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INFLUENCE OF AGRIBUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAMME ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study's key purpose was to examine the influence of Agribusiness training programme on youth empowerment and economic development in Nigeria. The study population consists of 965,157 beneficiaries of FADAMA III project. Yamane formula was use to draw a sample size of 520 participants that was increased by 30% with a 93.85% response rate. Primary quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire with the aid of multistage sampling technique. In analyzing the collected data, the use of the PLS-SEM technique was applied in this study. In the SEM technique, a CFA test was conducted to confirm the model's reliability and validity, whereas the results of path assessment were presented to examine the association between the variables. Findings of this study confirmed a positive and significant effect of agribusiness training programme on self-employment, income generation, poverty reduction, and standard of living among youth in Nigeria. It was recommended that training should include a focus on establishing agripreneurship as a source of reliable and steady income. Also, training programmes should be targeted towards individuals in dire conditions, such as rural youths. Furthermore, agricultural programmes should be practical and reflect environmental realities, as well as showcase agriculture as a worthwhile career choice. Finally, these programmes should incorporate added support such as the provision of adequate infrastructural and financial facilities, including the subsidization of loans to its beneficiaries.

Keywords: Agribusiness, Economic Development, Training, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

Agribusiness is seen as a promising medium to encourage youth empowerment as it unlocks the potential of non-engaged youth to create job opportunities with the goals of improving their livelihoods and reducing poverty through agriculture and agricultural-based enterprises. The agricultural sector years ago has been identified to have the needed capacity to encourage youth empowerment across the world (World Bank, 2019); this is because the profession's requirement for energy, creativity, and innovation makes it suitable for individuals within the 15–35 age group (Brooks et al., 2013). This is not far from the suggestion of Ogunmodede et al. (2020) that for Nigerian and African agricultural sectors to regain their lost glory of ensuring food security and relevance in the world economy

through exportation, the aging farmers need to be replaced by vibrant young individuals who can use their intellectual and physical capacity to meet up with global technological development that will lead to increased agricultural productivity.

Agu (2013) stated that problems associated with unemployment can be solved by empowering the youths through agricultural training programmes, which will enable them to have opportunities for self-employment through agriculture and lead to the creation of jobs via other sectors. Self-employment is the only way for an individual to earn enough money to support his/herself, family members and friends, as it is associated with positive well-being for the individual likewise those close to him. Youth empowerment specifically develops sociopolitical awareness among young individuals, by enhancing their skills to become agents of change in their respective communities (Zimmerman, 2000). Also, youth empowerment enables young people facilitate meaningful community change, to enhance the well-being of all individuals. By emphasizing collective participation and contribution, young people gain skills and competencies that cultivate their positive development, while also promoting the healthy development of others in society.

Daneji (2011) emphasized that within the context of economic development standards relating to the field of agriculture, there is evidence to show that changes are taking place in the agricultural sector across the globe. Such changes can be viewed from contributions of agriculture to the economic development of various countries in form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Nigeria inclusive. However, the general goal of development schemes is a total transformation in the quality of the life of the people or target beneficiaries of such programmes.

However, Fukuda-Parr (2006) believed that strategies to alleviate poverty should not be limited to only economic growth and redistribution, but also incorporate interventions in areas such as the expansion of education, combating discrimination, achieving social justice, encouraging agricultural activities and special skills acquisition in various communities. Therefore, the need for specific measures to be taken as agribusiness training to address poverty among youths could salvage the situation. This means that the empowerment of youths through agribusiness training programmes will reduce poverty and provide them with opportunities to upgrade their standard of living.

Stewart et al. (2015) highlighted two categories of interventions implemented to address issues related to the well-being of individuals inclusive of youth in African countries. The first focuses mainly on improving agricultural practices, through training and skills development, while the second is based on familiarizing and encouraging the use of newly available technologies. Based on this, agribusiness training has become one of the lucrative initiatives by the Nigerian government to empower young people as well as inspire them to become job creators and employers of labour.

In the same vein, Lachaud et al. (2018) highlighted interventions related to youth empowerment such as Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE) in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; the Technoserve business incubation program in Mozambique; Agribusiness Link in Rwanda; and the Agricultural Value Chains Support Project in Senegal, as leading to increased mobilization toward agribusiness, attitude change toward agribusiness, enhanced skills, learning and networking, youth empowerment, increased learning, and use of ICT in agribusiness. On the part of Nigeria, the government, through the support of relevant stakeholders, has shown a considerable level of commitment towards youth empowerment through agribusiness training.

Accordingly, Yami et al. (2019) stated that there is increasing investment in agricultural programmes aimed at promoting youth participation in agribusiness to reduce youth unemployment problems and empower this category of the population. Examples of such programmes include N-power, Youth Commercial Agriculture Development Programme (YCAD), Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP), Youth Initiatives for Sustainable Agriculture (YISA) and The Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise (LIFE) and many others.

Development practitioners and policymakers have broadened their attention to include agribusiness or agro-industries as a medium to salvage the problem of unemployment among the youth. However, the role of agribusiness training programmes is to enhance self-employment, income generation, poverty reduction and quality of life among youth in developing countries such as Nigeria is relatively underexplored. To fill this research gap, this study investigates the influence of agribusiness training on youth empowerment and economic development, with particular focus on the Fadama Graduate Unemployed Youth and Women Support (GUYS) programme.

Statement of Hypotheses

The current study is guided by the following postulations:

H_{01}: Agribusiness training programme has no significant influence on self-employment among youth in Nigeria

H_{02}: Agribusiness training programme has no significant influence on income generation among youth in Nigeria.

H_{03}: Agribusiness training programme has no significant influence on poverty reduction among youth in Nigeria

H_{04}: Agribusiness training programme has no significant influence on standard of living among youth in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Overview of the Fadama GUYS Programme

The Fadama GUYS programme titled "Third National Fadama Development Project (Fadama III) Additional Financing (AF)" is a youth-focused intervention introduced in 2017 by the Federal government of Nigeria in collaboration with the World Bank and state governments. Funding for the programme was implemented under a tripartite agreement between the World Bank, Federal Government of Nigeria, and all participating state governments. Specifically, the financing was designed to support and step-up production of four prioritized basic crops (rice, cassava, sorghum and tomatoes). The Project intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to support graduate unemployed youth and women to become agro-preneurs. The additional financing is fully dedicated to training individuals in numerous agripreneurship components. Essentially, the programme is founded on six important components: Capacity Building, Communications and Information Support; Small-Scale Community-owned Infrastructure; Advisory Services and Support for Acquisition of Farming Inputs; Support to the Agricultural Development Programs, Sponsored Research and On-Farm Demonstrations; Matching Grant Facility for Assets Acquisition through groups; and Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The programme was a four-week training session focusing on exposing young unemployed graduates between the ages of 18–35 years to new agribusiness ideas, thereby helping them to leverage their energy and motivation towards strengthening the drive for national economy diversification and achieving food security (Adeyanju et al., 2020). It was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and in 22 states across Nigeria - Benue, FCT, Kogi, Niger and Plateau states (Northcentral); Adamawa, Bauchi and Taraba states (Northeast); Jigawa Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto and Zamfara states (Northwest); Abia, Anambra and Ebonyi states (Southeast); Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa states (South-south); and Ekiti Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states (Southwest).

According to Adeyanju et al. (2021), the Objective of the project is to increase the incomes of the users of land and water resources on a sustainable basis. Specifically, the AF is to increase the income of users of land and water resources anchored on cassava, rice, sorghum and horticulture crops value chains in selected states with comparative advantage and link them to organized market including the selected states when established on a sustainable basis. Furthermore, the main beneficiaries of the programme are young individuals who are producer groups within the production clusters/sites in the catchment areas and other key players such as investors, public and private service providers, agro-dealers, agro-

processors. On average, the project was expected to reach about 317,000 direct beneficiary households in clusters and 1.4 million indirect beneficiaries.

Youth Empowerment: Generally, there is no single agreed definition that best describes the term youth empowerment. For clarity, defining the two words separately gives room for a literal meaning of the term. Youth is considered as a transitional period of an individual when they are active and fully responsible for their actions as a member of the society (DFID, 2007). Tope (2011) described empowerment as the act of stepping up the strength of individuals and communities in the realms of spiritual, political, social, or economical categories. Empowerment programmes are especially crucial for the less privileged or vulnerable members of the society. Therefore, youth empowerment can be defined as a means of stepping up spiritual, political, social, or economical supports and power to young individuals to become self-reliant and productive in the society.

The process of youth empowerment is focused on the attitudinal, social, structural, and cultural dimensions of young individuals whereby they gain the ability, power, and agency for taking decisions and implementing changes that concern their life (Tope, 2011). It creates accommodating environment for young individuals by enhancing motivation to perform (Akintayo & Adiat, 2013). Therefore, a significant amount of importance is attached to this concept by both the nations and the individuals, to secure future prosperity for them, as well as for successive generations to come.

Empowerment is assured when the youth come to realize there is enhancement in their abilities to control, influence or cope with their socioeconomic roles and responsibilities. Additionally, it does not only concern economic empowerment but also take into consideration social, ideological, educational, technological and political empowerment in its domain. Accordingly, it revolves around three key dimensions: i) economic, ii) social, and iii) political dimensions, which are the building blocks of youth (Punjab Youth Policy, 2012).

Self-Employment: Self-employment deals with individuals who earn income from their trade or business, who set the terms of how, when and where they perform their work, and who assume all the risks and responsibilities of their entrepreneurial activities (Budig & Hodges, 2010). Also, Afolabi et al., (2017) described self-employment as a situation where an individual creates, begins and takes control of business decisions rather than working a paid job. Similarly, Abdulkarim (2012) described self-employment as an act of working for oneself rather than working for an employer. This implies that Self-employment allows one to generate income directly from customers, clients or other organizations, as opposed to being an employee of a business or person. A self-employed individual works for him/ herself instead of working for an employer that pays salary or wages.

There is a boundary that exists between self-employment and employment, as well as between paid and unpaid work. Simply put, there are two types of employees, and two types of contracts: employees and self-employed. The main difference between the two is that employees earn by working for an employer, while self-employed individuals work on their own, for their own account, and they also can employ (Škalamera–Alilović et al., 2017).

The KOSTAT (2016) classified self-employed workers into self-employed workers with employees and self-employed workers without employees. The two have different meanings. Self-employed workers with employees referred to entrepreneurs who run business enterprises with one or few paid workers. While self-employed workers without employees are entrepreneurs who run business enterprises in an independent form, with their own responsibility alone, or with unpaid family workers (KOSTAT, 2016).

Income Generation: According to Brooks (2018), there are definitions of income for different purposes, income is source of taxes, transfers, measurement of national production, measurement of household resources, measurement of individual wellbeing, health care subsidies, student financial aid grants and loans, and more. Additionally, the Haig-Simons definition of income is the standard economic definition in public economics.

It is defined as the increase in wealth (savings) plus consumer spending over a period of time such as a year.

As pointed out by Sherif (2009), income generation generally means gaining or increasing income. Originally, it was a term used by economists to explain the intricacies of a nation's economy. However, it is now widely used to cover a wide range of productive activities by people in the economy.

Economic Development: Wozniak (2008) described economic development as quantitative economic change which is expressed with the help of economic growth indicators including qualitative changes in the country's socioeconomic structures. It covers qualitative elements and involves transformations in areas of economy, politics, culture, institutions, ecology, techniques and technology among others. It also consists of other changes that often accompany economic growth such as improving techniques and skills, which means going beyond factors that stimulate economic growth (Stec et al., 2014).

Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2010) viewed economic development as a long phase of economic growth, such as increases in per capita income, and attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialized countries. An economy is said to be developed when basic need such as access to education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income is achieved. Economic development expands the availability of work and the ability of individuals to secure an income to support themselves and their dependents. Additionally, a country's economic development is related to its human development, which encompasses, among other things, health, education and poverty rates.

Poverty Reduction: Singleton (2003) defined poverty reduction as an approach that requires intervention, involving considerable social and cultural change. According to him, the multifaceted nature of poverty requires more than technical and engineering solutions which can be provided from the international level. Thus, Asante and Ayee (2004) defined poverty reduction as designing and implementing appropriate strategies to ensure effective use of scarce resources by allocating resources to activities that have the potential to yield maximum impact on the poor and contribute to reducing deprivation and vulnerability in poor communities.

Poverty reduction is meant to increase resource levels of poor individuals in the society. Because, it is a matter of reducing gross inequality in society and providing the poor populace with available resources. World Bank (2001) identified four perspectives in which to view poverty reduction. The first is whether individuals in the society have enough resources to meet their needs. Another perspective is inequality in distribution of income across the population. The third perspective is consumption patterns between different groups in society. A fourth perspective is vulnerability which refers to risk of falling back into poverty. Poverty is often seen in terms of the percentage of income spent on food; the higher the percentage the poorer the individual. Poor individuals are also vulnerable and can fall deeper into poverty. For example, in cases of drought or floods, which have destroyed their subsistent agricultural and livelihood base? Therefore, strategies to escape such situations are good enough to warrant poverty reduction.

Standard of Living and Youth Development: Standard of living simply refers to the wealth, comfort, material goods, and necessities of certain classes in particular areas which promote the quality of human life with focus on personal liberty and environmental quality. Nathan and Shawn (2022) described standard of living as the level of material wealth and income available to a person or community in the society. It is usually measured by indices such as life expectancy, literacy rates, access to education and health care, and housing conditions. It is commonly measured through Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and per capita income.

Empirical Studies

Bello et al. (2021) carried out a research study to examine the impact of Youth-in-Agribusiness (YIA) program on creating gainful employment among the youth in Nigeria. Survey research design was used and the target population comprised youth between the ages of 15 to 35 who participated in the YIA program, and those that did

not participate, in Ogun and Ondo States, a multistage random sampling was employed to obtain cross-sectional data from 668 youth. The sampled youth were selected from the list of youth participating in the YIA program obtained from the respective offices of the ministry of agriculture in Ogun and Ondo States. While those that did not participate were selected randomly. The cross-sectional data was collected through the use of a questionnaire coded using Surveybe software and administered with smartphones/tablets and Propensity score matching and endogenous switching probit techniques were used for the estimations. It was found that participation in the YIA program has a significant positive impact on gainful employment among the youth. Therefore, the study recommended that strengthening social capital such as youth organization, credit scheme (financed by private and government), vocational training, and educational system is vital in enhancing participation in the YIA program and eventually gainful employment of youth.

Okolo-obasi and Uduji (2021) examined the agri-business/small and medium investment schemes (AGSMEIS) on youth entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Quasi-experimental and survey research designs using a quantitative methodology was adopted at gathering information from a representative sample of the population, as it is essentially cross sectional. Participants and non-participants of AGSMEIS in Nigeria constitute the target population, multi-staged and purposive sampling methods were used to select a total of 1,200 respondents across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The selected are Kogi State (North-Central), Borno State (North East), Kano State (North-West), Enugu State (South-East), Rivers State (South-South), and Lagos State (South-West). Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire. While secondary data were also generated from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), national directorate for employment (NDE), small and medium enterprises development (SMEDAN). Based on the result obtained from the use of a combined propensity score matching (PSM) and logit model, it was revealed that AGSMEIS initiative generates significance gains in empowering youths in enterprise development, and if enhanced will help many young people become entrepreneurs.

Ogunmodede et al. (2020) evaluated the impact of the N-power Agro Program on youth employment and income generation through agribusiness in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted and the target population comprised of the N-Power Agro applicants from southwestern Nigeria (Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos States). Six hundred and forty-five (645) respondents were randomly selected from the database of N-Power, while structured questionnaires were used in obtaining the data. Descriptive statistics, logistic regression model, and regression discontinuity were applied and it was revealed that the impact of the N-Power Agro program for Nigeria's young men and women on employment and income generation for participants was shown to be effective and positive with an increase in the beneficiaries' income and a discontinuity in the design.

Adeyanju et al. (2020) employed the use of Propensity Score Matching (PSM) method to investigate the impact of agribusiness training on youth empowerment in Nigeria. The target population for the study comprised of participants and non-participants of the Fadama GUYS programme in Abia, Ekiti and Kebbi States. A sample size of 977 was generated using Microsoft Excel and primary data was sourced from a total of 977 respondents comprising of 455 Fadama GUYS programme participants and 522 non-participants in the study areas. Outcome of the PSM model revealed that there is positive change in the economic status and livelihoods of the youths who participated in the agribusiness training of the Programme. However, it was recommended that schemes such as the Fadama GUYS should be encouraged and out-scaled elsewhere in Africa as they can inspire youths to engage in agribusiness and thereby contribute to reduction of youth unemployment as well as enhancement of youth empowerment.

Methodology

This study used a survey research design in which data was gathered from a sample of the population. The target population comprised of all the 965,157 (582,099, male and 383,058, female) beneficiaries of the FADAMA III

project across Nigeria (World Bank, 2020). The sample size of the study was obtained using Taro Yamane formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where

n = sample size,

N = Population size,

e = error margin of 5%, and

1= constant

$$n = \frac{965{,}157}{1 + (965{,}157)(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{965{,}157}{1 + (965{,}157)(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{965{,}157}{1 + 2412.893}$$

$$n = \frac{965{,}157}{2413.893} = 399.834 \approx 400$$

From the above illustration, the sample size estimated for the study was 400.

To enable the researcher carry out the survey more effectively, the sample size was increased by 30% as suggested by Naing et al. (2006) in order to allow for nonresponse. Accordingly, the sample size was increased by 120 (i.e., 30% of 400) to 520.

Form the 22 states and the FCT captured for the FADAMA III project, multistage sampling technique was used to select six states who participated. In the first stage, the concerned states (22 States and FCT) were clustered according to the six geopolitical zones of the country to ensure that no zone was left out. In the second stage, using purposive sampling, one state was selected from each of the geopolitical zones on the basis of the report of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, on youth participation in the third National Fadama Development Project (Fadama III) Additional Financing (AF) which was launched in 2017. The states considered for the study were Adamawa (Northeast), Akwa-Ibom (South-south), Anambra (Southeast), Jigawa (Northwest), Kogi (Northcentral), and Ondo (Southwest).

In the third phase, three local government areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from each state, giving a total of 18 LGAs. Following the fourth stage, purposive sampling was employed to select three communities from each of the selected LGAs to ensure adequate representation. Ultimately, a total of 54 communities was obtained and used for the study. In the fifth and last stage, snowball sampling was employed to select 520 beneficiaries of the Fadama GUYS programme across the 54 communities. This was conducted by sampling a minimum of nine and maximum of 10 respondents to each selected community.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that was based on 5-point Likert scaling, ranging from Strongly Agreed to Strongly Disagreed. The distribution of questionnaire was done directly by the researcher, with the help of research assistants, to beneficiaries of FADAMA III project in each of the sampled LGAs. Out of the 520 administered copies of questionnaire, 488 were found to be completely filled and usable for analysis.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyze data collected and to spell out the relationship between the independent variable (agribusiness training programme) and dependent variables (self-employment, income generation, poverty reduction, and standard of living).

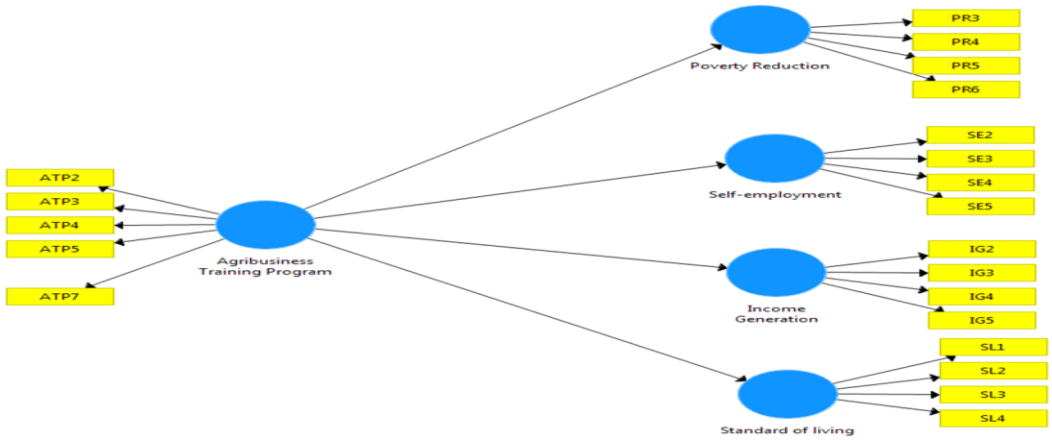

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the study

Results and Interpretation

To test the hypothesized model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, path assessment, blindfolding was conducted. For the determination of the factor structure, the validity of the factor was examined with the help of factor loadings. The indicator loadings should be larger than 0.7 to ensure indicator reliability. In table 1, it can be seen that all the indicators are larger than 0.7, implying that the construct explains more than 50 percent of the indicator's variance, thus providing acceptable item reliability. However, in present study, some items did not meet the recommended criteria, therefore excluded from further analysis.

Table 1: Convergent Validity and Reliability of the Constructs and Indicators.

Latent variables	Indicators	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extract (AVE)
Agribusiness Training Program	ATP2	0.87	0.897	0.934	0.709
	ATP3	0.904			
	ATP4	0.808			
	ATP5	0.858			
	ATP7	0.764			
Income Generation	IG2	0.840	0.879	0.917	0.733
	IG3	0.903			
	IG4	0.878			
	IG5	0.801			
Poverty Reduction	PR3	0.865	0.899	0.930	0.769
	PR4	0.873			
	PR5	0.834			
	PR6	0.933			
Self-employment	SE2	0.813	0.810	0.872	0.631
	SE3	0.797			

	SE4	0.765			
	SE5	0.801			
Standard of living	SL1	0.817	0.892	0.925	0.756
	SL2	0.864			
	SL3	0.912			
	SL4	0.883			

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2022

To establish internal consistency and reliability of the constructs, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) should be higher than the threshold of 0.7. It is clear from table 1 that all the latent indicators are reliable since their values are higher than the threshold value of 0.7. Convergent validity is the extent to which the construct converges in order to explain the variance of its items. To assess convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be larger than 0.5. In table 1, all the constructs value of the AVE are larger than 0.5 which shows that our constructs satisfied the condition of convergent validity. It also indicates that all the constructs explain 50 percent or more of the variance of the items that make up the construct.

Table 2: Fornell-larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Agribusiness Training Program	Income Generation	Poverty Reduction	Self-employment	Standard of living
Agribusiness Training Program	0.842				
Income Generation	0.756	0.856			
Poverty Reduction	0.384	0.463	0.877		
Self-employment	0.760	0.714	0.661	0.794	
Standard of living	0.827	0.674	0.271	0.683	0.870

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2022

In addition to indicator validity, the construct level validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) - each construct should share higher diagonal value with itself. These diagonal values are the square root of AVE. Furthermore, these values also represent the correlation among the study variables, and the signs (positive and negative) attached with the values represent the direction of relationship. The results of analysis revealed that all constructs were in line with the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Table 3: Predictive Power of the Model

Constructs	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Income Generation	0.571	0.570
Poverty Reduction	0.148	0.146
Self-employment	0.578	0.577
Standard of living	0.683	0.683

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2022

Table 3 shows the assessed explanatory power of the model using Coefficient of Determination (R^2). The coefficient of R^2 ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a greater explanatory power. With R^2 of 0.571, 0.148, 0.578 & 0.683 Agribusiness training program explains 57.1% of variance in income generation, 14.8% of variance in poverty generation, 57.8% of variance in self-employment and 68.3% of variance in standard of living. As a guideline, the R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 can be considered substantial, moderate, and weak (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2011). The R^2 values of all the constructs indicate a moderate explanatory power

of the exogenous variables except for poverty reduction that shows a weak explanatory power.

Table 4: Path Assessment

Hypotheses	Beta	T Statistics	P Val.	Decision
Agribusiness Training Program -> Income Generation	0.756	48.794***	0.000	Rejected
Agribusiness Training Program -> Poverty Reduction	0.384	11.468***	0.000	Rejected
Agribusiness Training Program -> Self-employment	0.760	43.364***	0.000	Rejected
Agribusiness Training Program -> Standard of living	0.827	46.966***	0.000	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2022

The researcher conducted bootstrapping, which is regarded as a resampling technique to determine significance for all constructs in explaining others. The results, presented in Table 4, indicates that the effect of agribusiness training program on income generation is statistically significant [β= 0.756; $p < 0.05$]. The effect is positive, which means that income generation improves significantly in the case of agricultural training in Nigeria. Similarly, the effect of agribusiness training program on Poverty Reduction was statistically significant and positive [β= 0.384; $p < 0.05$]. That can be interpreted in the same manner. Further, the effect of agribusiness training program on Self-employment was also estimated as positive and statistically significant [β= 0.760; $p < 0.05$]. Finally, the effect of agribusiness training program on standard of living is positive and statistically significant [β= 0.827; $p < 0.05$], implying that agribusiness training program influences standard of living among youth in Nigeria.

Discussion

Based on the obtained results and findings, agribusiness training program is determined to exert significant and positive effect on self-employment, income generation, poverty reduction and standard of living among youth in Nigeria. This finding confirms similar findings of past studies (Bello et al. 2022; Kabir & Jazuli 2017) and implies that training the youth and women in agribusiness will lead to wealth creation, poverty reduction and employment generation for sustainable livelihood. The study is also consistent with the research of Obayelu et al. (2019) which revealed that IYA programme participants, on the average, earned more income per month than non-participants. IYA programme participants generated more employment opportunities which implied that the programme had not only empowered participants but also made them become employers. Lastly, the study of Adeyanju et al. (2020) also showed that agricultural training program exerts a significant effect on reduction of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to accomplish the aim of this study, primary quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire. Subsequently, SEM statistical technique was applied in analyzing the collected data, in which the tests of Confirmatory Factor Analysis and path assessment were conducted. This study's findings revealed that agribusiness training program significantly and positively influences self-employment, income generation, poverty reduction and standard of living among youths in Nigeria. In line with these findings, it can be concluded that agricultural training programmes are indispensable in achieving youth empowerment and economic improvement in Nigeria.

Based on key findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

i. More expansion in training programmes is required to ensure that proper and deliberate awareness of the importance of agripreneurship as a source of reliable and steady income is boosted among Nigerian youths. Programmes should be drawn up with acute analysis of pertinent factors to ensure that skills and

knowledges being transferred are congruent with business profitability and survival.

ii. Agricultural training programmes should be targeted towards people in dire conditions. The fact the country is currently rated as the country with the highest number of poor people gives credence to critical need for programmes specifically designed to improve the economic conditions of individuals and households. Additionally, more agricultural training programs should focus on the rural youths. This will enable a drastic reduction of poverty within the rural setting.

iii. Agricultural programmes should be practical and reflect environmental realities, as well as showcase agriculture as a worthwhile career choice. There is the need for the youth to see agricultural entrepreneurship as a viable and more beneficial alternative to white collar jobs.

iv. Training programmes should be accompanied with added support such as the provision of adequate infrastructural and financial facilities, including the subsidization of loans to its beneficiaries. This will go a long way in improving living standards among Nigerian youths who would benefit from training programmes.

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