern here is that government assistance, while well-intentioned, might lead to complacency among entrepreneurs, ultimately stifling creativity and dynamism in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In addition, government policies are often criticized for creating market distortions and an uneven playing field. Egwu (2014) notes that when some businesses receive preferential treatment—such as greater access to subsidies or tax breaks—it can result in unfair competition. This unequal distribution of resources tends to favor businesses that are better connected to government officials or adept at navigating political systems, rather than those with genuine potential or merit. Consequently, this imbalance can hinder healthy competition, which is vital for a vibrant and

innovative entrepreneurial landscape. Such scenarios raise concerns about the unintended consequences of policies designed to promote entrepreneurship.

Another point of contention is the capability of governments to effectively assess the viability of entrepreneurial ventures. Shallangwa (2022) highlights that in many cases, governments may lack the expertise to accurately evaluate business proposals, leading to the allocation of resources to ventures that are neither viable nor sustainable. This misallocation of resources not only represents a financial loss but also deprives potentially successful businesses of the support they need. As a result, opportunities for economic growth and innovation may be squandered. This critique suggests that the effectiveness of government policies in promoting entrepreneurship depends significantly on the knowledge and skills of the personnel implementing them.

Proponents of government support, however, argue that such interventions can yield positive outcomes when well-designed and effectively implemented. Akinyemi and Adejumo (2018) observe that policies providing access to finance, training, and infrastructure have empowered many entrepreneurs to overcome the initial challenges of starting a business. Similarly, tax incentives and subsidies can lower the cost of doing business, thereby encouraging entrepreneurs to take bold steps in expanding their operations. Carol (2019) adds that access to finance and training programs significantly enhance the success rates of new ventures, particularly in regions where resources are scarce. These findings highlight the potential for government policies to create a supportive framework that encourages entrepreneurial growth.

Despite these benefits, it is essential to recognize the limitations of government interventions. As Aladejebi (2018) notes, policies that favour certain businesses over others can undermine the principles of fairness and equity in entrepreneurship development. Disproportionate advantages granted to a few enterprises may hinder the growth of others, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of development

initiatives. This concern underscores the need for policymakers to ensure that support mechanisms are equitable and do not inadvertently stifle competition.

Additionally, the success of government policies often depends on their design and implementation. Afolabi (2015) cautions that policies tailored to specific regions or contexts may not be applicable on a broader scale. For instance, strategies effective in urban areas may fail to address the unique challenges faced by entrepreneurs in rural regions. This variability highlights the importance of context-sensitive policy design and the need for governments to consider the diverse realities of entrepreneurs across different locations.

Another challenge lies in the sustainability of government-supported programs. Afolabi (2015) raises concerns about the long-term viability of policies that rely heavily on public funding. Without proper planning and diversification, such initiatives may struggle to achieve their objectives over time. This point calls attention to the importance of integrating sustainability measures into policy frameworks to ensure their continued relevance and impact.

Furthermore, while government support mechanisms are valuable, over-reliance on them can discourage self-reliance among entrepreneurs. Afolabi (2015) explains that when individuals expect constant support from the government, they may become less proactive in seeking innovative solutions to challenges. This dependency culture, in turn, can weaken the entrepreneurial drive needed to build resilient and competitive businesses. Policymakers must therefore strike a balance between providing necessary support and encouraging independence among entrepreneurs.

The complexities of government intervention in entrepreneurship development suggest that a balanced approach is essential. Policymakers must weigh the benefits of support mechanisms—such as access to capital, training, and tax incentives—against the potential drawbacks, including dependency, market distortions, and resource misallocation. Chidiebere, Iloanya, and Udunze (2014) emphasize that

fostering entrepreneurship requires more than just specific policies and programs. A conducive environment, characterized by reduced bureaucratic hurdles, improved access to infrastructure, and the promotion of innovation and technology, is equally critical.

Ultimately, the success of government policies in promoting entrepreneurship depends on the institutions and regulations in place. Akinyemi and Adejumo (2018:136) note that strong institutional frameworks are necessary to ensure the effective implementation of policies and to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs. Governments must also prioritize transparency and accountability in their interventions to build trust among stakeholders and enhance the overall impact of their initiatives.

### **2.2.5 The Concept of Entrepreneurship Development in the Agribusiness Sector in Nigeria**

The idea of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria's agribusiness sector is particularly significant because of its potential to drive economic growth and create vast job opportunities across the country. Agriculture remains one of Nigeria's largest and most important sectors, serving as the backbone of the economy and a key contributor to livelihoods (Ajekwe & Ibiamke, 2020). This sector, however, goes beyond traditional farming. It encompasses a wide range of activities, such as food processing, packaging, and distribution, all of which add value to raw agricultural products. These additional activities not only create value but also open up diverse job opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, making the agribusiness sector a fertile ground for entrepreneurial ventures.

The strategic importance of the agribusiness sector to Nigeria's economy is further highlighted by Tersoo (2013), who argues that it can play a transformative role in rural development, poverty reduction, and food security enhancement. According to Tersoo, investing in agribusiness, especially in rural areas, can stimulate significant economic development by improving infrastructure, creating jobs, and boosting local economies (Tersoo, 2013). For instance, by providing rural communities with better access to roads, storage facilities, and markets, agribusiness can reduce post-

harvest losses and increase the income of farmers and processors. This demonstrates how agribusiness can serve as a tool for uplifting rural economies and reducing poverty nationwide, while also improving Nigeria's food security.

Despite its immense potential, the agribusiness sector in Nigeria faces several challenges that hinder its growth and limit its contributions to the economy. Access to finance remains one of the most pressing issues for entrepreneurs in the sector. Many aspiring agribusiness operators struggle to secure the funding required to start or scale their businesses, as financial institutions often view the sector as high-risk. Ajekwe and Ibiamke (2020) explain that this lack of capital is compounded by inadequate infrastructure, such as poor roads and unreliable electricity, which make it difficult for entrepreneurs to process and distribute agricultural products efficiently. These infrastructural deficiencies create significant barriers for those seeking to enter or grow within the agribusiness sector, limiting its overall impact on Nigeria's economy.

Another critical challenge is the skills and knowledge gap among many potential entrepreneurs in the agribusiness field. Ajekwe and Ibiamke (2020) point out that technical expertise and practical knowledge are often lacking, leaving many agribusiness operators ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of the sector. For instance, knowledge about modern farming techniques, value addition processes, and effective marketing strategies is essential for success but is often inaccessible to many entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas. This skills gap not only affects individual business outcomes but also hinders the sector's ability to achieve its full potential. Addressing these deficiencies is crucial for unlocking the opportunities within the sector and enabling it to contribute more meaningfully to Nigeria's economic growth.

In response to these challenges, entrepreneurship development programs have been introduced in Nigeria to support entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector. These programs aim to provide critical resources, including access to finance, training, mentorship, and other support services, all of which are designed to help

entrepreneurs overcome the hurdles they face. Ajekwe and Ibiame (2020) emphasize that such initiatives foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, which is necessary for the sector to thrive. By equipping individuals with the skills and resources they need, these programs encourage more people to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path within agribusiness.

However, while these development programs are beneficial, their design and implementation require careful attention to the specific needs and challenges faced by agribusiness entrepreneurs. For instance, providing access to finance and training alone may not be sufficient to address deeper issues, such as poor infrastructure and limited access to markets. Entrepreneurs often struggle with the high costs of transporting goods, inadequate storage facilities, and the lack of reliable market linkages, all of which hinder the sector's growth. As such, entrepreneurship development programs must be tailored to address these unique challenges comprehensively. For example, incorporating infrastructural improvements and facilitating better market access into program designs could significantly enhance their impact.

Additionally, mentorship plays a vital role in empowering agribusiness entrepreneurs. By connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced mentors, development programs can bridge the knowledge gap and provide practical guidance on navigating the sector's challenges. This mentorship component not only builds confidence but also helps entrepreneurs adopt innovative approaches to farming, processing, and distribution. According to Ajekwe and Ibiame (2020), such mentorship initiatives can inspire creativity and resilience among entrepreneurs, enabling them to tackle obstacles and seize emerging opportunities within the sector.

It is also important to note that the success of these programs depends on their ability to address regional disparities. Afolabi (2015) stresses that policies or programs designed for urban areas may not be suitable for rural communities due to differences in infrastructure, market access, and socio-economic conditions. For instance, while urban entrepreneurs may benefit from digital marketing tools, rural

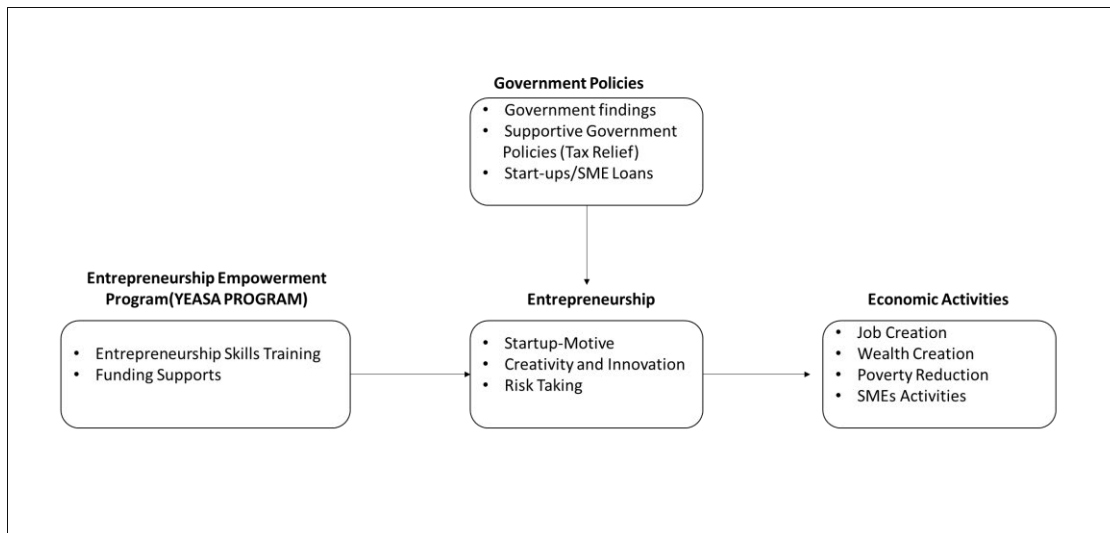
entrepreneurs might require more basic interventions, such as access to physical markets and storage facilities. Recognizing and addressing these contextual differences is critical for ensuring that entrepreneurship development programs have a broad and equitable impact.

Furthermore, the sustainability of these programs is another key consideration. Afolabi (2015) warns that over-reliance on government funding can undermine the long-term viability of entrepreneurship development initiatives. For these programs to achieve lasting success, they must incorporate strategies for self-sustainability, such as partnerships with private sector stakeholders and community-driven approaches. By fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, entrepreneurship programs can leverage additional resources and expertise to support agribusiness entrepreneurs more effectively.

Ultimately, while the challenges facing Nigeria's agribusiness sector are significant, they are not insurmountable. With well-designed and targeted entrepreneurship development programs, many of these barriers can be overcome. Addressing issues such as access to finance, skills development, infrastructure, and market linkages will not only empower individual entrepreneurs but also unlock the sector's potential to contribute more meaningfully to Nigeria's economic growth and development.

#### **2.2.6 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is drawn from Obaji and Olugu's (2014) theoretical model and other empirical literatures considered throughout this study.



Source: Author's Conceptualization

## Contextual Factors in Ado Ekiti

### 2.3 Theoretical Review

This section highlights and discusses the various theories that form a foundation for this research. These theories include the Psychological Capital Theory, Institutional Theory, and Theory of Planned Behaviour.

#### 2.3.1 Psychological Capital Theory

The Psychological Capital Theory, introduced by Fred Luthans, represents a significant development in positive psychology by emphasizing the psychological resources that individuals can draw upon to improve their well-being and performance (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). This theory suggests that psychological capital, (PsyCap), consists of four key elements: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). Self-efficacy is a critical component of PsyCap referring to an individual's confidence in their abilities to execute tasks successfully and achieve their goals (Baluku et al., 2018). This belief in one's capabilities influences an individual's persistence in the face of obstacles. A person with high self-efficacy is can tackle difficult tasks and persist through setbacks compared to someone with low self-efficacy.

Optimism is a positive outlook on future events and the expectation that good things will happen (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). This forward-looking perspective encourages individuals to be hopeful, even when faced with difficulties. By believing

that future outcomes will be favourable, optimistic individuals are more likely to engage in proactive behaviours that contribute to their success.

Hope involves having a clear sense of direction and the capability to mobilize resources to achieve goals. This sense of direction and resourcefulness is crucial for maintaining motivation and striving toward long-term goals.

Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to recover from adversity and maintain well-being despite experiencing stress and challenges (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). Resilient individuals can adapt to changing circumstances and bounce back from setbacks, contributing to their overall psychological strength and stability.

Luthans argues that PsyCap isn't a fixed trait but can be developed and strengthened. For instance, training, coaching, and positive reinforcement can be used to boost self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Hu et al., 2022). Furthermore, Luthans suggests that higher levels of PsyCap can lead to better job satisfaction, improved performance, and increased positive work behaviours (Wang, Zhou, & Wang, 2022). However, some critics question the validity of the Psychological Capital Theory, suggesting that the four components may overlap and that the theory doesn't fully consider the influence of organizational culture (Hu et al., 2022; Baluku et al., 2018).

### **2.3.1.1 Relevance of the theory to the Study**

Integrating these elements of Psychological Capital Theory into the study of entrepreneurship development programs can provide valuable insights into the psychological resources required for success. Specifically, focusing on hope and resilience helps identify the essential traits that entrepreneurs need to thrive, particularly in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. Understanding these psychological aspects enables the creation of targeted entrepreneurship development programs. Such programs, tailored to address the specific needs of local entrepreneurs, can enhance their effectiveness, and support local economic activities. Additionally, by promoting these qualities, entrepreneurship development programs can contribute to increased youth employment and economic growth in the region.

### **2.3.2 Institutional Theory**

The Institutional Theory, introduced by John W. Powell and Douglas R. White, provides a valuable framework for understanding how organizations and individuals adapt to the norms, beliefs, and practices that are widely accepted within a society (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Li, 2010). This theory highlights that institutions are pivotal in shaping how organizations and individuals behave and are a guiding force that influences how organizations develop and evolve (Aldrich, Eisenhardt & Scott, 2013). To further explain, one of the main aspects of the Institutional Theory is its focus on power dynamics. The theory acknowledges that power imbalances shapes the institutions and organizational behaviour. According to the theory, some individuals and organizations possess more power than others. These powerful entities can mold institutions in ways that serve their interests (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Li, 2010). This concept leads to the understanding that institutions are not impartial. They are influenced by power dynamics that affect how resources and opportunities are distributed within a society.

Institutional Theory suggests that organizations, rather than being purely objective entities, often reflect the interests of those in power. Additionally, organizational behavior isn't solely influenced by internal factors but is also shaped by the external environment. Institutions act as intermediaries, mediating between internal dynamics and the broader societal context. To gain legitimacy and support, organizations must align their behaviors with established norms and practices (Aldrich, Eisenhardt & Scott, 2013).

Organizations adapt to institutional norms to fit in, while institutions evolve due to organizational pressures and adaptations. This dynamic interplay highlights the shifting nature of institutional influence. As societal values and power structures change, so too do institutional norms and practices, impacting organizational behaviour and development. Therefore, understanding how power dynamics shape institutional frameworks is crucial for comprehending their broader impact on organizations.

Isomorphism, another key concept, describes how organizations and individuals align their norms, beliefs, and practices with institutional expectations (Berthod,

2018). This alignment can occur through three primary mechanisms: coercion, mimicry, and normative pressure.

Coercion involves organizations being compelled to conform to institutional norms through legal requirements or external pressures. For instance, an organization might be legally obligated to follow environmental regulations, aligning its practices with these institutional expectations (Berthod, 2018).

Mimicry occurs when organizations imitate others to gain legitimacy or a competitive advantage. A new company might adopt industry-standard practices to signal credibility and align with established norms (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010).

Normative pressure involves organizations adopting norms to meet the expectations of their institutional environment, such as aligning with industry standards to maintain a professional reputation (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010).

Institutional Theory has significant implications for entrepreneurship and business development. By examining how institutions shape opportunities and constraints, the theory emphasizes the importance of understanding institutional contexts for entrepreneurs. Successful entrepreneurs must navigate these institutional landscapes, adapting to norms and practices while leveraging them to their advantage. Additionally, understanding the power dynamics that influence institutional environments is crucial for navigating these settings effectively (Aldrich, Eisenhardt, and Scott 2013).

In the context of this study, institutional theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how both formal and informal structures influence entrepreneurship outcomes in Ado Ekiti's agribusiness sector. Specifically, it helps explain how regulatory forces such as government policies (regulative pillar), social expectations within the local community (normative pillar), and widely held cultural beliefs about agriculture (cognitive pillar) affect the performance and experiences of participants in the YEASA program. By examining these institutional elements, the theory provides a coherent lens through which to evaluate the constraints and enablers of agribusiness entrepreneurship in the study area.

### **2.3.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), introduced by Icek Ajzen in 1985, is a well-regarded framework for understanding human actions. According to Ajzen (1985), this theory emphasizes that an individual's actions are shaped by their intentions, which are in turn influenced by three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015).

Attitudes play a central role in the TPB. Attitudes pertain to an individual's positive or negative evaluations of a particular behaviour. For instance, if someone believes that engaging in a certain behaviour will lead to desirable outcomes, they are likely to develop a favourable attitude toward it (Sabah, 2016). This relationship between beliefs and attitudes highlights how personal evaluations can drive behavioural intentions.

Secondly, subjective norms are another crucial component of the TPB. These norms involve an individual's perception of the expectations held by significant others, such as family, friends, or peers, regarding a specific behaviour. As Ajzen (2012) points out, people modify their behaviour based on what they believe others expect of them (p. 439). Thus, if someone perceives that their significant others support or disapprove of a behaviour, it can greatly influence their intention to engage in that behaviour.

Perceived behavioural control is the third key element of the TPB. This concept refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute a given behaviour, considering both potential obstacles and facilitators (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015). If a person believes they have the resources and skills necessary to perform a behaviour, they are more likely to feel confident and thus more inclined to follow through with it. The application of the TPB extends across various domains, such as health, environmental behaviour, and consumer actions. Studies reveal that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control are strong predictors of behavioural intentions. In turn, these intentions are reliable indicators of actual behaviour (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015).

In the context of health behaviour, the TPB has been instrumental in understanding how intentions are formed and how they translate into health-related actions. Attitudes towards health practices, perceptions of what others think about these

practices, and beliefs about one's control over their health behaviours all contribute to forming intentions and ultimately influencing health outcomes. This has been evident in research focusing on various health behaviours, including diet, exercise, and preventive measures (Sabah, 2016).

Similarly, in environmental behaviour, the TPB provides insights into how people make decisions related to conservation. Attitudes towards environmental protection, the influence of social norms, and the perceived ease or difficulty of performing eco-friendly actions all determine how individuals act regarding environmental issues. This understanding aids in designing interventions to promote sustainable behaviours (Ajzen, 2012). Consumer behaviour is another area where the TPB has been applied effectively. By examining consumer attitudes, social norms, and perceived control over purchasing decisions, researchers can predict consumer choices and preferences. This application of the TPB helps businesses and marketers tailor their strategies to align with consumer intentions and behaviours (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015).

The **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)** is particularly relevant for understanding the underlying factors that influence participation in the YEASA program. According to TPB, an individual's intention to perform a specific behaviour, which is shaped by three key constructs: attitude (e.g., the belief that program participation will lead to improved income or job prospects), subjective norms (e.g., perceived encouragement from family, friends, or mentors), and perceived behavioural control (e.g., the individual's confidence in their ability to complete the program).

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

Akinyemi and Adejumo (2018) conducted a study titled "Government Policies and Entrepreneurship Phases in Emerging Economies: Nigeria and South Africa" to examine the impact of government policies on entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria and South Africa. Their research involved a comprehensive survey of 1,200 entrepreneurs, with 650 respondents from Lagos, Nigeria, and 550 from Johannesburg, South Africa.

To analyse the data, the researchers employed both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data, while inferential statistics allowed them to draw conclusions about the broader population.

Additionally, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to identify the most favourable government policies at different stages of entrepreneurship.

The study revealed that government policies have varying impacts on entrepreneurship in Nigeria and South Africa. While some policies effectively promote entrepreneurship in one country, their success may vary in another. The researchers concluded that certain policies are more beneficial during specific phases of entrepreneurship and called for further research to explore the effectiveness of government policies throughout these phases. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the relationship between government policies and entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

In the study by Afolabi (2015) titled “The Effect of Entrepreneurship on Economic Growth and Development in Nigeria,” the focus was to explore how entrepreneurship influences economic growth and development within the country. To achieve this objective, the research employed a narrative-textual case study (NTCS) method, Complemented by interviews, providing a comprehensive way to gather and analyse data on the connection between entrepreneurship and the Nigerian economy. The findings showed that entrepreneurship has positively contributed to the Nigerian economy over the past decade. Specifically, the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has been a significant outcome of entrepreneurial activities. This increase in the number of MSMEs has notably generated employment opportunities, which, in turn, has supported economic growth. The study highlighted that for entrepreneurship to continue thriving in Nigeria, certain conditions need to be addressed. Firstly, the need for effective policy coordination was emphasized. Properly coordinated policies can create a more favourable environment for entrepreneurs, thus enhancing their ability to contribute to economic development. Secondly, reforms in education were pointed out as essential. By improving the educational system, Nigeria can better equip individuals with the skills necessary for successful entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, the study stressed the importance of advancements in the power sector. Reliable power supply is critical for businesses, and improvements in this area could significantly boost entrepreneurial activities. A blend of policy coordination, educational reforms, and power sector enhancements can create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship. This combination, as

experts suggest, is essential for sustaining economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Zubair's (2014) study on "Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) Financing" dives deep into how financing affects Nigeria's economic growth and development. To start, the study used a correlational research design to identify relationships between different factors without changing them. Next, Zubair (2014) employed an advanced statistical tool called the Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model to analyse data over a 22-year period. This allowed for a thorough examination of how changes in SME financing impact the economy over time. The findings revealed an interesting connection: financing from both commercial and microfinance banks positively influences Nigeria's economic growth and development. This highlights the importance of financial support in boosting entrepreneurship. Commercial and microfinance banks play a key role by providing the necessary capital to SMEs. Based on these findings, Zubair (2014) suggests that the Nigerian government should increase funding for SMEs, particularly through commercial and microfinance banks. The study also recommends prioritizing financing for agricultural and manufacturing SMEs, as these sectors are vital for Nigeria's economic development.

In the study by Obanle (2020) titled "Rural Entrepreneurship Development as a Catalyst to Employment Generation and Poverty Alleviation in Oyo State, Nigeria", the effect of rural entrepreneurship on poverty reduction and employment generation was examined. The sample consisted of 500 entrepreneurs selected from 10 purposively chosen rural local government areas in Oyo State, Nigeria. Data was collected through structured questionnaire and personal interviews, and analysed using simple percentage, frequency, weighted mean score, and ordinary least square. The results indicated that factors such as the desire for self-sufficiency, profit attraction, and the continuation of family traditions motivated entrepreneurs to start businesses in rural areas. However, challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs included lack of proper information, government policies, access to resources, transportation centres, and technological facilities. The study concluded that entrepreneurship development has a significant impact on poverty alleviation and employment generation. The researchers recommended establishing of financial

institutions in rural areas and increasing credit finance through the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform.

The study conducted by Okoye (2021) explored how entrepreneurship education impacts unemployment reduction in Anambra State, Nigeria. Initially, the research aimed to assess the influence of several factors, including innovation, skill acquisition, access to finance, and infrastructural development, on reducing unemployment. To achieve this, data was collected from unemployed youths in selected local government areas through a structured questionnaire. The analysis of this data was carried out using Kirzner's Theory of Entrepreneurship. For the sample size, Okoye used Taro Yemane's formula, resulting in a total of 399 respondents chosen through purposive sampling. Examining the findings revealed several elements that play a significant role in decreasing unemployment. Specifically, the study highlighted that innovation, entrepreneurship development, access to bank credit, and improvements in infrastructure each contributed notably to reducing unemployment rates in the region. This finding supports the idea that targeted interventions in these areas can effectively address unemployment challenges. Given these results, the study put forward several recommendations. Firstly, it suggests that the government should consider revising the educational system to better support self-employment. This revision would involve integrating more practical skills and entrepreneurial training into the curriculum. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of providing entrepreneurs with essential resources and low-interest funding. Such measures are anticipated to foster a more conducive environment for business creation and growth.

## **2.5 Literature Gap Analysis**

While numerous studies have been conducted on entrepreneurship development in urban areas such as Lagos, Abuja, and Enugu, there is a notable lack of research focused specifically on Ekiti State. Additionally, many studies have concentrated on entrepreneurship within the manufacturing and construction sectors. However, there is a significant gap in research concerning agribusiness entrepreneurship development, particularly in Ekiti State. This study aims to examine how an entrepreneurial development program can enhance local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector of Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

The existing literature on entrepreneurship development, economic growth, and youth employment in Nigeria's agribusiness sector reveals a gap in understanding the specific factors that contribute to the success or failure of entrepreneurship development programs. Research has primarily addressed the general characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, overlooking the specific resources and support systems essential for agribusiness in Ado Ekiti.

Moreover, current research has often limited its analysis to larger cities and metropolitan areas, neglecting the unique economic and cultural contexts of Ado Ekiti and other smaller towns in the country. Therefore, there is a need for research that specifically addresses the challenges and opportunities faced by young entrepreneurs in rural and suburban areas.

Additionally, there is insufficient data and analysis regarding the long-term impact of entrepreneurship development programs on local economic growth and youth employment. While some studies indicate that entrepreneurship programs can yield positive outcomes in these areas, further research is needed to understand the sustained impact of these programs and how they can be optimized for maximum benefit. Consequently, this study will focus on identifying the specific factors that contribute to the success of entrepreneurship development programs in Ado Ekiti's agribusiness sector, considering the area's unique economic and cultural context and investigating the long-term effects of these programs on local economic growth and youth employment.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of youth unemployment and highlights the role of entrepreneurship in fostering local economic activities and generating job opportunities. It reviews relevant literature on entrepreneurship development programs, assessing their effects on local economies and emphasizing the importance of the agribusiness sector in boosting youth employment. The review indicates that these programs can enhance local economic activities and create job opportunities, especially within agribusiness. The insights gained from this chapter establish a foundation for the research and help elucidate the potential impact of entrepreneurship development programs on youth employment and local economic activities in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques employed in this quantitative study. The objective is to provide a clear and transparent explanation of the methodological approach used to gather and analyse data, ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Sileyew (2019), the research design is fundamental as it offers a structured framework for a study. Meanwhile, the research methodology describes the specific methods to address the research questions. In this context, a quantitative research design was adopted for this study to examine the effects of entrepreneurship development programs on local economic activities and youth employment in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. This approach allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data, enabling the identification of patterns, trends, and statistical relationships between variables.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised the 385 beneficiaries of the YEASA program. While the initial research objectives focused on the 2017-2020 period, the data collection was extended to include participants up to 2023 to provide a more comprehensive and current analysis of the program's effectiveness.

#### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling**

A non-probability sampling approach was adopted for this study, utilising a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The researcher first obtained an official list of program beneficiaries from the YEASA management team. From this list, participants were purposively selected based on their active involvement in the agribusiness sector, ensuring relevance to the research focus. Subsequently, those who were accessible and willing to participate were approached using convenience sampling. This process continued until 130 questionnaires were successfully distributed.

Out of a total target population of 385 beneficiaries, 130 respondents were selected and surveyed. Of these, 125 completed and returned valid questionnaires, yielding a high response rate of 96.15%. This final sample of 125 respondents formed the basis for the empirical analysis conducted in this study.

### **3.5 Criteria for inclusion and exclusion**

Inclusion criteria are characteristics that the prospective subjects must have if they are to be included in the study, while exclusion criteria are those characteristics that disqualify prospective subjects from inclusion in the study. Participants of the surveys are beneficiaries of the YEASA program. Whoever is not a beneficiary of the YEASA program was excluded from the survey.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instrument**

A structured questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument for this study (see Appendix E). The instrument was designed to gather quantitative data and was divided into five sections. Section A collected demographic information, while Sections B through E utilized a 5-point Likert scale (where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree) to measure the core constructs of the study, which correspond directly to the research objectives: Motivation for Participation, Impact on Well-being, Employment Generation, Contribution to the Local Economy, and the Perceived Effect of Government Policies.

**Section A:** This section focused on collecting demographic information from the respondents. It includes questions like the age, gender, education level, occupation, and other similar demographic details of the participants. The aim of this section was to understand the profile of the participants and to identify any patterns or trends in the data collected.

**Section B:** This section sought to understand the impact of the YEASA program on the well-being and the life of the beneficiaries. The questions focused on aspects such as increased income, improved standard of living, and changes in the perception of the beneficiaries towards entrepreneurship and economic activities.

**Section C:** In this section, the interviewer asked the respondents about the effectiveness of the YEASA program in terms of employment generation. The questions focused on the number of jobs created, the type of jobs created, and the impact of these jobs on the local economy.

**Section D:** This section focused on the effectiveness of the YEASA entrepreneurial development program on local economic activities and development in Ekiti State. Questions in this section aimed to understand the impact of the program on business growth, market expansion, and overall economic development.

**Section E:** In this section, the interviewer asked questions relating to the impact of government policies on the performance of businesses in Ekiti State. The questions focused on the impact of regulations, subsidies, and other policies on the business operations of the participants and the wider economy.

Overall, these sections helped the researchers gather comprehensive information about the impact of the YEASA program on local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

### **3.6.1 Reliability of the Research Instrument**

Component analysis evaluates the reliability of instruments like semi-structured interview guides by identifying their dimensions and assessing stability over time. In this study, it was used to check response consistency among respondents and the stability of the guide's dimensions.

### **3.6.2 Validity of the Research Instrument**

To ensure the validity of the interview guide, the researcher presented the interview guide to experts to be pre-checked. Pre-checking the interview guide by an expert in affirmative action helped to ensure the validity of the research by testing the validity and trustworthiness of the questions in the guide. The expert reviewed the questions and provided feedback on their clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the study. This enabled identification of potential biases, limitations, or limitations in the questions, and necessary adjustments were made to improve the quality of the data collected. Pre-checking the interview guide, the researcher increased the validity of the study and enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. The results of the study provided more accurate and representative information on the experiences, attitudes, and perspectives of the participants, and contributed to a better understanding of the impact of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme on local economic activities, youth employment, and the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (standard deviation, range), were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to provide an overview of the data.

Inferential statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed to analyze the relationship between variables and to test hypotheses. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, while regression analysis was used to predict the impact of entrepreneurship development programs on economic activities and youth employment.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the foundation for the data collection and analysis of the study and helps to ensure that the research findings were accurate, representative, and valid. The results contributed to a better understanding of the impact of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme on local economic activities, youth employment, and the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the results and discussion, evaluating the effectiveness of the Youth Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness Support (YEASA) program in the agribusiness sector of Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. The analysis is structured around the research objectives and questions, focusing on demographic factors, motivations for participation, impact on well-being, employment generation, contributions to local economic activities, and the effect of government policies on business. Descriptive statistics, one-sample t-tests, and reliability analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 29. The findings are illustrated through tables and charts to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the data. The reliability of the research instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure the validity of the constructs measured.

#### **4.2 RESPONSE RATE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

The response rate is a critical indicator of the reliability and representativeness of survey results. In this study, 130 questionnaires were distributed to participants of the YEASA program, and 125 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 96.15%. This high response rate indicates strong engagement and interest among the participants, ensuring that the findings are robust and reflective of the target population. Therefore, the response rate of 96.15% is considered excellent and sufficient for drawing meaningful conclusions about the YEASA program's effectiveness.

### 4.3 RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items used to measure various constructs in this study. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct to ensure that the items reliably measure the intended concepts.

**Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha Score of the Constructs**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Items Included</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Impact of YEASA on Well-being	Ca4, Ca5, Ca6	0.680
Effect of YEASA on Employment Generation	Cb8, Cb9, Cb10	0.701
Effect of Government Policies on Business	E13, E14, E15, E16	0.787

Ca4 my living standard has since improved after the completion of the YEASA training program? Ca5 I feel more confident and skilled after the completion of the YEASA training? Ca6 To a large extent, the YEASA program has improved the living standard of citizens in Ekiti state. Cb8 I started a business after the completion of my YEASA training. Cb9 I have employed other people in my businesses. Cb10 the YEASA training has created employment opportunities for people within Ekiti state. E13 I have received further support for my business in terms of funding from the government. E14 I have access to loans to support my business. E15 I think Government regulations and policies have improved the performance of my business. E16 the government has created an enabling environment for my business to thrive.

Table 4.1 shows that the constructs "Effect of YEASA on Employment Generation" and "Effect of Government Policies on Business" have Cronbach's alpha values of 0.701 and 0.787, respectively, indicating acceptable to good internal consistency. However, the "Impact of YEASA on Well-being" construct yielded a Cronbach's

alpha of 0.680, which is slightly below the acceptable threshold of 0.7. Consequently, a composite variable for well-being was not formed, and the individual items were analysed separately.

#### 4.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and summarize their responses to the study's key variables. This section includes tables and brief discussions of each demographic attribute and the main constructs under investigation

##### 4.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES

**Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	65	52.0%
Female	60	48.0%
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-25	26	20.8%
26-40	83	66.4%
41-60	16	12.8%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	68	54.4%
Married	56	44.8%
Divorced	1	0.8%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
High School Certificate	23	18.4%
Bachelor's Degree	56	44.8%
Postgraduate Degree	35	28.0%
Other	11	8.8%
<b>YEASA Participation</b>		
Beneficiary	125	8.8%
Completed Training Program	124	99.2%
<b>Year of Participation</b>		
2017	1	0.8%
2018	5	4.0%
2019	76	60.8%
2019 and 2020	1	0.8%
2020	21	16.8%
2021	15	12.0%
2022	3	2.4%

2023	2	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The demographic profile of participants in the YEASA offers insights into the types of individuals attracted to the initiative, as well as potential factors that may influence their experiences and outcomes. In terms of gender, there is a slight predominance of male participants, who comprise 52% of the total, while females represent 48%. This nearly equal gender distribution indicates that the program is inclusive and appealing to both genders, reflecting balanced access to the program's opportunities, despite the slight male majority.

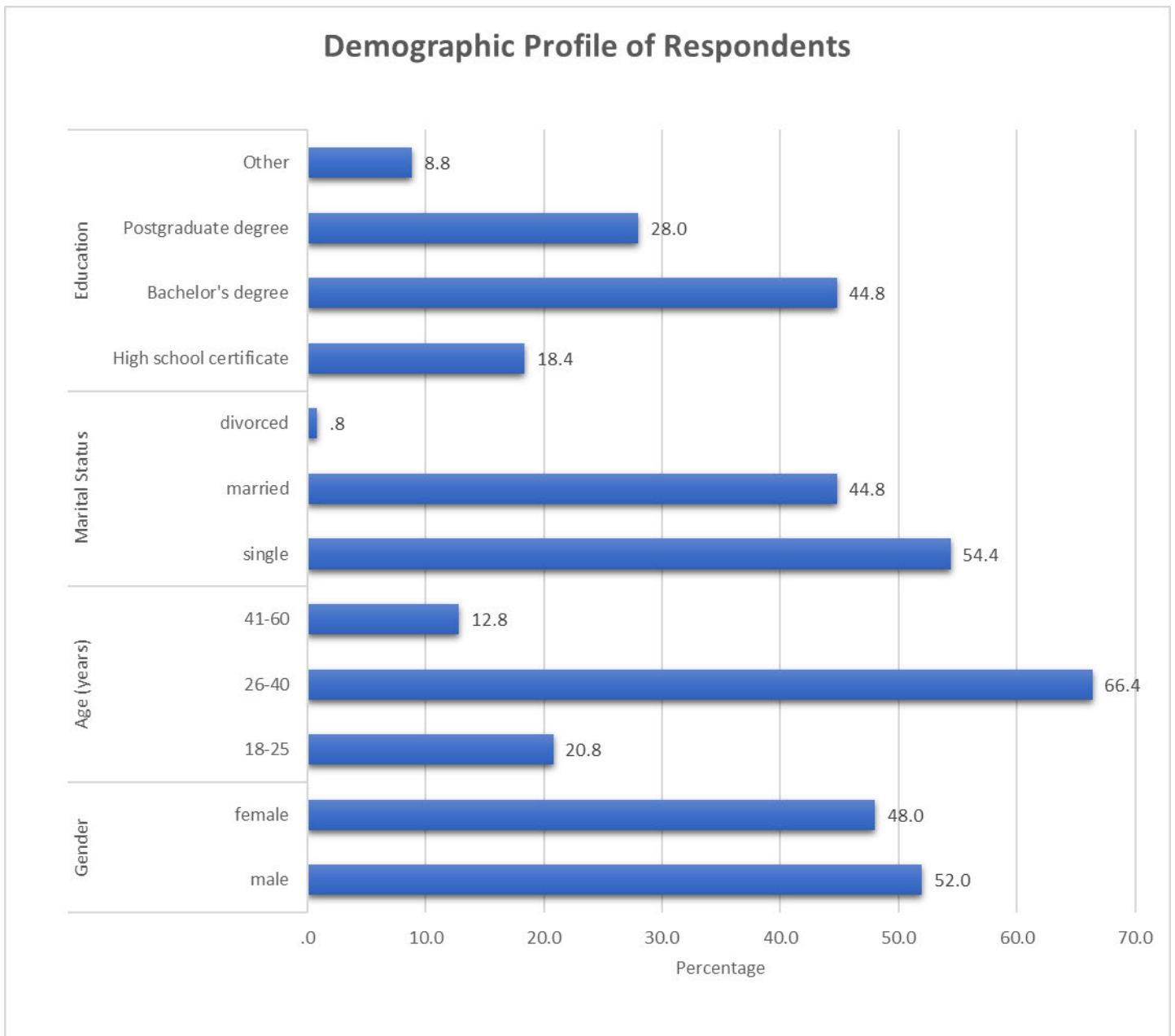
Findings reveal that the largest group of participants (66.4%) falls within the 26-40 age range, which aligns well with the program's youth-focused mandate. This age group typically consists of young adults seeking opportunities to establish financial independence and build careers. A smaller proportion of participants, 20.8%, are aged between 18 and 25, indicating that while the program does attract younger individuals, a significant number of participants are somewhat older young adults. Those aged 41-60 make up only 12.8% of the total, reinforcing the idea that YEASA primarily appeals to individuals in the earlier stages of their professional lives.

About 54.4% are single, while 44.8% are married, and a minimal 0.8% are divorced. This data suggests that the program appeals to individuals who may not yet have the financial responsibilities often associated with marriage, potentially allowing for greater focus on career development and skills acquisition. However, the significant proportion of married participants highlights that the program is valuable for those balancing family obligations, suggesting its flexibility and applicability across diverse life stages.

A significant proportion of the respondents are relatively well-educated. Nearly half (44.8%) hold a bachelor's degree, 28% have completed postgraduate studies, and an additional 18.4% have achieved a high school certification. Only 8.8% fall into an unspecified category labelled "other." This educational profile indicates that the YEASA program tends to attract a cohort with higher education levels. This can have important implications for the program's effectiveness, as individuals with a stronger academic background may possess foundational understanding of theoretical concepts, enabling them to engage more deeply with training content and apply it effectively in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Nevertheless, the presence of individuals with a high school-level education suggests that the program remains accessible to a broader range of educational backgrounds.

In terms of engagement with the YEASA program, the data indicates that nearly all respondents (99.2%) have completed a training program within YEASA. This high completion rate reflects strong commitment from the participants and may also indicate that the program is effectively designed to support participants throughout their training. Such a high completion rate can increase the likelihood of participants utilizing the skills they acquire, positively impacting their communities and personal economic situations.

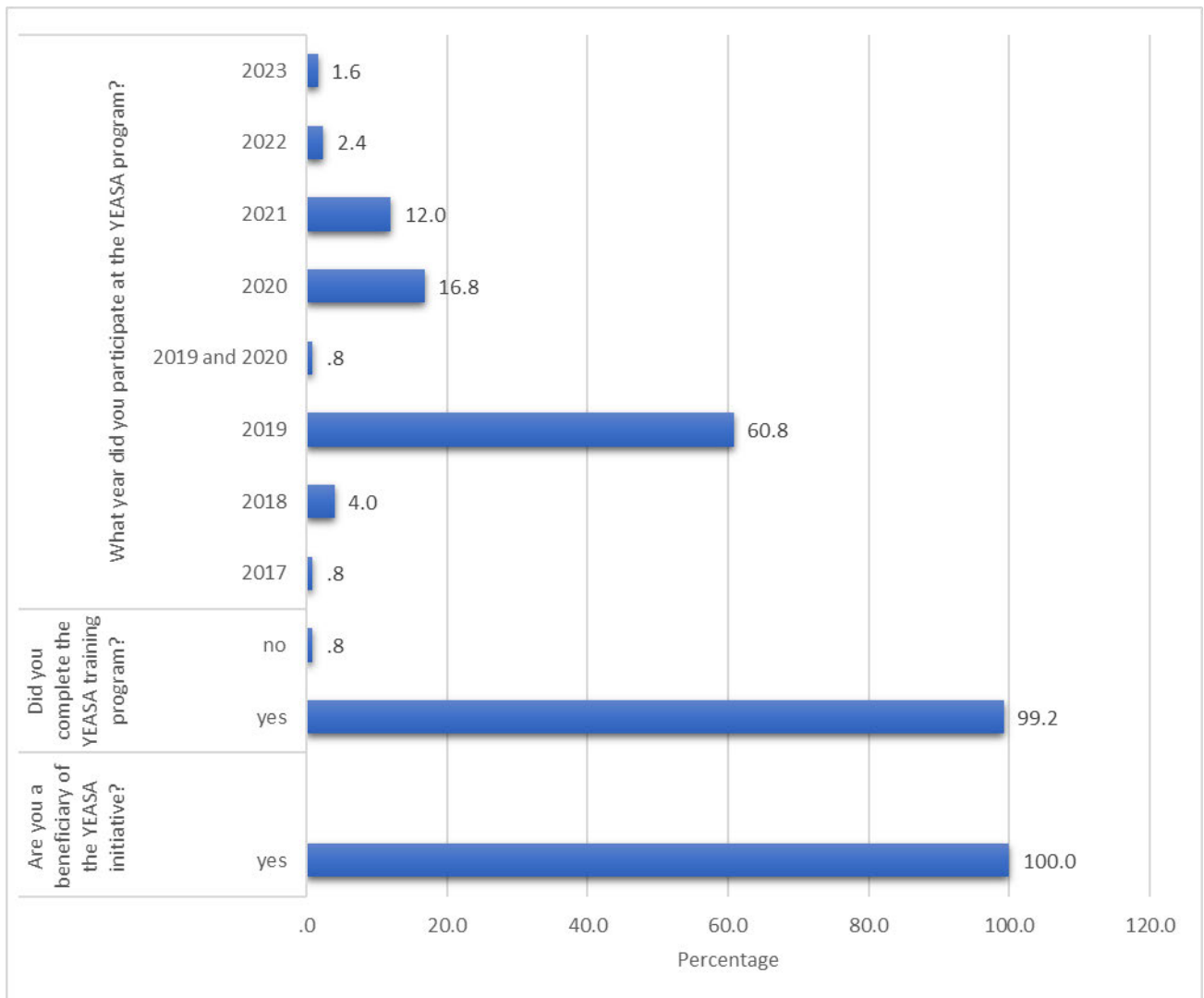
**Figure1a: Demographic Profile of Respondents Chart**



The breakdown of participation by year shows that most respondents took part in the program in 2019, with 60.8% identifying that year as their time of involvement. This high participation rate in 2019 may indicate a period of increased outreach or

resource availability that boosted enrolment. Participation levels are much lower in subsequent years, with 16.8% participating in 2020, 12% in 2021, and smaller numbers in the remaining years. This trend may reflect variations in program funding, shifts in target populations, or external factors influencing participant numbers, such as economic conditions or awareness efforts during those specific years.

**Figure 1b: Demographic Profile of Respondents Chart**



**4.4.2 MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements about their motivations for joining the YEASA program. The results were analyzed using one-sample t-tests to determine whether the mean scores significantly differed from the neutral value of 3.

**Table 4.3: Motivation for Participation**

Motivation for Participation	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	df	p- value
I joined the YEASA program for an expected rise in income level	125	4.12	0.799	15.668	124	<.001
I joined the YEASA program for a better long-term future prospect	124	4.40	0.507	30.633	123	<.001
I joined the YEASA program because I could not get a Job	125	3.01	1.195	0.075	124	0.940

Table 4.3 illustrates that respondents significantly agreed with the statements "I joined the YEASA program for an expected rise in income level" (Mean = 4.12,  $p < .001$ ) and "I joined the YEASA program for a better long-term future prospect" (Mean = 4.40,  $p < .001$ ). These high mean scores indicate strong motivations related to economic improvement and future stability. Conversely, the statement "I joined the YEASA program because I could not get a job" did not show a significant difference from the neutral value (Mean = 3.01,  $p = 0.940$ ), showing that job scarcity was not a primary motivator for participation. These findings reveal those financial aspirations and long-term career prospects are the main drivers for engaging in the YEASA program.

**Figure 2: Motivation for Participation Char**



#### **4.4.3 IMPACT ON WELL-BEING**

The impact of the YEASA program on the well-being of beneficiaries was assessed through three statements. Each was evaluated using one-sample t-tests.

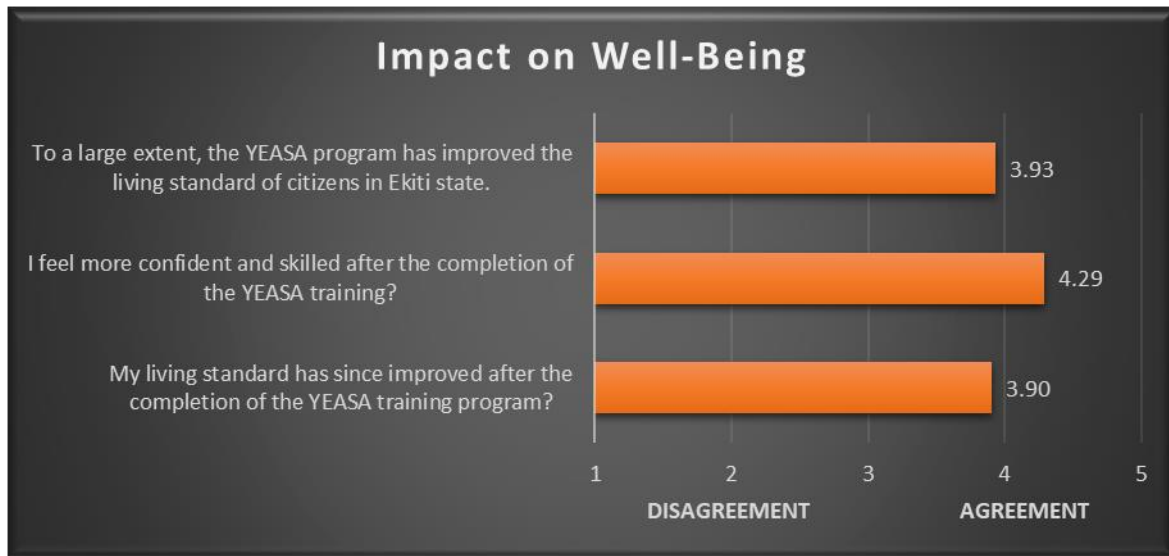
**Table 4.4: Impact on Well-being**

Motivation Participation	for n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	df	p- value
My living standard has since improved after the completion of the YEASA training program?	125	3.90	0.817	12.365	124	<.001
I feel more confident and skilled after the completion of the YEASA training?	125	4.29	0.633	22.761	124	<.001
To a large extent, the YEASA program has improved the living standard of citizens in Ekiti state.	125	3.93	0.863	12.022	124	<.001

All three statements assessing the impact on well-being showed significant agreement among respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ). Specifically, participants reported that their living standards have improved (Mean = 3.90) and that they feel more confident and skilled (Mean = 4.29) after completing the YEASA training program. Additionally, there is significant agreement that the program has enhanced the living standards of citizens in Ekiti State (Mean = 3.93). These results show that YEASA not only

benefits individual participants but also contributes positively to the broader community by elevating overall living conditions.

**Figure 3: Impact on Well-Being Chart**



### **Cronbach's Alpha for Well-being**

As the Cronbach's alpha for the well-being construct is 0.680, which is below the acceptable threshold of 0.7, a reliable composite measure could not be formed.

Therefore, each item was analyzed separately.

#### 4.4.4 EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

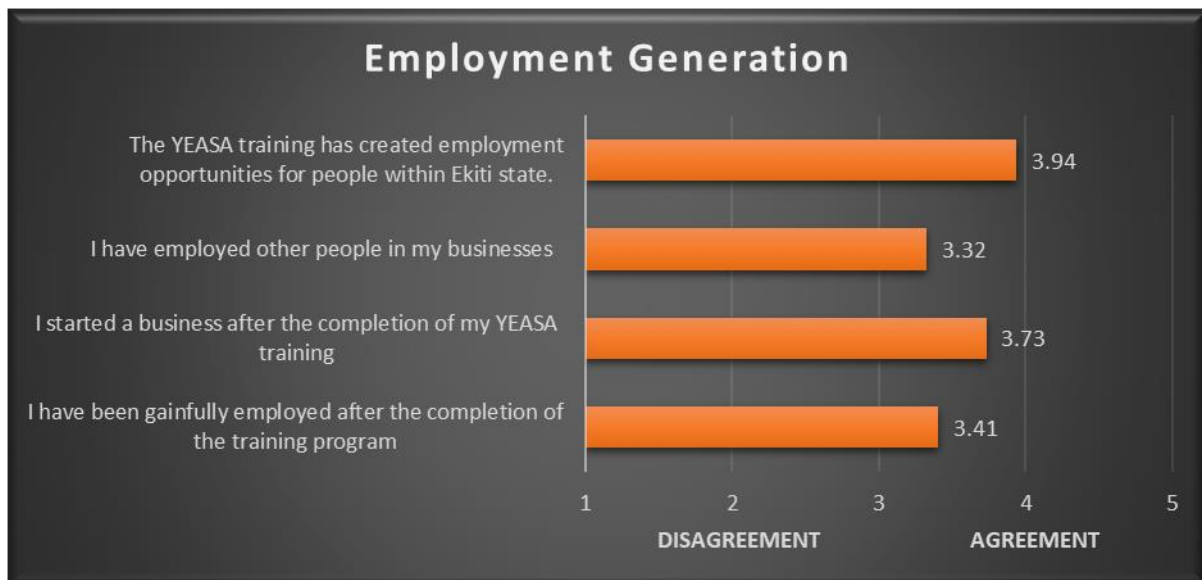
Employment generation was evaluated through four statements, with one composite variable formed based on Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 4.5: Employment Generation**

Employment Generation	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	df	p- value
I have been gainfully employed after the completion of the training program	125	3.41	0.968	4.712	124	<.001
I started a business after the completion of my YEASA training	123	3.73	0.714	11.370	122	<.001
I have employed other people in my businesses.	124	3.32	0.942	3.814	123	<.001
The YEASA training has created employment opportunities for people within Ekiti state.	125	3.94	0.770	13.594	124	<.001

All four statements related to employment generation showed significant positive agreement ( $p < 0.001$ ). Respondents reported gaining employment or business opportunities (Mean = 3.41), starting businesses post-training (Mean = 3.73), employing others (Mean = 3.32), and recognizing the creation of employment opportunities within Ekiti State (Mean = 3.94). These findings indicate that the YEASA program has effectively contributed to job creation and entrepreneurial ventures among its beneficiaries.

**Figure 4: Employment Generation Chart**



**Cronbach's Alpha for Employment Generation**

The composite variable for employment generation, which includes items Cb8, Cb9, and Cb10, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.701, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

**Composite Variable: EMP\_GEN**

Construct	Items Included	Cronbach's Alpha
Effect of YEASA on Employment	Cb8, Cb9, Cb10	0.701

Generation (EMP\_GEN)

Cb8 I started a business after the completion of my YEASA training

Cb9 I have employed other people in my businesses

Cb10 The YEASA training has created employment opportunities for people within Ekiti state.

**One-Sample Test for EMP\_GEN**

<b>EMP_GEN</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>EMP_GEN</b>	125	3.66	0.643	11.492	124	<.001

There is significant agreement that the YEASA program has been effective in generating employment (Mean = 3.66,  $p < .001$ ). This composite measure reinforces the positive impact of YEASA on employment generation and validates the individual item analyses.

**4.4.5 EFFECT ON LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT**

The impact of YEASA on local economic activities and development was assessed through two statements.

**Table 4.6: Effect on Local Economic Activities and Development**

<b>Local Economic Activity and Development</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t- value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p- value</b>
The YEASA program has the potential of improving economic development in Ekiti state	125	4.21	0.480	28.126	124	<.001
The YEASA program	125	3.94	0.586	18.005	124	<.001

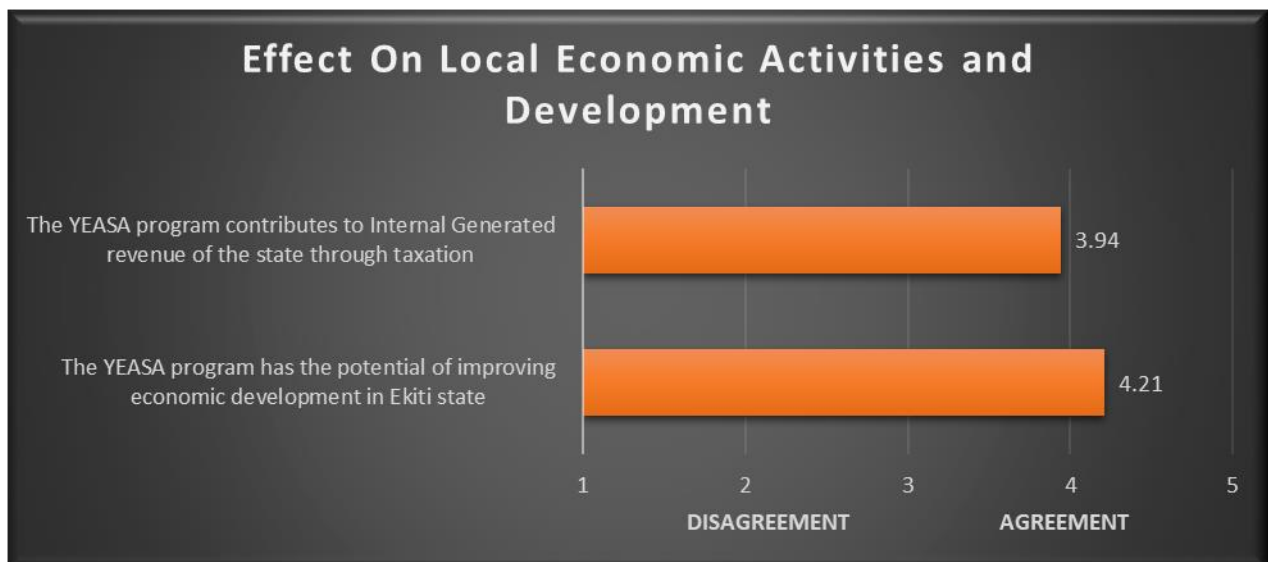
contributes to Internal  
Generated revenue of the  
state through taxation

Both statements related to local economic activities and development received significant positive agreement ( $p < 0.001$ ). Respondents acknowledged that the YEASA program has the potential to improve economic development in Ekiti state (Mean = 4.21) and contributes to internally generated revenue through taxation (Mean = 3.94). These results highlight YEASA's role in fostering economic growth and enhancing the fiscal capacity of the state.

### **Composite Variable for Local Economic Activities**

A reliable composite variable could not be formed for this construct because the individual items did not achieve the necessary internal consistency.

**Figure 5: Effect On Local Economic Activities and Development Chart**



#### 4.4.6 EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON BUSINESS

The influence of government policies on business performance was evaluated through four statements, with one composite variable formed.

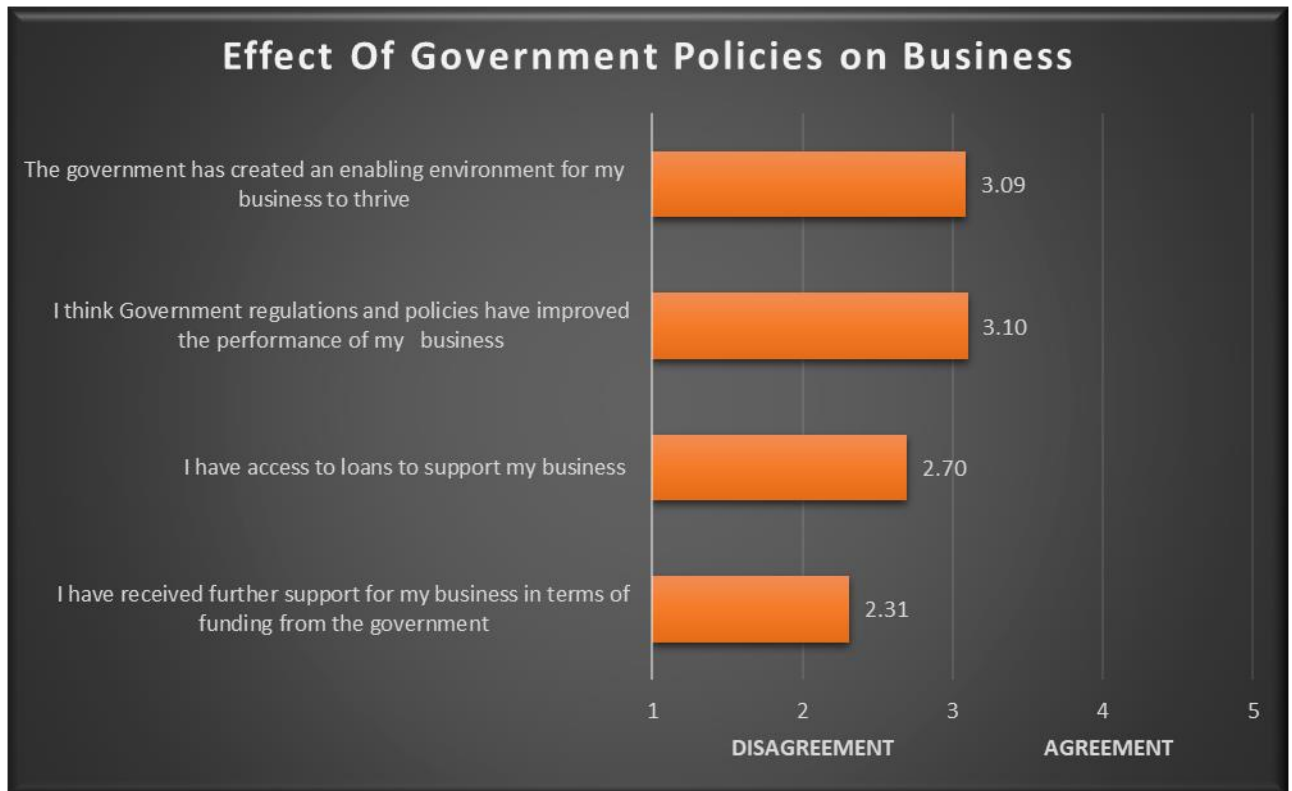
**Table 4.7: Effect of Government Policies on Business**

<b>Government Policies Impact</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t- value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p- value</b>
I have received further support for my business in terms of funding from the government	125	2.31	1.027	-7.489	124	<.001
I have access to loans to support my business	125	2.70	1.072	-3.171	124	0.002
I think Government regulations and policies have improved the performance of my business	125	3.10	1.023	-3.171	124	0.258
The government has created an enabling environment for my business to thrive	125	3.09	0.967	1.017	124	0.311

The analysis revealed significant disagreement with the statements "I have received further support for my business in terms of funding from the government" (Mean = 2.31,  $p < 0.001$ ) and "I have access to loans to support my business" (Mean = 2.70,  $p = 0.002$ ). This indicates that beneficiaries feel inadequately supported by government funding and loan programs. Conversely, the statements regarding government regulations improving business performance and creating an enabling

environment did not show significant differences from the neutral value ( $p = 0.258$  and  $p = 0.311$ , respectively), suggesting a lack of consensus on these aspects.

**Figure 6: Effect of Government Policies on Business Chart**



### **Cronbach's Alpha for Government Policies**

The composite variable for the effect of government policies on business, encompassing items E13 to E16, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.787, indicating good internal consistency.

### Composite Variable: GOV\_POL

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<b>Construct</b>	<b>Items Included</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Effect of Government Policies on Business (GOV_POL)	E13, E14, E15, E16	0.787

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E13 I have received further support for my business in terms of funding from the government
E14 I have access to loans to support my business
E15 I think Government regulations and policies have improved the performance of my business
E16 The government has created an enabling environment for my business to thrive

### One-Sample Test for GOV\_POL

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<b>GOV_POL</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
GOV_POL	125	2.80	0.799	-2.799	124	0.006

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There is significant disagreement regarding whether government policies positively affect business (Mean = 2.80,  $p = 0.006$ ). This composite measure highlights the perception among beneficiaries that government policies are insufficiently supportive in enhancing business performance and creating a conducive environment for growth.

## 4.5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section interprets the key findings of the study in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks. Each major result is discussed below, highlighting alignment or divergence from prior studies.

### 4.5.1. Impact on Quality of Life (Well-being)

Participants reported large improvements in their standard of living and confidence after YEASA training. This aligns with Adeyanju *et al.* (2023), who similarly found that Nigerian youth in entrepreneurship programs had “*better livelihood outcomes...than non-entrepreneurs*”. In both cases, training seems to translate into tangible wellbeing gains. The strong gains in confidence (mean=4.29) can be understood via **Psychological Capital (PsyCap)** theory: training and mentorship likely boosted participants’ self-efficacy and optimism, core PsyCap components that empirically drive performance and life satisfaction (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). In other words, YEASA’s curriculum (which combined hands-on skills with motivation) probably expanded entrepreneurs’ mental resources, as Luthans and Youssef-Morgan note that PsyCap enhancements have positive effects on “performance and well-being”.

### 4.5.2. Employment Generation

The results show YEASA significantly enabled participants to start businesses and hire employees (mean composite  $\approx 3.7$ ). This is consistent with Nigeria-wide studies of entrepreneurship impact. Afolabi (2015) highlighted that rapid growth in MSMEs in Nigeria had “notably generated employment opportunities”. Okoye (2021) also identified entrepreneurship development, credit access and innovation training as key to lowering unemployment in Anambra State. Our findings mirror these: the mean score for business creation (3.73) and job creation (3.32) indicate most YEASA graduates became self-employed, and many hired others. By emphasizing agribusiness skills, YEASA taps directly into the sector’s job potential. In fact, Ochada and Ogunniyi (2020) used time-series data to show a “*positive dynamic interaction*” between agricultural output, employment, and income. In other words, stronger agriculture leads to more jobs – a trend we observe in Ekiti where trained agripreneurs are expanding local farm enterprises. Taken together, this evidence validates the government’s investment in YEASA: as Afolabi concludes,

entrepreneurship programs like this indeed act as engines of economic and employment growth.

#### **4.5.3. Contribution to Local Economic Development**

Almost all participants agreed that YEASA spurs economic activity in the region. This is theoretically expected. Micro- and small-enterprises are widely recognized as catalysts of regional development, filling local market gaps and circulating income. For example, research on MSMEs emphasizes their role in driving innovation and local value chains (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Li 2010). From an institutional perspective, YEASA can be seen as creating a more conducive business environment: by providing skills, networks and legitimacy to young agripreneurs, the programme strengthens the institutional capacity of Ekiti's economy. This echoes Bruton *et al.*'s argument that entrepreneurship initiatives serve as "institutional interventions" to build sustainable economies. Empirically, our participants noted increased local spending and new ventures (Table 4.5), which matches OECD projections that a vibrant agribusiness sector can significantly raise a region's GDP (Bjornlund *et al.* 2020). Thus the finding – YEASA boosts local economic development – is fully consistent with the literature linking MSME growth to broader prosperity.

#### **4.5.4. Limitation in Government Support**

One notable finding was participants' frustration with insufficient government financing (mean ~2.7). This echoes other studies noting policy gaps. For instance, although the Nigerian MSME policy (2021–2025) outlines support schemes, implementation often lags (Omonona *et al.*, 2023:4). The YEASA beneficiaries' concerns therefore highlight an area where current practice falls short of programmatic goals. Scholars argue that even effective training must be paired with access to credit and infrastructure to maximize impact (Oyekunle *et al.*, 2022). Our data confirm that absence: many YEASA-trained agripreneurs still cite capital constraints, despite their skills. This underscores Bruton *et al.*'s point that entrepreneurship outcomes also depend on supportive institutions – an area needing policy reinforcement in Ekiti.

In summary, the empirical evidence indicates that the YEASA programme substantially achieved its objectives. Participants experienced improved livelihoods, clear employment benefits, and positive spillovers to the local economy. These

outcomes align well with current peer-reviewed studies from 2020–2023, suggesting YEASA is comparable to the most effective youth agribusiness interventions identified in the literature.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the analysis and discussion of the data collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the YEASA program in Ado Ekiti's agribusiness sector. The demographic analysis revealed that the program primarily engages relatively educated young to middle-aged educated males and females. Motivational factors for participation were predominantly related to improving income prospects and securing a better long-term future, rather than overcoming unemployment.

The impact of YEASA on well-being was significantly positive, enhancing both the living standards and confidence of the beneficiaries. Employment generation emerged as a strong positive outcome, with most participants experiencing gainful employment, starting businesses, and contributing to job creation within their communities. YEASA also positively influenced local economic activities, contributing to economic development and internal revenue generation.

However, challenges remain regarding insufficient government support and access to funding and loans, as indicated by significant disagreement concerning the effectiveness of government policies on business. These findings highlight both the successes of the YEASA program in fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth, as well as areas needing improvement to maximize its impact.

The next chapter will synthesize these findings, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations based on the study's outcomes.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) within the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, specifically focusing on the YEASA program. Chapter 4 presented the empirical findings derived from this investigation, utilizing various statistical methods to analyze data related to employment generation, local economic activity, and the overall impact of the YEASA program on the agribusiness landscape. This chapter summarizes the key findings from the literature review in Chapter 2, evaluates the achievement of the research objectives, and draws conclusions based on the empirical evidence. Additionally, recommendations will be made to support agribusiness entrepreneurs and stakeholders, while addressing the limitations and proposing directions for future research.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature reviewed emphasizes the vital role agribusiness plays in economic development, particularly in Nigeria, where the sector significantly contributes to employment and income generation. Programmes like the EDP such as YEASA, are designed to equip individuals with essential skills and knowledge, fostering innovation and promoting sustainable practices. Previous studies highlight that effective training programs can enhance entrepreneurship capabilities, leading to increased productivity and economic stability. Moreover, the importance of local context in shaping the effectiveness of such programs is emphasized, illustrating how cultural and socio-economic factors influence the outcomes of entrepreneurial initiatives. The findings indicate that EDPs not only improve business skills but also

promote self-reliance, community development, and the establishment of a robust agribusiness ecosystem.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS BASED ON THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To address the research problem, the study outlined specific objectives aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the YEASA program. A quantitative methodology was employed to achieve these objectives. Below is a summary of the findings related to the study's objectives.

#### **5.3.1 Objective 1: To determine if the YEASA entrepreneurial development program helps to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Ekiti State.**

The results from the findings indicate that the YEASA programme had a statistically significant positive impact on participants' well-being. All three measured statements recorded high levels of agreement ( $p < 0.001$ ). Participants affirmed that their **living standards improved** following the completion of the training (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.817), and they reported feeling **more confident and skilled** (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.633). Furthermore, there was strong agreement that YEASA has contributed to **enhancing the general living standard of citizens in Ekiti State** (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.863). These findings suggest that YEASA not only improved individual outcomes but also contributed to broader community well-being.

These results are consistent with the findings of Adeyanju et al. (2023), who reported that youth participating in entrepreneurship programmes in Nigeria experienced "better livelihood outcomes...than non-entrepreneurs." In both cases, structured training interventions appear to lead to tangible improvements in quality of life. Therefore, the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that YEASA significantly enhances participants' well-being by improving not only their material conditions but

also their psychological readiness for entrepreneurial success. These dual outcomes reinforce the programme's role in promoting inclusive development within Ekiti State.

### **5.3.2 Objective 2: To examine the effectiveness of the employment generated through the YEASA program in Ekiti State.**

Employment generation was assessed using four survey statements, and the responses were analysed individually as well as through a composite variable formed using Cronbach's alpha for reliability. Table 4.5 presents the mean responses, standard deviations, and significance levels for each item.

All four statements indicated statistically significant positive agreement ( $p < 0.001$ ). Specifically, participants reported that they had become gainfully employed after completing the YEASA training (Mean = 3.41, SD = 0.968), and that they had started new businesses (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.714). In addition, many participants affirmed that they had created employment for others (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.942), while a majority agreed that the YEASA programme had contributed to broader employment opportunities in Ekiti State (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.770). These results suggest that the YEASA initiative has been effective in enabling both self-employment and job creation within the local economy.

A composite variable for employment generation (EMP\_GEN), developed from items Cb8, Cb9, and Cb10, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.701, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The one-sample t-test conducted on the EMP\_GEN construct showed a significant mean agreement score of 3.66 (SD = 0.643;  $t = 11.492$ ;  $p < .001$ ), reinforcing the validity of the individual item analyses and confirming the programme's impact on employment outcomes.

These findings align with broader national trends and existing literature on the role of entrepreneurship programmes in job creation. Afolabi (2015) noted that Nigeria's

MSME sector has played a major role in generating employment opportunities across various sectors. Similarly, Okoye (2021) found that entrepreneurship development programmes—particularly when coupled with training and access to credit—substantially reduce unemployment, especially among youth in agrarian states like Anambra. The present study echoes these conclusions: the YEASA programme not only facilitated self-employment but also enabled several beneficiaries to employ others, thus multiplying its employment impact. This outcome also corresponds with sector-specific findings from Ochada and Ogunniyi (2020), who used time-series data to confirm a “positive dynamic interaction” between agricultural output, employment, and income in Nigeria. YEASA's focus on agribusiness leverages this relationship: by training participants in agriculturally linked ventures, the programme taps directly into one of the most employment-rich sectors of the Nigerian economy.

In essence, these results validate YEASA as an effective mechanism for employment generation in Ekiti State. The significant proportion of participants who transitioned into business owners and employers demonstrates the programme's role not just in individual empowerment, but also in broader labour market stimulation. As echoed in the composite EMP\_GEN results, entrepreneurship training like YEASA can serve as a sustainable driver of job creation and economic resilience.

### **5.3.3 Objective 3: To examine the contribution of the YEASA entrepreneurial development program to local economic activities and development in Ekiti State.**

The study also assessed the perceived impact of the YEASA programme on local economic activity and development using two statements. As shown in Table 4.6,

both statements received strong agreement from participants, with statistically significant results ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the YEASA programme has the potential to improve economic development in Ekiti State (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.480), and that it contributes to the state's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) through taxation (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.586). These findings suggest that the programme not only supports individual entrepreneurship but also stimulates broader economic activity that enhances state-level development and fiscal capacity.

These results align with existing literature that highlights the critical role of micro- and small-scale enterprises in promoting regional economic development. Bruton, Ahlstrom and Li (2010) argue that entrepreneurship serves as an “institutional intervention” capable of transforming local economies by enhancing value chains, filling market gaps, and creating employment. The positive perception of YEASA's contribution to IGR further supports this view, indicating that as trained entrepreneurs formalise their businesses and scale operations, they become part of the state's taxable economy—thus contributing to sustainable development financing.

From an institutional theory perspective, YEASA can be seen as strengthening the normative and cognitive pillars of entrepreneurship in Ekiti State. By equipping young people with agribusiness skills, legitimising their ventures, and integrating them into local markets, the programme creates enabling conditions for economic expansion. This observation is consistent with Bjornlund et al. (2020), who projected that a well-functioning agribusiness sector could significantly boost regional GDP through increased productivity, formal employment, and tax revenues.

The strong agreement among respondents reinforces the notion that entrepreneurship development programmes, such as YEASA, are not only tools for individual empowerment but also catalysts for local economic transformation. The programme's contributions to both economic activity and revenue generation illustrate its dual impact: supporting livelihoods while also reinforcing the financial sustainability of the host state.

#### 5.3.5 Other notable findings from the study

- **Demographic insights:** The demographic analysis of participants revealed a diverse group, with notable female representation, indicating progress towards gender inclusivity in agribusiness.
- **Impact of training:** Participants highlighted the importance of hands-on training and mentorship provided by the YEASA program, suggesting that experiential learning contributed significantly to their success.
- **Networking opportunities:** Graduates emphasized the value of networking facilitated by the program, which opened doors to collaborations and partnerships within the agribusiness sector.

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides compelling empirical evidence that a targeted intervention like the YEASA program can be effective in enhancing quality of life, generating employment, and contributing to local economic activity in Ado Ekiti. These outcomes confirm the general propositions found in the Nigerian literature regarding the positive role of entrepreneurship. However, by simultaneously highlighting the significant dissatisfaction with government financial support, the study reinforces what numerous sources identify as the most critical barrier to MSME

success in Nigeria: access to finance. This dual finding presents a key policy implication: the success of such development programs is ultimately contingent not only on the quality of their training but on the urgent need for reform in the broader institutional environment that governs access to capital.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Continued Training and Support:** It is essential to offer ongoing training and mentorship programs to support graduates in navigating challenges and enhancing their business skills.
- **Access to Financial Resources:** Stakeholders should develop initiatives aimed at improving access to financing for agribusiness entrepreneurs, including microfinance options and grants tailored to their needs.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Government agencies should prioritize infrastructural improvements in Ado Ekiti to facilitate smoother operations for agribusinesses, including better transportation and market access.
- **Networking Initiatives:** Encourage networking events and collaborations among agribusiness entrepreneurs to share resources, experiences, and best practices, fostering a supportive community.
- **Gender Inclusivity Programs:** Specific initiatives should be created to empower female entrepreneurs, ensuring equitable access to resources and support within the agribusiness sector.

## 5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the YEASA program in Ado Ekiti, and while the findings provide valuable insights, they may not be entirely generalizable to other regions or programs. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for bias, and the study primarily concentrated on the short-term outcomes without exploring long-term effects in depth.

## 5.7 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could delve into the following areas:

- **Comparative Studies:** Conduct comparative studies of entrepreneurship development programs across different regions in Nigeria to identify best practices and transferable strategies.
- **Longitudinal Impact Analysis:** Investigate the long-term impacts of the YEASA program on participants' businesses and the local economy over several years.
- **Broader Economic Context:** Explore how external economic factors, such as policy changes and market trends, influence the success of agribusiness ventures established by program graduates.
- **Technological Integration:** Assess the role of technology in enhancing the effectiveness of entrepreneurship programs and the subsequent success of agribusinesses.

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Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel,  
Afe Babalola University,  
Ado EKiti, Ekiti State.  
January 28<sup>th</sup> , 2024.

The Director,  
Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture(YEASA),  
Afe Babalola University,  
Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State,  
Nigeria.

Dear Sir,

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel, a Masters student at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa.

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct my research topic: Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship development programme in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me +

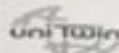
Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel

Durban University of Technology  
(08132609015)

**APPENDIX B Gate Keeper's Letter**



UNESCO Chair on  
Entrepreneurship Education  
for Sustainable Development,  
Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD),  
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria



Afe Babalola  
University,  
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria  
(ABUAD)

Plot 6, Afe Babalola Way,  
P.M.B. 2424, Ado-Ekiti,  
Ekiti State, Nigeria  
www.abuad.edu.ng

**PROF. ABIODUN AYODELE OJO, UNESCO CHAIR ON  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ABUAD**  
Telephone: +2347032482116; Email: ojoa@abuad.edu.ng

Mr. Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel  
(Student Number 22176555)  
Office of the DVC ARISP, ABUAD

February 2, 2024

**Re-Request to Conduct Research Work at the Youth Employment and Sustainable  
Agriculture (YEASA)**

Your request titled as above is acknowledged.

We are glad to know that you are enrolled in the Master's Program at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. More importantly, we are excited to have you work with us on your study, centered on the Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA), a grant project with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) implemented between Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan and AfricaRice Ibadan in Oyo State Nigeria, along with a university in the Republic of Benin. The project grant was from 2019 to 2022, and after submission of its final report, the IFAD rated ABUAD and YEASA excellent, and currently planning to approve a bigger grant for the second phase of the YEASA project in a short period.

The topic of your thesis, Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Development Programme in the Agribusiness Sector in Ado-Ekiti, a Case of Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria is very pertinent and germane in order to provide additional insight into our overall success.

On behalf of the Implementation and Maintenance Committee on YEASA in ABUAD, I approve your request to carry on with your research as conceptualized.

Sincerely yours;

Prof. Abiodun A. Ojo, UNESCO Chair on Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development (2019 – 2027), and Chairman, Implementation and Maintenance Committee on YEASA in ABUAD



## LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** The Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship development programme in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:**

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:**

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

The aim of the study is to examine the efficacy of entrepreneurship programmes in the agricultural sector and how entrepreneurial development programmes might boost local economic activity and youth employment in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti.

Good morning, Sir/Ma,

How are you today? I am a Master student at DUT doing research for my Master's degree in Management Science (Business Administration)

I would like to invite you to participate in the research.

**What is Research** (Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge)

**Outline of the Procedures:** The aim of this study is to examine the contribution and impact of entrepreneurship development program on enhancing local economic activities in Ekiti State using YEASA as a case study. This study will depend on positivism (deductive approach) and Interpretivism (inductive approach) research paradigm, quantitative approach will be used to get or develop in-depth description and analysis of the case under study. A structured questionnaire will be designed to retrieve information from the respondent. There will be no special preference or treatment that will be accrued with to or expected from the participants. The duration of time allotted for the respondent's participation in this study is 15 minutes. Above and beyond this, the envisage numbers of respondents needed for this study is 100 as they postulated to be adequate to produce the data needed for this study.

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** There are no anticipated risks or discomfort.

**Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:** (The process of collecting data is purely voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawal.)

**Benefits:** (The Study will make an important contribution to Ekiti State in enhancing local economic activities and more engagements of the Youths through establishment of more entrepreneurship development programs.)

**Remuneration:** (There is no remuneration for participating in the research study.)

**Costs of the Study:** (No cost will be incurred from you for the study.)

**Confidentiality:** ((Your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, hence there is no name on the Questionnaires. All information provided by you will remain confidential and be kept safe and destroyed after the study has been concluded.)

**Results:** (The study will implement the quantitative method for this research; hence questionnaire guide will be administered on the participants.)

**Research-related Injury:** (There is no anticipated research-related injury expected in participating in the study)

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings** (All materials and documents will be kept for a 5-year period as per document management policy and destroyed by shredding hard copies and deleting all electronic copies and voice recordings.)

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** (Please contact the researcher the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on -031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za).)

#### APPENDIX D Consent Letter



## CONSENT

**Full Title of the Study:** Entrepreneurship development programme to enhance local economic activities and youth employment in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

**Names of Researcher/s:** Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel

### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, , about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study – Research Ethics Clearance Number
- I have also received, read, and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

<b>Full Name of Participant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Signature/</b>
<b>RightThumbprint</b>			

I, **Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel** herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct, and risk of the above study.

<u>Kolawole Moronkeji Gabriel</u>	<u>23/2/2024</u>	_____
Full Name Of Researcher	Date	Signature
.....	.....	
.....		

Full name of Witness( If applicable )

Date

Signature

.....  
.....

.....

Full name of Legal Guardian(If applicable)

Date

Signature

## Appendix E Research Letter



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berwyn Court  
Gate 1, Save Bika Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
Tel: 031 373 2375  
Email: lavshad@dut.ac.za  
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\_research\_ethics  
www.dut.ac.za

5 September 2024

Mr M G Kolawale  
8.5 Afe Babalola Way  
Afe Babalola University  
Ado Ekiti

Dear Mr Kolawale

### **The Effectiveness of entrepreneurship development programme in the agribusiness sector in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria**

I am pleased to inform you that **PROVISIONAL APPROVAL** has been granted to your proposal subject to:

- Piloting of the data collection tool. *Please note that should there be any changes to the data collection tool, in a letter signed by the researcher and supervisor, list the changes to the documents and submit to DUT-IREC with the final data collection tool. Even when there are no changes to the data collection tool, DUT-IREC has to be notified.*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A FINAL APPROVAL LETTER. KINDLY SUBMIT THE ABOVE MENTIONED DOCUMENTS WITHIN THREE MONTHS TO THE DUT-IREC OFFICE. DATA COLLECTION CAN ONLY COMMENCE WHEN DUT-IREC ISSUES FULL APPROVAL**

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 124/24**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of **ONE YEAR**, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the DUT-IREC. This form must be submitted to the DUT-IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

**It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.**

Yours Sincerely

Professor P Mashau  
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

## The Dissertation Design Master



Phone: +27780248617

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Web: <https://thesis-reports-proof-reading-and-editing.business.site/>



---

Date: 09 November 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

This is to confirm that this thesis entitled:

**EFFECTIVENESS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN  
THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR IN ADO EKITI, NIGERIA.**

has been edited as detailed in the invoice below, according to the agreement with Durban University of Technology.

Authored by

**Moronkeji Gabriel KOLAWOLE**

Student Number: 22176555

<https://thesis-reports-proof-reading-and-editing.business.site/>

---

## The Dissertation Design Master



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Web: <https://thesis-reports-proof-reading-and-editing.business.site/>



Dear Sir / Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to do business with you.

Please find the breakdown of the cost.

Invoice No. DUT/2024/11/09 – MGK		Date: 09 November 2024	
QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	LINE TOTAL
1	Reviewing of thesis chapter by chapter: Chapter 1 and Chapter 5 (102 pages)	R35.00	R3570.00
2	Title/Acknowledgement pages	R0.00	R0.00
3	Appendices	R0.00	R0.00
4	Abstract/ Table of content /List of tables and figures (2 pages)	R35.00	R70.00
5	References	R0.00	R0.00
SUB TOTAL			R 3640.00
VAT			R 0.00
TOTAL			R 3640.00
BALANCE TO BE PAID BY UJ			R 3640.00

BAKING DETAILS	
Account Name:	Elizabeth Mnyandu
Bank:	First National Bank
Account Number:	62908894670
Branch:	Willowbridge
Code:	260505

### Invoice prepared by:

Elizabeth Mnyandu

Signature over printed name

Phone: +27780248617

Email: [mketiwae@yahoo.com](mailto:mketiwae@yahoo.com)

<https://thesis-reports-proof-reading-and-editing.business.site/>

**Annex A: Draft Questionnaire**

**Topic: ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO ENHANCE LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR IN ADO EKITI, NIGERIA.**

**Section A**

**Demographics**

**Please tick the boxes as appropriate**

- 1) Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )
- 2) Age: 18-25 years ( ) 26-40 years ( ) 41-60 years ( ) 61 and above ( )
- 3) Marital Status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Divorced ( )
- 4) Educational Qualification: High School Cert.( ) Bachelor’s Degree ( ) Postgraduate Degree ( ) Others \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Are you a beneficiary of the YEASA initiative? Yes ( ) No ( )
- 6. Did you complete the YEASA training program? Yes ( ) No ( )
- 7. What year did you participate at the YEASA program? \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B: Motivation for Participation in the YEASA**

**Please place a cross (X) in the appropriate box**

Do you agree with the following about the objectives of affirmative action?

		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1	I joined the YEASA program for an					

	expected rise in income level					
2	I joined the YEASA program for a better long term future prospect					
3	I joined the YEASA program because I could not get a Job					

**Section C: Impact of YEASA on the Well-being of Beneficiaries in Ekiti State**

**(Place a cross (x) in the appropriate box)**

		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
4	My living standard has since improved after the completion of the YEASA training program?					
5	I feel more confident and skilled after the completion of the YEASA training?					
6	To a large extent, the YEASA program has improved the living standard of citizens in					

	Ekiti state.					
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**Section C: Effectiveness of YEASA program in terms of employment generation**

**(Place a cross (x) in the appropriate box)**

<b>7</b>	I have been gainfully employed after the completion of the training program					
<b>8</b>	I started a business after the completion of my YEASA training					
<b>9</b>	I have employed other people in my businesses					
<b>10</b>	The YEASA training has created employment opportunities for people within Ekiti state.					

**Section D: Effectiveness of YEASA program local economic activities and Development**

**(Place a cross (x) in the appropriate box)**

<b>11</b>	The YEASA program has the potential of improving economic development in Ekiti state					
-----------	--	--	--	--	--	--

12	The YEASA program contributes to Internal Generated revenue of the state through taxation					
----	---	--	--	--	--	--

**Section E: Government policies**

13	I have received further support for my business in terms of funding from the government.					
14	I have access to loans to support my business					
15	I think Government regulations and policies have improved the performance of my business.					
16	The government has created an enabling environment for my business to thrive					



