Original Research Article

FACTORS HINDERING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRIBUSINESS AT MBARALI DISTRICT IN MBEYA REGION

Abstract

Aims: This study was set to examine factors hindering youth participation in agribusiness in Mbarali district in Mbeya region. Specifically, the study intended to determine the influence of youth perspectives towards participation in agri-business, identify socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business, and analyse the measures established to support youth participation in agri-business

Methodology: The study adopted a mixed mixed-method approach involving both primary and secondary sources of data. The information was obtained through interviews, questionnaires, and documentary reviews. A sample of 384 youths aged 15-35 was adopted drawn from the total population using Krejci and Morgan table for a Finite Population.

Results: Results in this study show that age, marital status, and training and development have a favourable and significant effect on youth engagement in agriculture and most of the youths perceive agriculture to be less profitable revealing that the perceptions of both male and female youths towards agricultural activity and agribusiness as a branch are still a hindrance towards youth engagement in agribusiness activities. Moreover, the youths in Mbarali district face several socio-economic hindrances in getting involved in agri-preneurship and business such as lack of adequate working capital, low knowledge in agribusiness, land access problems, restrictive bank landing conditions, subsidized Govt inputs not reaching the youth, unfavourable commodity markets and lack of youths' platforms to channel their views. These factors have been echoed by most of the participants in this study along with some key informants who were visited to offer their insights on the subject under study.

Conclusion: The youth in Africa mostly have a negative perception concerning agriculture. This influences their intention and participation in Agriculture. There is a lack of access to land; finance; technology; education and skills in agribusiness. However mixed findings on access to finance and its influence on the engagement of the youth in agriculture. More studies should look at the influence of access to finance and other resources on youth engagement in agriculture. Youth involvement in agriculture is crucial, but experts may not regard it as a serious threat to long-term agricultural practices.

Keywords:

Youths, agri-business, participation, human civilization

1.0 Introduction

"Agriculture is the backbone of human civilization and is fundamental to poverty eradication and economic development in the 21st century. It is estimated that 75 percent of the global population resides in rural areas and earns their livelihoods through farming and related activities (Mutinda, 2023). Agriculture, a sector that involves producing crops (food, fibre, and other products), livestock, fisheries, and forestry is important for the economic sustainability and social well-being of all developing countries across the globe" (Alawa and Adie, 2020; Kwenye, and Sichone, 2016; FAO, 2014b).

":Agriculture is fundamental to poverty reduction and economic growth in the 21st Century (World Bank, 2018) and has contributed approximately 15% of many developing countries' GDP, and in Tanzania, the sector contributes 26.1% to the national GDP" (Tanzania Economic Survey, 2021). Despite the influence of agriculture on developing countries' economies, Mukembo *et al.* (2014) confirmed that "attracting and retaining the youth in agriculture remains a global challenge". Although the agricultural sector presents a huge opportunity for the creation of employment to absorb the youth, their participation in agriculture has been declining, from 60.72% in 1994 to 28.4% in 2020 (Mutinda, 2023).

"Recently, there has been a surge in efforts to engage young people (aged 15-35 years) in the agricultural business sector in Africa such as; the adoption of the African Youth Charter (AYC) by the African Union in 2006, the declaration of the Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009 to 2018), and the establishment of the Youth Desk within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)" (Boye, *et al*. 2024). Additionally, "initiatives such as ENABLE (Empowering New Agribusiness-Led Employment for Young People in African Agriculture) which receive support from the African Development Bank and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) are designed to encourage recent university graduates to pursue professional endeavours within the agribusiness sector" (Boye, *et al*., 2024).

At the country level, the Tanzanian Government has developed various development programs to promote youth involvement in the agriculture sector such as the National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture (NSYIA) for 2016–2021 with a vision of empowering youth to participate fully in agricultural development and contributing to national economic growth (Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries, 2016).

Additionally, the Tanzanian government has developed many programs and strategies such as the Agricultural Sector Development Programme which encourages the inclusion of youth in all agricultural programs, and the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan which promotes youth employment in agriculture for increased agricultural productivity, food and nutrition security, and income (United Republic of Tanzania - URT, 2017; URT, 2011).

"Youths of today are actively eager and in need to invest where there are quick returns" (URT, 2016), and to them, being a farmer is condemning oneself to subsistence and poverty a perception that has a bearing on their participation (FAO, 2014). However, "the youth population in Africa is positioned to assume a crucial and influential position in the development and transformation of the agricultural sector. Tanzania has 16 million youths, of whom 10 million are aged 15 to 24 years and the rest are aged 25 to 34 years" (Andrea, 2016).

Most youths (51% of those aged 15-24 years, and 46.6% of those aged 25-34 years) are engaged in small-scale farming activities while off-farm agri-food systems provide employment opportunities for 8% and 16% of youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years, respectively (BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030). Other sectors outside farming and agri-food systems employ around 19% and of youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years, respectively (Building A Better Tomorrow: Youth Initiative for Agribusiness - BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030)

The relatively low contribution of the agricultural sector and high import of processed foods in Tanzania is partly associated with the low engagement of youth in the agricultural sector who account for a large share of the labour force (URT, 2021; World Population Review, 2022). Their engagement has been reported to be hindered by a lack of access to land, infrastructure, credit, and improved inputs, limited access to the market, and inadequate skills, as well as poor business environment and negative perception about the role of agriculture in the creation of a sustainable livelihood (BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030).

Although, non-governmental organizations and private, government institutions have tried to address youth challenges in participating in agribusiness their impact and outreach have been localized and uncoordinated leading to duplication of effort, lack of synergy, and possibly inefficient and ineffective outcomes (BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030). In addition, the majority have focused on offering short training for skills development with horticulture as the preferred value chain, and geographically concentrated in major producing zones, like the Southern Highlands and Northern zones leaving other challenges and youth in other areas and value chains unfacilitated (BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030).

"Youth involvement in agriculture is a recent phenomenon as governments in Africa, including Tanzania, have made commitments to engage youth in agribusiness as a strategy to address youth unemployment. Moreover, the youth's tendency to be energetic, innovative, and risk-takers could provide an opportunity to transform the agricultural sector in Africa which has been dominated by older people with an average age of 60 to 70 years old" (Yami, *et al*., 2016). This study therefore intends to unearth the factors hindering the participation of youths in agribusiness by using a case of Mbarali District in Mbeya region

1.1 Problem Statement and Justification

The meeting by African Heads of State and Governments (Tanzania inclusive), which was held in 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea concluded that youth agribusiness is the best strategy for addressing unemployment and youth income poverty [STRATEGIS, 2020]. "Youth agribusiness as a strategy was recommended for several reasons such as; in Tanzania (and Africa at large), more than 70% of the population (and thus a majority of youth) live in rural areas, where agriculture is the main activity (accounting for 65.5% of employment, 29% of GDP, 30% of export earnings, and 65% of industrial raw materials" (URT/MoA, 2017).

Additionally, agribusiness, farming in particular, has a high potential to create more jobs as it accounts for 59.1% of the total new jobs created (Allen *et al*., 2016). Moreover, there is still plenty of unutilized land as only less than 25% of 44 million hectares of arable land (of which 29.4% can apply irrigation) is currently being used for farming (Tumbo *et al*., 2017); and youth's higher willingness to apply new technologies is appropriate in transforming agriculture for food security given increasing population hence the high demand for food (AfDB, 2016; Lindsjö *et al*., 2020).

"Despite the considerable progress in promoting youth engagement in agriculture via skills training in Tanzania as in the rest of Africa, the intended outcomes have yet to be fully realized (The African Youth Decade 2009–2018 Plan of Action). The task of engaging youths in agriculture and its related value chains has also proven to be challenging" (Checkoway, 2011). Reports from several academic studies have shown that few young people are engaged in agriculture (Henning, *et al*. 2022; López-Fernández, *et al*. 2016; Irungu, *et al*., 2015). The findings from these studies indicated that young people associated the agricultural sector with low-skilled labour, low social status, and tedious work, resulting in many people moving to urban areas for better job opportunities.

Youth transitioning into independent youth-led agribusiness, particularly farming, has been a challenge to most youths in Tanzania (BBT-YIA, 2022 – 2030) and this study intends to understand the reasons behind it. Although the Mbarali area in the Mbeya region is a priority horticultural zone for the Tanzanian government and many donors due to the presence of good potential for improved vegetable production, with active vegetable farmers, access to water, and established market connections to Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Mbeya, as well as neighbouring countries like Malawi, youths aged 15-35 in Tanzania are still heavily limited in their participation in agribusiness. Even more surprising is the presence of few studies that have been conducted to address this issue in the Mbarali district as elsewhere and thus this study intends to generate new information on the issue to facilitate change in policies and considerations placed on youth participation in agribusiness.

1.2. Research Objective

1.2.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine factors hindering youth participation in agribusiness in Mbarali district in Mbeya region.

1.2.2. Specific objectives

The study specifically needed to

i. Determine the influence of youth perspectives towards participation in agri-business
ii. Identify socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business
iii. Analyse the measures established to support youth participation in agri-business

1.3. Research Questions

i. How do the perspectives of youths influence their participation in agri-business
ii. What are the socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business
iii. What are the measures established to support youth participation in agri-business

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Influence of youth perspectives towards participation in agri-business

Results from previous studies reveal that agriculture is not perceived as a full-time job as it is seen as a low-status profession by the youth in different countries in Africa (Maritim, 2020; Njeru, 2017). In Ghana, the unemployed youth look for other jobs instead of agriculture (Heifer International, 2021).

Even among undergraduate students, less than half of the respondents mentioned their interest in engaging in agri-preneurship in Benin (FAO and AUC, 2022). The formal sector where the youth mostly look for jobs has fewer vacancies. This pushes the youth to go into agriculture; there is no alternative job to look at as they are mostly unemployed (Brooks et al., 2013; Maritim, 2020). This explains why the unemployed youth in Ghana see the agriculture industry as a future industry to venture into (Brooks *et al*., 2013). The youth see a promising future career in agriculture (August 2020).

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries (MoALF) (2017) indicates that factors affecting youth in agribusiness in Kenya include: Negative perception of agricultural activities, inadequate skills and information, inadequate market infrastructure and entrepreneurial skills, limited incentives and investment in agricultural innovations, research, technology development and utilization, limited access to arable land for agriculture, limited access to financial services, and poor development and adoption of policies to support youth in agribusiness, natural calamities such as drought, and weak environmental governance. Most of these problems revolve around value addition, information, and financial access, government support, and technological facilitators.

Studies by various authors in differing settings (Henning *et al*., 2022; Kaki *et al*., 2022; Magagula & Tsvakirai, 2020; Maritim, 2020; Obisesan, 2019; Zidana *et al*., 2020) mentioned that youth perceive agribusiness to be profitable. A venture's profitability drives a rational investor's interest and participation. The youth in Malawi and Kenya perceived agriculture to be profitable as reported by several studies (August, 2020; Kaki *et al*., 2022). This explains the reason for the choice of agriculture as a career in the future (Henning *et al*., 2022; Magagula & Tsvakirai, 2020). The youth can be encouraged to go into agribusiness when programs target the profitability of the agribusiness industry (FAO and AUC, 2022).

A study on determinants of participation in the Youth-in-Agriculture Programme in Ondo State, Nigeria conducted by Adesina & Favour (2016) using a sample of 128 derived from a population of 1789 youths involved in various agricultural activities within Ondo State in Nigeria found that attitudes of the youths significantly influenced youth engagement in agricultural activities. The study collected data using questionnaires and analysed using quantitative approaches including Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The study therefore recommended that efforts to involve youths in agriculture must start by changing their attitude towards farming.

Ikpea (2022) argued that Kenyan youth have negative perceptions about the viability of agribusinesses and face challenges accessing finance, information, and land. Furthermore, most of the policies instituted by the government do not focus on or include the youth in policy dialogue (Njeru, 2016). Youth need to understand the importance of agriculture and agribusiness to replace ageing farmers and overcome the major constraints to expanding the agribusiness sector (Mibey, 2015). Ikpea (2022) calls for a more holistic approach in the analysis of the challenge of youth participation in agribusiness as a means of determining the best way to increase the sector's attractiveness to the youth.

2.2 Socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business

Kilonzi (2011) defined socioeconomic factors as the various aspects arising from population demographics, social aspects, land access, and farm inputs that impact involvement in agricultural activities. Adolwa, Esilaba, Okoth, and Mulwa (2010) showed that social factors such as the education of farmers, income level, farmer skills, and family demographics are determinants of agricultural productivity. Maritim (2020) established that access to credit, access to adequate land, perceived benefits, and attitude affected the youth participation in Agri-business in Kericho County.

Amariah and Murei (2022) identified economic factors and institutional factors such as level of income, farm size, type of farming enterprise, farming, and entrepreneurial experience, size of the workforce, land tenure, access to training, access to information, and distance to market as the determinants of smallholder participation in agro-processing. Sunday Baba (2019) affirmed that access to land is critical in youth participation in agribusiness in Sudan but on the contrary, Henning *et al*., (2022) and Sumberg *et al*., (2017) found no relationship between access to land and participation in the youth in agriculture.

According to Umeh, *et al*. (2020), socioeconomic determinants influencing youth agri-preneurship include marital status, education status, income per annum, source of investment capital, and family agro-history. In DRC Congo, the intention to be an agri-preneur starts when one has access to land (Martinson *et al*., 2019). This is because the land is the basic resource for farming and setting up a business. Challenges in securing land pose a great barrier to the engagement of the youth in agribusiness. Sources of securing land include purchases and inheritance.

The youth perceive that prices of land are high in Malawi (Kaki *et al*., 2022) preventing the youth from participating in agriculture and agribusiness. Even when land is inherited, there are challenges as people perceive that family lands, which are the most dominant means of acquiring land by the youth (Brooks *et al*., 2013) are subdivided making it difficult for the youth in Malawi and Kenya to engage in viable agribusiness ventures (Kaki *et al*., 2022; Maritim, 2020).

Akinwekomi, Obayelu, and Afolabi (2017) state that the absence of agricultural programs, technology, agro-processing skills, and training and development workshops have all hindered young engagement in agribusiness. In Southwest Nigeria, youth are reported to forsake farming more than older generations. This trend is particularly visible among educated young people seeking work in cities. Also, fewer young people use improved input, forcing them to farm subsistence.

Kimaro, Towo, and Moshi (2015) used descriptive statistics to analyse the socioeconomic determinants of youth participation in rural agriculture. The investigation indicated that socioeconomic determinants include rural credit, land availability, age, education, family history, and gender. Similarly, Anna (2016) used descriptive analysis to investigate factors impacting youth disengagement from agricultural activity in Tanzania and it was found that educational level, land availability, access to funds, and machinery all influence youth disengagement in agriculture

2.3 Measures established to support youth participation in agri-business

Globally, scholars have studied factors affecting youth involvement in agriculture (Anna, 2016; Eric, 2017; Akinwekomi, Obayelu, & Afolabi, 2017; Adesina & Eforuoku; 2018; Olufemi, 2019; Adeyanju, 2019; Mastewal *et al*, 2019; Tsekpo, 2019; Adeyanju and Mburu and Mignouna, 2020). However, few actual and effective approaches, institutions, and procedures exist.

Youth involvement in agriculture is crucial, but experts may not regard it as a serious threat to long-term agricultural practices. With so little research on young people in agriculture, it's tough to figure out what works. Mulema *et al*. (2021) argued that the issue should be taken seriously rather than only mainstreamed. To remedy the issue, we must first understand the variables that lead to inadequate adolescent involvement in agriculture.

Akinwekomi, Obayelu, and Afolabi (2017) stated that the absence of agricultural programs, technology, agro-processing skills, and training and development workshops have all hindered youth engagement in agribusiness and therefore recommend strengthening these aspects to remedy the issue.

Etela and Onoja (2017) assessed the impact of e-agriculture incentives and agribusiness incubators on youth involvement in agriculture. The researchers carried out exploratory research, which aimed at reviewing the impact of agricultural policies and their contribution to youth employment in e-agriculture. The study determined that adopting a national agricultural policy that promotes the establishment of e-agriculture and incubator development is key to incentivizing youth involvement in agriculture. This would improve inclusion, information distribution, and network establishment and increase a sense of ownership among youth in the agriculture value chain.

Ng'atigwa, Hepelwa, Yami, and Manyong (2020) in their assessment of factors promoting Tanzanian youth involvement in horticulture agribusiness recommended instituting investment programs, horticulture education and promotion, management education, increasing incentives, increasing accessibility of environmentally-friendly packaging materials, provision of youth-friendly credit facilities, institution of women empowerment initiatives, and improved storage from both private and government facilities would improve youth involvement in horticultural agribusiness. These were recommended after their determination of the level of education attainment, management innovation, youth perception of horticulture, quality of packaging materials, gender, and access to land as key factors influencing youth involvement in horticulture agribusiness.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design/approach

The study adopted mixed methods research design using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods that help in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the issue under study. Use of a mixed methods approach was deemed relevant in this case as it strengthens findings by looking at the issue from different angles and identifying patterns that emerge across both qualitative and quantitative data sets.

3.2 Population and sampling techniques

The study was conducted at Mbarali district in Tanzania located between latitude 70 and 90 South of the Equator and between Longitude 33.80 and 350 East of Greenwich. It is bordered to the north by the Iringa region and east by the Njombe region. To the south, the district is bordered by Mbeya Rural District and to the west by Chunya District. Mbarali district is the most famous area for rice farming. The district is home to the Kapunga rice project and Mbarali estate. The district hosts a very famous wetland called Ihefu, as well as the Usangu Plain and Ruaha National Park on the north side of the district.

The population of the district according to the 2022 National Census is 446,336 where 49% are male while 51% are female. The Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) hasn't released district-level data on the youth population from the 2022 census yet, however, their published results indicate that 34.4% of Tanzania's total population falls within the 15-35 age range, therefore, computing 34.4% out of the total population in the district which 446,336 we approximate the number of youths to be 153,539

The sample population was drawn from 153,539 youths aged 15-35 using the Krejci and Morgan table for a Finite Population in calculating the sample participants of the research without considering if they are engaging in agribusiness or not. The study used a sample of 384 youths selected in the areas where there are many small-scale and large-scale agricultural activities.

3.3 Instruments used

The choice of a tool and instrument to be used in research depends mainly on the forms and attributes of the research and the expected data and results. The research employed quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative research data was collected using structured research questionnaires developed using a 5-point Likert scale with; 5 = representing to a very great extent, 4 = to an extent, 3 = to a moderate extent, 2 = to a low extent, and 1 = to a very low extent. The instrument was constructed in line with the study objectives with the dependent variable adopting a binary scale with 1= representing yes and 0 = no. The qualitative data was obtained through the use of interviews where contents were provided based on key themes relative to the study

3.4 Validity and reliability

The research tested the reliability and validity of the study instrument by conducting a pretest with 10% of the sample participants, as advised by Creswell and Creswell (2003) who noted that 10%-30% are adequate for pretesting.

In this study, the internal validity of the questionnaire was achieved by ensuring that all research questions can measure the intended variables of the research while the validity of the content of the questions was achieved by pilot-testing the questionnaire with a panel of individuals before the data collection is done. After achieving internal validity and content validity of the questionnaire reliability was measured through internal consistency by calculating Cronbach alpha which measures the consistency of responses to a set of questions. The values of the alpha coefficient were 0.7 and above indicating that the answers to the questions in the questionnaire are consistent (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012).

3.5 Statistical treatment of data

The study applied the triangulation method which involves making a comparison of results from both quantitative and qualitative data, and looking for convergence (where findings align) and divergence (where they differ). This helped strengthen the overall understanding of the subject and identify areas for further exploration. The quantitative data was used to provide a broader picture and context, while the qualitative data offered deeper explanations for the "why" behind the statistics. Presentation of data involves explanations that combine quantitative and qualitative findings to effectively communicate the connections between them.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Demographic information of respondents

The study solicited relevant information about the study from various primary and secondary sources. The participants involved in the provision of primary information had varying features ranging from their age to their sources of income as discussed here under. Most of the participants in this study were male and only a few were females. Male respondents were more likely than females to be involved in agriculture marketing due to the need to operate transportation equipment and loading/unloading of cargo.

The average age range of most of the participants was from 15-35 years and this age group was considered to be the most energetic and innovative. The researcher obtained relevant information relative to the study objectives from mature and self-aware individuals who were found to be engaged in agricultural activities. Mbarali district is youth as shown in the approximations from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on youth population from the 2022 census which indicates that 34.4% of Tanzania's total population falls within the 15-35 age range.

Educationally, the participants had an average level of secondary education, meaning that most of the participants in this study had attained secondary-level education. It was revealed that if the education system of Tanzania would emphasize agricultural studies in primary and secondary schools it would increase young people's interest in agriculture. This could be because educated kids are more aware of the benefits of agribusiness. This discovery was backed up by Bello *et al* (2021) and Adeyanju (2019). There is a positive and considerable effect of formal education on young engagement in agriculture. But it rejected Mulema et al's findings (2021). In agribusiness, education has a marginally beneficial effect on young engagement.

In terms of marital status, the results of this study reveal that most of the participants in this study were unmarried while few were married. It is shown that unmarried youth are less likely to farm than married youth. The unmarried youth live unhealthy lifestyles and consume ready-made food, unlike their married counterparts who feed at home with their spouses. Analysis of the participant's features in this study indicated that the age of the people has a bearing on their participation in farm marketing. Those with agricultural training are also more likely to work in agribusiness than those without. Age, marital status, and training and development have a favourable and significant effect on youth engagement in agriculture, according to Akinwekomi, Obayelu, and Afolabi (2017).

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	250	65.10
Female	134	34.89
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
15-20	68	17.70
21-25	99	25.78
26-30	130	33.85
31-35	87	22.65
Education level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Primary level	107	27.86
Secondary level	156	40.62
Tertiary level	56	14.58
No formal education	65	16.92
Marital status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Married	78	20.31
Single	240	62.5
Separated/divorced	66	17.18
Total	**384**	**100**

Source: Field data, 2024

4.2 Influence of youth perspectives towards participation in agri-business

This study found that the youths in Mbarali district perceive agriculture to be less profitable as has been reported by most of the participants in this study who strongly agreed and agreed with the provided statements. Additionally, only a few disagreed and strongly disagreed that agriculture is not a profitable activity. From a gender perspective, most female youths who engage in agriculture reported considering agriculture as a tedious activity with less returns, long periods of waiting, and cannot lead to better prospects while the male youths engaging in agriculture activities mentioned agriculture to be only a per time activity but they do not expect it to be lucrative to them.

These results reveal that the perceptions of both male and female youths towards agricultural activity and agribusiness as a branch are still a hindrance to youth engagement in agribusiness activities. Unsimilar results were observed in a study conducted in Southwest Nigeria, where it was reported that youth attitude has a negative and minor effect on youth engagement in agribusiness, on the contrary studies by Mundo (2019), Tsekpo (2019), and Maritim (2020) found that young people's attitudes influence their involvement in agribusiness.

The youth in Malawi and Kenya perceive agriculture to be profitable (August 2020; Kaki *et al.,* 2022). This explains the reason for the choice of agriculture as a career in the future (Henning *et al*., 2022; Magagula and Tsvakirai, 2020). The youth can be encouraged to go into agribusiness when programs target the profitability of the agribusiness industry (FAO and AUC, 2022). In Ghana, the unemployed youth do not want to go into agriculture because they found it unprofitable and risky when they first ventured into the industry; they were mostly unpaid hands help on the farm (Wuni *et al*., 2017). Profitability is a key determinant that influences the perception of the youth in agribusiness as has also been show in the findings in this study

Table 2: Influence of youth perspectives towards participation in agri-business

Youth perspectives	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Agri-business is profitable	180	46.87	106	27.60	98	25.52
Agri-business is less profitable	320	98.95	19	4.94	45	11.71
Youths have a positive attitude toward agri-business	159	41.40	85	22.13	140	36.45
Youths have a negative attitude towards agribusiness	260	67.70	95	24.73	29	7.55
Total	**384**	**100**	**384**	**100**	**384**	**100**

Source: Field data, 2024

4.3 Socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business

Findings in this study show that youths in Mbarali district face several socio-economic hindrances in getting involved in agri-preneurship and business such as lack of adequate working capital, low knowledge in agribusiness, land access problems, restrictive bank landing conditions, subsidized Govt inputs don't reach the youth, unfavourable commodity markets and lack of youths' platforms to channel their views. These factors have been echoed by most of the participants in this study along with some key informants who were visited to offer their insights on the subject under study.

Findings depict that on average most of the youths in Mbarali district strongly agreed that socio-economic factors such as lack of adequate working capital, low knowledge in agribusiness, land access problems, restrictive bank landing conditions, subsidized Govt inputs don't reach the youth, unfavourable commodity markets and lack of youths' platforms to channel their views have a bearing on their perceptions towards agriculture activities and their involvement in general.

From a gender perspective, the female sex is mostly challenged by socio-economic factors and it keeps them away from benefiting or considering agriculture to be a viable activity for their empowerment. The male sex is found to be somehow resilient and adaptive to the challenges due to their biological nature. The lack of youth platforms to channel their views and the low involvement of youths in planning for development programs worsens the situation of youth engagement in agricultural activities as youth needs are not adequately in the development policies and this proves that their essence is not yet fully realized in Tanzania as one of the developing countries

Socio-economic factors such as age, gender, and education were reported in several studies as key drivers of youth involvement in agribusiness (Haggblade *et al*, (2015); Ephrem, (2021). The findings from this review underscore the need to tackle socioeconomic disparities that negatively impact the involvement of young adults in the agricultural sector. The research findings emphasized the need to rectify gender disparities within the agricultural sector to promote the inclusion of all young people, irrespective of gender. Interventions, including mentorship programs, education initiatives, and training endeavours, can foster equity and engender increased interest among young people, irrespective of gender, in pursuing agriculture as a viable and purposeful career path.

Table 3: Socio-economic factors hindering youth participation in agri-business

Socio-economic factors	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Adequate working capital	280	72.91	44	11.45	60	15.62
Low knowledge in agribusiness	160	11.45	129	33.59	95	24.73
Land access problems	295	76.82	40	10.41	49	12.76
Restrictive bank landing conditions	180	46.87	116	30.20	88	22.91
Subsidized Govt inputs don't reach the youth	149	38.80	55	14.32	180	46.87
Unfavourable commodity markets	293	76.30	41	10.67	50	13.02
Lack of youths' platforms to channel their views	198	51.56	70	18.22	116	30.20
Total	**384**	**100**	**384**	**100**	**384**	**100**

Source: Field data, 2024

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The youth in Africa mostly have a negative perception of agriculture. This influences their intention and participation in Agriculture. There is a lack of access to land; finance; technology; education and skills in agribusiness. There are however mixed findings on access to finance and its influence on the engagement of the youth in agriculture. More studies should look at the influence of access to finance and other resources on youth engagement in agriculture. Youth involvement in agriculture is crucial, but experts may not regard it as a serious threat to long-term agricultural practices.

Youth should be encouraged and rewarded for establishing agribusiness. These young people should be able to get credit without conditions. It is also critical to replace outdated agricultural practices with modern, small-scale farming-friendly technologies. Overall, where youth are more active in agricultural production, they need to improve their organizational ability to benefit from organized production, land, and labour-saving equipment, lucrative and niche markets, and processing/value addition. Scholars can research Nigeria's various geopolitical zones.

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