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Sustainable Agro- Entrepreneurship And Youth Unemployment Reduction In South East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the sustainable agro- entrepreneurship and youth unemployment reduction in south east Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: examine the effect of agroprenurship loans, agroprenurship financing, agroprenurship policies and Infrastructural facilities on unemployment reduction. Survey research design were adopted in the study. Since the population is infinite, the sample size of the study was determined with the aid of Cochran's non-parametric which gives 368. Copies of questionnaires were duly completed and returned showing 90% response rate. Research hypothesis were tested using ANOVA method. Primary sources of data were adopted and structure questionnaire were used to elicit information from the respondent. The research was done at 0.05% level of significant**.** The findings show that Agroprenurship skill acquisition has significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria; Agroprenurship policies have significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria; Infrastructural facilities have significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria. The study concludes that sustainable agro-entrepreneurship is an effective strategy for reducing youth unemployment in South East Nigeria. On the basis of the findings the study recommends that Governments should establish accessible and low-interest agricultural loan schemes for young entrepreneurs. Financial institutions should also simplify loan application procedures to enable more youths to access funding for agribusiness. Government agencies, educational institutions, and agricultural development organizations should organize regular training, workshops, and vocational programmes to equip youths with modern agricultural and entrepreneurial skills necessary for establishing and managing profitable agribusinesses. Policies that promote youth participation in agriculture through tax incentives, subsidies, grants, technical support, and favourable business regulations should be strengthened to encourage investment in the agricultural sector.
Keywords: agro- entrepreneurship and youth unemployment reduction, Agroprenurship skill acquisition, Agroprenurship policies, Infrastructural facilities

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is widely recognized as one of the most important sectors for both national and global economic development. The sector contributes significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, productivity growth, foreign exchange earnings, food security, and tax revenue in both local and national economies (Ogen, 2003; Olajide, Akinlabi & Tijani, 2013). Beyond these economic contributions, agriculture serves as the foundation for the survival and development of both rural and urban communities by providing food, raw materials for industries, and livelihoods for millions

of people. Consequently, the sector remains indispensable to sustainable economic development, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria.

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), agriculture has been identified as one of the most promising sectors capable of addressing unemployment and reducing poverty, particularly among young people (Owings, 2020). The sector offers enormous opportunities for employment, income generation, and wealth creation due to its diverse value chains and numerous business opportunities. Consequently, agriculture is increasingly viewed not merely as a means of food production but as a viable business venture capable of driving economic transformation and improving the living standards of the population.

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a catalyst for socioeconomic development because of its capacity to stimulate innovation, create employment opportunities, and promote economic growth (Omeje et al., 2020). When entrepreneurial principles are integrated into agriculture, the concept of agropreneurship emerges. Agropreneurship refers to the identification and exploitation of business opportunities across the agricultural value chain through innovation, efficient resource utilization, and value creation. Agropreneurs engage in agriculturally related enterprises with the objective of generating profit while creating employment and contributing to economic development (Tripathi & Agarwal, 2015).

Several scholars have argued that agriculture remains the cornerstone of sustainable national development (Meijerink & Roza, 2007; Vaarst, 2010; Barbu & Capusneanu, 2012). Owing to its multifaceted nature, the agricultural sector provides extensive opportunities in crop production, livestock farming, agro-processing, storage, transportation, marketing, and agricultural services. These activities create direct and indirect employment opportunities capable of addressing the growing challenge of youth unemployment, particularly in developing economies.

Furthermore, agripreneurship has enormous potential to promote economic development through employment creation, poverty reduction, food security, and rural development (Bairwa, Lakra, Kushaha, Meena & Kumar, 2014). It facilitates the development of agricultural value chains, encourages innovation, enhances productivity, and improves the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. Consequently, a transition from traditional subsistence farming to commercial agropreneurship has become essential for revitalizing Nigeria's agricultural sector and making agriculture more attractive, profitable, and sustainable (Uche & Familusi, 2018).

Given the increasing rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria, sustainable agropreneurship has become an important policy option for promoting self-employment, stimulating economic growth, and reducing poverty. By providing access to finance, entrepreneurial skills, supportive government policies, and adequate infrastructure, agropreneurship can empower young people to establish profitable agribusinesses, thereby contributing significantly to employment generation and national development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment remains one of the most serious socioeconomic challenges confronting Nigeria despite the country's enormous agricultural potential. The agricultural sector contributes approximately 21 percent to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs over 40 percent of the country's labour force, and provides livelihoods for nearly 70 percent of the rural population. This demonstrates that agriculture remains a critical sector for employment generation and economic development.

Despite these enormous opportunities, the participation of young people in agriculture has continued to decline. According to Mullu and Ndiritu (2023), attracting and retaining youths in agriculture remains a major global challenge, particularly in developing countries where the youth constitute the largest proportion of the population. Although agriculture possesses the capacity to absorb a significant number of unemployed youths, many young people continue to migrate to urban areas in search of white-collar jobs, leaving the agricultural sector increasingly dominated by an ageing farming population.

One of the major constraints limiting sustainable agropreneurship is inadequate access to finance. Many young entrepreneurs lack the financial resources required to establish or expand agribusiness ventures. Likewise, inadequate government funding for Agropreneurship Development Centres (ADCs) and

Agropreneurship Development Programmes (ADPs) has limited the provision of entrepreneurial training, technical support, and financial assistance needed to encourage youth participation in agriculture.

Another significant challenge is the negative perception of agriculture among young people. Many youths perceive agriculture as an unattractive, labour-intensive, and low-income occupation suitable only for rural dwellers. Consequently, many graduates prefer seeking salaried employment rather than venturing into agribusiness, despite the enormous business opportunities available within the agricultural value chain.

Furthermore, inadequate infrastructural facilities continue to hinder the growth of agropreneurship in Nigeria. Poor rural roads, inadequate electricity supply, limited irrigation facilities, insufficient storage and processing facilities, poor transportation systems, and limited access to modern agricultural machinery reduce productivity, increase production costs, and discourage investment in agribusiness.

Similarly, the absence or weak implementation of supportive agropreneurship policies has constrained the development of the agricultural sector. Inadequate policy incentives, inconsistent government programmes, weak institutional support, and limited extension services have discouraged private investment and youth participation in agriculture. The shortage of agricultural experts with modern entrepreneurial knowledge and technical competencies has further reduced the effectiveness of agricultural development initiatives.

Although previous studies have examined agriculture and employment generation in Nigeria, relatively few have investigated how the key components of sustainable agropreneurship—particularly agropreneurship loans, agropreneurship skill acquisition, agropreneurship policies, and infrastructural facilities collectively influence youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria. This gap in the literature necessitates the present study, which seeks to examine the effect of sustainable agropreneurship on youth unemployment reduction in the region and provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and other stakeholders

1.3 Objectives of the study

Specifically, this study was guided by the following specific objectives;

1.To examine the effect of agroprenurship loans on unemployment reduction in south-East Nigeria.
2.To determine the effect of agroprenurship financing on unemployment reduction in south-East Nigeria
3.To examine the effect of agroprenurship policies on unemployment reduction in south-East Nigeria
4.To determine the effect of Infrastructural facilities on unemployment reduction in south-East Nigeria

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Agro-Entrepreneurship

Agro-Entrepreneurship comprises the application of science and technology in agriculture and, all business and management activities conducted by firms such as the provision of farm inputs, production process, marketing and transportation of produce (Ng'atigwa, Hepelwa, Yami & Manyong, 2020). Agro-Entrepreneurship or agribusiness is more than just the sale of farm produce, but instead involves all the economic activities related to agriculture, including chemicals, farm machinery, breeding, crop production/farming, distribution, marketing and sales.

Agropreneurship is the combination of entrepreneurship and agriculture with the intent of profiting from a business enterprise. Ezen and Chinedu-Eze (2016). Jena et al. (2018) define agribusiness as agriculture-related business. Agropreneurship has been conceptualized as the application of the principles of entrepreneurship to agriculture or agricultural related businesses (Uche & Familusi, 2018**)**. Agropreneurship is synonymous with agricultural entrepreneurship (Bairwa et al., 2014).

It involves applying the principles of entrepreneurship to identifying, developing, and managing viable agricultural projects or enterprises sustainably and optimally for making a profit and improving livelihoods (Mukembo & Edwards, 2016). It also involves creating an agricultural venture with the view to devoting required effort and time, assuming the accompanying financial, social and psychic risks with

the view to making a profit and earning a living. The concept of incorporating entrepreneurial principles in managing agribusiness has received a global attention in the recent times, because this concept has increased farmers` profit through the amalgamation of agriculture and entrepreneurship and also serves as employment generation strategy through the advancement of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Birwa *et al.*, 2014; Nagalakshmi and Sudhakar, 2013).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Zahra and Covin's (1995) theory of Agrepreneurial orientation. These authors hold that firms with an Agrepreneurship can target premium market segments, charge high prices and "skim" the market ahead of competitors. They further indicate that such firms monitor market changes and respond quickly, thus capitalizing on emerging opportunities. The authors of this theory observed that innovation keeps such firms ahead of competitors, gaining competitive advantage that leads to better financial results.

Zahra & Covin (1995) indicate that firms with Entrepreneurship have an undue advantage of pro-activeness which gives them the ability to present new offers to the market ahead of competitors which gives them a competitive advantage. These authors affirmed that the relationship between entrepreneurship and performance is particularly strong among small firms. They emphasize that smallness of firms per section fosters flexibility and innovation but limits competitiveness in other strategic orientations. This component makes this theory relevant to this study as it provides the importance for examining the role that Entrepreneurship plays on performance of small firms (Small and Medium Enterprises); which are the focus of this study.

Zahra and Covin's (1995) further observe that although the relationship between Entrepreneurship and firm performance may be more complex than previously assumed, the relationship may in particular be contingent upon the nature of the environment that the firm operates in. These authors observe that Entrepreneurs may be a better predictor of performance for firms in hostile than benign environments. They hold that the fit between Entrepreneur and environment and not Entrepreneur per section is what promotes performance and that firms in growing industries may perform better than other firms regardless of their Entrepreneurship. Hence, these authors suggest that environment may influence small firm performance directly or moderate the relationship between Entrepreneurs and performance. Some scholars have however provided a critique of this theory. Storey (2009) observed that Zahra & Covin's (1995) theory does not take cognizance of the fact that more variables (other than those that define the dimensions of Entrepreneurship) may still influence the performance of small firms. Storey (1994) mentioned that a relatively consistent finding is that capital availability may also affect firm performance.

2.3 Empirical Study

Agbor and Asu-Nandi, (2024) investigated what will mitigate graduates of colleges of education unemployment through agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. Two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised of 343 respondents consisting of unemployed graduates of colleges of education who applied for employment into Cocoa Development Agency, Commercial Agriculture and Rice Seedlings Production Factory. A structured questionnaire containing 40 items was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Department of Agricultural and Bio-resources Education, University of Calabar, Calabar in Cross River State. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded 0.76 coefficients. The data collected were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses. The paper identified thirty skills that should be acquired through agricultural entrepreneurship programme in Colleges of Education. Factors inhibiting development of skills were also identified and measures for mitigating graduates of colleges of education unemployment were also stated. Recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

Masinde and Makokha, (2024) focused on youth participation in agripreneurship in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya. The county being a bread basket of Kenya, the youth are a sign of progress in the agribusiness

sector in the county and country at large. The study was guided by the following objectives; to assess effect of youth attitude on participation in Agripreneurship in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya, and to establish the effect of perceived benefits on youth participation in Agripreneurship in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya. The research theories in the study included; the pull- push theory, and unity maximization theory. A descriptive research design was adopted by the study. A target population of 10,080 respondents from which, a sample of 385 respondents was used for data collection and eventual analysis. Research questionnaires were used in collecting data. Both inferential and descriptive statistical methods were used for data analysis and presentation. This enabled the establishment of the strength and nature of relationship among the variables. The findings were expected to benefit county governments, national governments, youth, and various development agencies and to enrich the existing literature on youth programs and empowerment. The study employed the F-test in predicting the dependent variable which indicated that the model significantly predicted how the independent variables affected the dependent variable (youth participation in Agripreneurship in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya). The study further made recommendations on each of the variables for management consideration in future decision making processes.

Ifechukwu-Jacobs, (2022) examined the role of a sustainable agro entrepreneurship towards economic diversification and economic growth: a study of Anambra East Local Government. The objectives of the study were: To evaluate the effect of agro financing towards economic diversification and economic growth: To determine the effect of agro output towards economic diversification and economic growth. The sources of data were through primary sources. The variables were agro financing and agro output as the independent variables while economic diversification and economic growth were dependent variables. Questionnaire and semi structured interview were used to collect data from manager, owners and other key officers in the selected firms. The population of this study was 2244, while the sample size was 432. The research adopted purposive sampling method. ANOVA Method of regression analysis was employed for the test of hypotheses. Specifically the study found out that. Agro financing has significant effect on economic diversification and economic growth. Agro output has significant effect on economic diversification and economic growth It was recommended that To support the agripreneur needs of the farmers, the authorities need to formulate some new skills and this is beneficial in the process of commercialization also. The farmers need to grow the farm plans with the help of other individual farmers and also, working with the distinctive levels of farmer organizations from groups to the corporations. This will help analyze the areas of market, sales and financing and building various farming business opportunities with the clients.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Population and Sample Size determination

This research adopted the survey and ex-post facto method. The choice for the survey method lies in the fact that it focuses on obtaining subjective opinion of respondents and aims at drawing an accurate assessment of the entire population by studying samples derived from the population (Osuala, 2005). For the purpose of this research work, the population of the study is made up of unemployed youth within South East Nigeria. Due to none existence separate data base on unemployed youth because unemployment occur every minute in South East, the study shall employ an infinite population i.e. population without a definite size. Samples are beneficial because it may be practically impossible to study the entire population of unemployed youth in South East (especially where the population is very large), it prevents waste of time and offers benefits on cost. The sampling frame for this research work includes all the unemployed youth in South East. Since we have an infinite population (a population greater than 20,000) the sample size would be calculated using the following formula. Since the population is infinite, the sample size of the study was determined with the aid of Cochran's non-parametric sample size determination formula,. A pilot survey on 100 respondents frown from within the study area was conducted

Q and p values obtained from their responses were recorded as, 40 and 60 respectively and calculated on Cochran's formula for sample size determination as shown below

$$n = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

where

n = Sample size

z = The value of Z-score associated with the selected degree of confidence limit (95%) i.e. = constant = 1.96

p = probability of positive response 40/100 = 0.4

q = probability of negative response 60/100 = 0.6

e = tolerable error or error margin = 5% = 0.05

Substituting therefore,

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \text{ X } 0.4 \text{ X } 0.6}{(0,05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \text{ X} 0.4 \text{X}}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.921984}{0.0025}$$

n = 368

3.2 Research Instrument and data collection procedure

For this study the instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. A questionnaire is an instrument containing some statement and/or questions for which the respondent is expected to provide answers to the questions or confirm/dis-confirm the statements (Ojo, 2005). For this research work, the questionnaire will be use because it enables the researcher access to places she could access physically, and it helps the respondents to be objective and more precise in responding to the research questions. The questionnaire is divided into two; section A contains the bio-data of the respondents. It is made up the respondents age, marital status, educational qualification, while section B consists of questions that relate to the study and would answer our research questions. The Likert scale will be used with a Calibration of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Provisions were created for respondents to tick where appropriate and acceptable. The Likert scale used to enable us compare easily among individual respondents.

3.3 Sources of Data

The sources of data in this study were primary sources. Primary Sources include all those who are to be orally interviewed and those who will complete the questionnaire while secondary

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, correlation and multiple regression were used for the analysis of the research questions while hypotheses testing was done using t-test this was done using. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance. At 5% level of significance, reject the null hypotheses for test with probability estimate higher than 5% (0.05) and conclude that they are statistically significant. Otherwise, we accept 0.05 when probability estimate is lower.

PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the data obtained from the respondents through the administered questionnaire. Three hundred and seventy-six (376) were administered among the employees of selected respondents. However, three hundred and forty-seven (347) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of data were based on the returned questionnaire. The validity and reliability of

this study is highly ensured, despite the number of questionnaires not returned. The method used was percentage table technique and t-test for the hypothesis.

4.1 Questionnaire Response Rate

Copies of Distributed	Copies of Returned	Percentage Returned
350	347	99.14

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 4.1: Respondents' Demographic Variables

4.1.1 Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	172	49.4	49.6	49.6
	Female	175	50.3	50.4	100.0
	Total	347	99.7	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2026

The above table reveals that the one hundred and seventy-two of the respondents which represents 49.4 persons were male respondents, while one hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents which represent 50.4% were female respondents. By implication, female respondents were more than male respondents by 3 respondents in our selected sample for this study. The implication of this is to enable us to know the number of female and male that successfully returned their questionnaire.

4.1.2 Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	252	72.4	72.6	72.6
	Single	95	27.3	27.4	100.0
	Total	347	99.7	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2026

In the table above, out of the three hundred and forty-seven (347) respondents, two hundred and fifty-two (252) of the respondents were married, while ninety-five (95) respondents which represent 27.4 percent are single. It is therefore glaring that the majority of the respondents are married as at the time of this study. Thus, marital status table help us to know the number of single, and married, respondents that answered the distributed questionnaire.

Table 4.1.3 level of Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
WAEC/NECO	29	4.4	4.7	8.6
BSC/HND	157	22.6	45.2	41.7
MSC/MBA	174	50.6	50.1	93.2
Total	347	98.3	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2026

The table above indicates that twenty-nine (29) respondents which representing 4.7% percent maintain to acquired WAEC OR NECO while 45.2% percent of the respondents which represents one hundred and fifty-seven (157) have BSC/HND. However, one hundred and seventy-four respondents which represent 50.1 percent either have MSC or MBA. This as the one of demographic item helps us to identify the education qualification of the respondents.

4.1.4 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	29	9.1	9.6	9.6
	26-33	118	22.9	34.2	33.8
	34-40	104	32.6	29.9	68.2
	41-50	28	8.8	9.3	77.5
	51-above	68	21.3	19.5	100.0
	Total	347	94.7	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 4.3 above depicted the age bracket of the respondents. The distribution shows that 9.6% of the respondents are between the age brackets of 18 to 25 years while 34.2% respondents are within the age bracket of 26-33 years. On the same note, 29.9% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 34 - 40 years. On the same note, 9.3% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 41 - 50 years, while the remaining respondents representing 19.5% are within the age bracket of 51 years and above.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

Table 4.3.1 Summary of the Regression Result

The result of the multiple regressions formulated in chapter three is presented in the tables below.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.664[a]	0.664	0.441	.73873	.441	67.349	4	343	.000	1.701

a. Predictors: (Constant), APL, ASA, APP, IFF

b. Dependent Variable: UPR

The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.664, indicating a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (Agropreneurship Loans, Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition, Agropreneurship Policies, and Infrastructural Facilities) and youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria. This implies that improvements in sustainable agro-entrepreneurship initiatives are associated with greater reductions in youth unemployment.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.441, indicating that 44.1% of the variation in youth unemployment reduction is jointly explained by Agropreneurship Loans, Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition, Agropreneurship Policies, and Infrastructural Facilities. The remaining 55.9% of the variation is explained by other factors not included in the model and random error.

The Adjusted R Square is also reported as 0.441, implying that after adjusting for the number of explanatory variables, approximately 44.1% of the variation in youth unemployment reduction is still explained by the independent variables. This suggests that the model has a moderate explanatory power and that the selected predictors make a meaningful contribution to explaining youth unemployment reduction.

The F-change statistic of 67.349 with degrees of freedom (df1 = 4, df2 = 343) and a significance value of 0.000 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level. Since the significance value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis that the independent variables jointly have no effect on youth unemployment reduction is rejected. This means that Agropreneurship Loans, Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition, Agropreneurship Policies, and Infrastructural Facilities collectively have a significant effect on youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria.

Finally, the Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.701 is reasonably close to the benchmark value of 2.0, indicating that there is no serious autocorrelation among the residuals. This suggests that the

independence assumption of the regression model has been satisfied, making the regression estimates reliable and suitable for inference.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	147.016	4	36.754	67.349	.000[b]
	Residual	186.638	343	.546		
	Total	333.654	346			

a. Dependent Variable: UPR
b. Predictors: (Constant), APL, ASA, APP, IFF

The computed F-statistic of 67.349 with a corresponding probability value (Sig.) of 0.000 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. Since the probability value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis that Agropreneurship Loans, Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition, Agropreneurship Policies, and Infrastructural Facilities jointly have no significant effect on youth unemployment reduction is rejected. This finding implies that the independent variables, when considered together, significantly explain variations in youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria. In other words, sustainable agro-entrepreneurship initiatives collectively play a significant role in reducing youth unemployment in the study area.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-1.342	.372		-3.605	.000	.610	2.074
	APL	.552	.065	.552	8.490	.000	.424	.679
	ASA	.247	.075	.183	3.273	.001	.395	.099
	APP	.277	.034	.383	8.206	.000	.343	.211
	IFF	.286	.039	.394	7.420	.000	.362	.210

a. Dependent Variable: UPR

The constant (intercept) has a coefficient of -1.342 with a t-value of -3.605 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the constant is statistically significant at the 5% level. The negative intercept suggests that in the absence of Agropreneurship Loans, Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition, Agropreneurship Policies, and Infrastructural Facilities, the level of youth unemployment reduction would be expected to decrease by 1.342 units.

Agropreneurship Loans (APL)

The coefficient of Agropreneurship Loans (APL) is 0.552, indicating that a one-unit increase in access to agropreneurship loans leads to a 0.552-unit increase in youth unemployment reduction, holding other variables constant. The variable has a t-value of 8.490 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 5% level of significance. This implies that Agropreneurship Loans have a positive and statistically significant effect on youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.552 further indicates that APL is one of the strongest predictors of youth unemployment reduction in the model.

Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition (ASA)

The coefficient of Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition (ASA) is 0.247, implying that a one-unit increase in agropreneurship skill acquisition increases youth unemployment reduction by 0.247 units, all other variables being held constant. The t-value of 3.273 and p-value of 0.001 indicate that the effect is positive and statistically significant. This finding suggests that equipping youths with agropreneurship skills

significantly enhances their employment opportunities and contributes to reducing unemployment in South East Nigeria.

Agropreneurship Policies (APP)

The coefficient of Agropreneurship Policies (APP) is 0.277, indicating that a one-unit improvement in agropreneurship policies increases youth unemployment reduction by 0.277 units, ceteris paribus. The variable has a t-value of 8.206 and a p-value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. This result implies that supportive agropreneurship policies significantly contribute to reducing youth unemployment by creating an enabling environment for agricultural entrepreneurship and business development.

Infrastructural Facilities (IFF)

The coefficient of Infrastructural Facilities (IFF) is 0.286, indicating that a one-unit improvement in infrastructural facilities leads to a 0.286-unit increase in youth unemployment reduction, holding other variables constant. The t-value of 7.420 and p-value of 0.000 show that the effect is positive and statistically significant. This finding suggests that improved infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, irrigation systems, storage facilities, and market access, significantly promotes agropreneurship and creates employment opportunities for youths.

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

Ho_2: Agroprenurship skill acquisition has no significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in **Anambra state,** Nigeria.

In testing this hypothesis, the t-statistics and probability value in table 4.3.3 above is used. Agroprenurship skill acquisition variables have a t-statistics of 3.273 and a probability value of 0.001 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Agroprenurship skill acquisition has significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria

Hypothesis Two

Ho_3: Agroprenurship policies have no significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in **Anambra state,** Nigeria.

Apprenticeship policies system has a t-statistics of 8.206 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Agroprenurship policies have significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria

Hypothesis Three

Ho_4: Infrastructural facilities have no significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria

Apprenticeship training system has a t-statistics of 7.420 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Infrastructural facilities have significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state**,** Nigeria

Hypothesis Four

Ho_1: Agroprenurship loans have no significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Seed capital has a t-statistics of 8.490 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that Agroprenurship loans have significant effect in youth unemployment reduction in Anambra state, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of sustainable agro-entrepreneurship on youth unemployment reduction in South East Nigeria, with emphasis on Agropreneurship Loans (APL), Agropreneurship Skill Acquisition (ASA), Agropreneurship Policies (APP), and Infrastructural Facilities (IFF). The findings revealed that all the explanatory variables have positive and statistically significant effects on youth unemployment reduction. Specifically, access to agropreneurship loans, acquisition of agricultural entrepreneurial skills, supportive government policies, and the availability of infrastructural facilities were found to significantly enhance employment opportunities for youths in the region. The study therefore concludes that sustainable agro-entrepreneurship is an effective strategy for reducing youth unemployment in South East Nigeria. Strengthening financial support, improving skill development programmes, implementing favorable agropreneurship policies, and investing in rural infrastructure will not only promote youth participation in agriculture but also contribute to sustainable employment creation, economic growth, and rural development.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are posed based on the findings of the study:

1. Governments should establish accessible and low-interest agricultural loan schemes for young entrepreneurs. Financial institutions should also simplify loan application procedures to enable more youths to access funding for agribusiness.
2. Government agencies, educational institutions, and agricultural development organizations should organize regular training, workshops, and vocational programmes to equip youths with modern agricultural and entrepreneurial skills necessary for establishing and managing profitable agribusinesses.
3. Policies that promote youth participation in agriculture through tax incentives, subsidies, grants, technical support, and favourable business regulations should be strengthened to encourage investment in the agricultural sector.
4. Governments at all levels should improve rural roads, electricity supply, irrigation facilities, storage facilities, processing centres, and market infrastructure. Adequate infrastructure will reduce production costs, improve productivity, and create more employment opportunities for youths.

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