



## Attitude of Youth towards Agricultural Empowerment Programmes: Evidence from Delta State

<sup>1</sup>Eromedoghene, E.O., <sup>1</sup>Amafade, U.G., <sup>2</sup>Omosigho, N.E. and <sup>3</sup>Owigho, O.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Agricultural Extension, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development,  
Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension,  
Delta State University of Science & Technology, Ozoro, Nigeria

Corresponding author's email: [eromedogheneezekeiel@delsu.edu.ng](mailto:eromedogheneezekeiel@delsu.edu.ng) [eromedogheneezekeiel@gmail.com](mailto:eromedogheneezekeiel@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7475-5244>

### Abstract

The paper investigated the attitudes of youth towards the agricultural empowerment programme in Delta State, Nigeria. The paper examined the respondents' educational backgrounds, farm size and other socioeconomic characteristics. The YAGEP recipients from 2015 down to 2018 were included in the research. The research included 441 YAGEP beneficiaries as a sample. Both descriptive & inferential statistics were introduced to address the research objectives. Men comprise 86.4% of the survey. Thirty was the average age of the respondents. 52.6% of respondents were single. 97% of the beneficiaries are Christians. From the survey, 55.3% of Respondents had higher educational qualifications such as a BSc or HND. The average farm size was 1.2 hectares. The recipients' average tenure in agriculture was five years. The YAGEP recipients are impressed with the programme. Also, the fish production company's YAGEP participants had the highest socioeconomic level both before (average = 147.6471) & after (average = 148.9765). Lastly, respondents differ significantly in terms of their socioeconomic status before (F value = 3.106;  $p < 5\%$ ) & after (F value = 2.759;  $p < 5\%$ ) the program. Considering the positive effects of the program on participants' quality of life, the paper submits that, more individuals should be given the opportunity to enjoy the empowerment programmes. **Keywords:** *Attitude, Agricultural entrepreneurship, Youth empowerment programme, Beneficiaries*

### Introduction

Youth are a nation's backbone and workforce. The most energetic and productive segment of any country's population is its youth. Young people, according to Onuekwusi *et al* (2015), are strong and have an excess of energy that must be directed and exploited for increased agricultural output. According to Onuekwusi *et al* (2015), the agricultural programmes would not only offer them work opportunities, but will also enhance food production &, to some extent, reduce the gap between food supply and community demand. Over 60% of the Nigerian population resides in rural regions, making the country's economy primarily rural. Subsistence farming is the main source of employment in these regions, with 90 per cent of the population (including youths) residing in rural areas (Goodluck & Joseph, 2024). The rural regions are characterized by a lack of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, railways, internet infrastructures, water reservoirs and treatment plants, and services such as health care, education, and limited job opportunities which can lead to youth

restiveness and poverty. Ureigho U.N. (2018) describes poverty as a condition in which an individual is unable to sufficiently meet their fundamental needs for food, clothing, and shelter. They also struggle to meet their social and economic responsibilities, and lack meaningful employment, skills, assets, and self-esteem (Goodluck *et al*, 2024). Additionally, they have limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation. As a result, their chances of improving their well-being are severely limited. Paul, (2010) as cited by Owigho *et al*, in 2023, observed that globally, the unemployment rate among young people is three times higher than that among adults. It is estimated that there are over 300 million young people who are classified as part of the global working poor.

Many states in Nigeria pay great attention to fostering youth engagement in agriculture. The willingness of youths to participate in agriculture is impacted by their mindset. The attitude of youths towards agriculture

entrepreneurship is determined by their access to knowledge, motivation and belief in the rewards of the enterprise. Yunandar, *et al.*, (2019) noted that access to information on agricultural entrepreneurship is the ease of obtaining information about agricultural entrepreneurship through watching television programmes and videos on the internet, listening to radio and reading various print media such as articles and news among others. Furthermore, Yunandar *et al.* (2019) underlined that the entrepreneurial programme is primarily meant to enhance youth's interest and motivation in agricultural entrepreneurship.

To address food insecurity, unemployment, and environmental challenges, young people need to get involved in the agriculture industry (Bakar, *et al.*, 2022). According to Amiry *et al.* (2015), a deeper comprehension of young people's attitudes toward agricultural entrepreneurship could provide the basis for assessing, enhancing, and modifying tactics to enhance their entrepreneurial behaviour and support the country's economic growth, wealth creation, and poverty alleviation. Many young people nowadays are unemployed due to a lack of employment possibilities and population growth. The problem was made worse by the economic slump. Job creation improves a nation's economic prospects and decreases unemployment rates. It is a consequence of infrastructure development, entrepreneurial training, opportunity recognition, and technological innovation (Eromedoghene *et al.*, 2023). In an attempt to encourage young participation in agricultural operations, the Delta State Government established a youth agricultural entrepreneurship initiative to make the enterprise more engaging and lucrative. Graduates of the course are labelled and advertised as YAGEPreneurs. YAGEP instructs and places jobless youth in agricultural businesses of their choosing, including crop cultivation, piggery, poultry, and fishing. A designated agricultural training institution will, based on the organization, provide theoretical and practical agricultural training over a predetermined length of time. The training program includes instruction in agricultural disciplines, business management, group farming, life skills & leadership (YAGEP, 2021).

Some young people's pessimistic views make them less inclined to work in the agriculture sector. Youth in Delta State have a negative perception of agriculture because they think it's stressful and reserved for the less fortunate in society, like illiterates and school dropouts; agricultural products fetch low prices, degrade one's social standing, and are only for older people (Aphunu & Akpobasa, 2010). Again, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate fiscal support, constrained land access, inconsistent training, and poor extension services hinder youth involvement in agriculture. The recent graduates ignore the numerous economic prospects in agriculture in favour of white-collar occupations (Onuekwusi, *et al.*, 2015). The paper mainly sought the opinions of YAGEP recipients. In particular, the study aims to:

I. Determine the recipients 'youth's varied socioeconomic characteristics

ii. assess youths attitudes toward the YAGEP program;

### Materials and Methods

Delta State is the study region. 3 agricultural zones make up Delta State: North, South, & Central. As of 2020, the total male residents in Delta State is 3,079,210 while female residents are 2,958,457 females (6,037,667 residents) (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission-NIPC, 2021). The state is roughly located between latitudes 5°00 & 6°301 North & longitudes 5°00 & 6°451 East of the equator. Its borders are as follows: Edo State is for north while Anambra is west. Also, Imo, & River State is for the east. Meanwhile, Bayelsa is for southeast & Benin, which occupies around 160km of the state's coastline, to the south. Its overall area is 17,698 km<sup>2</sup>. There are 25 LGAs in the State. The state features two (2) different seasons due to its tropical environment. Table 1 presents the target population (sample size). To collect data, a methodical interview schedule and questionnaire were employed. The methodical interview schedule and questionnaire were done by the researchers. The interview considers the respondents' backgrounds and opinions of YAGEP grantees before and during the program. Objective 1 was accomplished by using the socioeconomic metric. Among the descriptive statistics utilized to achieve Objective 2 were mean & frequency counts. The ANOVA was considered. Considering that ANOVA looked at the average difference among the three (3) variables, it fits this theory well.

### Results and Discussion

Table 2 displays the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics. According to the study's findings, 80.4% of the recipients of the questionnaire were men, while few (19.6%) were women. Again, YAGEP recipients in the research region are men. Once more, 43.2% of the respondents of the questionnaire were 26 to 30 years old. 0.5% of respondents are in the 41–45 age range, while 3.3% of people were under the age of 21. 30 was the average age reported in the poll. This finding suggests that young people benefited from the YAGEP programs. Amafade, *et al.* (2022), noted that individuals within this age range are regarded as active and more willing to take risks. They were seen as rational decision-makers and had ample time to build their reputation within their communities. Furthermore, the majority of recipients, 60.5%, were unmarried. This demonstrates that the young people receiving YAGEP benefits are prepared to start their careers by picking up agricultural skills. 1.3% of the receivers were divorced, 1.2% are widowed, and 37% of those who received them were married. Moreover, 94.9% of respondents are Christians, 3.5% of the recipients practiced traditional faiths, and 1.6% of respondents are Muslims. This is a clear indication that the majority of the respondents are Christians. Additionally, 56.4% of the recipients held BSc or HND degrees. Of the recipients, 2.3% held a postgraduate degree and 14.7% had an OND. Those who are illiterate make up 0.4%. By implication, most YAGEP program participants have a college degree. This may work to the benefit of both the program's trainers and recipients

when they integrate throughout the training phase. According to Shehu *et al.* (2021), most LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the research field are well-educated and typically consider these initiatives favourably. Furthermore, the average (mean) farm size was 1.2 hectares. Finally, a mean of five years of agricultural expertise was used to disperse the recipients. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that 3.2% of respondents have been working over 9 to 12 years, whereas the rest (57.2%) had only one to four years. Participating in the program allows individuals to increase their knowledge and expertise with a variety of agricultural endeavors, since most YAGEP recipients were still relatively novice farmers.

#### ***Attitude of youth to YAGEP programme***

From Table 3, the YAGEP beneficiaries responded positively to all the statements towards the programme. Some attitudinal statements that have the highest positive responses were; YAGEP is efficient (mean = 3.2), YAGEP exposed me to new approaches on crop & animal production (mean = 3.1), YAGEP has helped to improve my income (mean = 3.1), I like YAGEP because the instructors are development-oriented (mean = 3.1) and I have no regret in participating in YAGEP (mean = 3.1). By implication, the YAGEP programme to be well-organized in a way that it was effective in imparting agricultural practical skills on them. By implication, most beneficiaries were duly compensated for their time and inconveniences both knowledge-wise and financially thereby giving the programme an overall pass mark.

#### ***Descriptive statistics***

Table 3 revealed that among the three (3) agricultural zones Delta South (mean = 46.3929) being the zone with the lowest number of beneficiaries responded greatly. This was followed by Delta Central (mean = 44.7819) and Delta North (mean = 43.2403).

The ANOVA result for the differences in the teens' opinions about the YAGEP programme between the three agric. zones. The study's conclusions show that the donors' perspectives varied greatly between the 3 agricultural zones. At the 1% probability level, the statistical significance was established. By implication, the study maintained no appreciable variations in the attitudes of the respondents in the zones were rejected.

#### ***LSD Multiple comparisons***

The least significant (LSD) ascertained the locations of these discrepancies since the ANOVA estimate in Table 5 indicated the adolescents' attitudes across the zones differ significantly. Table 6's findings demonstrated significant variations in the beneficiary attitudinal statements between Delta Central-DC & Delta South-DS, Delta North-DN & Delta South-DS, Delta North-DN, & Delta Central-DC.

#### ***Standardization of Valid Respondents' Background***

The responses was subjected to item analysis after uniform scoring as reported by Eromedoghene &

Ovwohio's research (2019). The dichotomous questions were evaluated using Point Biserial Correlation (rpbis), while the qualitative items were assessed using the t-test for an independent sample. The valid status displayed in Table 6 were transformed into standard scores using the sigma scoring approach (see Tables 6 & 7).

#### **Conclusion**

The social and economic effects of the YAGEP recipients were the main focus of the paper. It is anticipated that this initiative will encourage youth to become *agripreneurs* which will lead to job prospects and long-term revenue streams. The study's findings led to the following submissions: Given the program's beneficial impact on beneficiaries' standards of living, it could be necessary to extend it to include additional recipients. It is advised that the current youth empowerment program be expanded to include more villages, communities, and districts.

**Conflict of interest:** There is no conflict of interest.

#### **References**

- Amafade, U. G., Ofuoku, A. U., Ovharhe, O. J., & Eromedoghene, E. O. (2022). Evaluation of the Livelihood Improvement: Family Enterprise Project for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) Programme on Living Standard of Youths in Delta State, Nigeria. *Innovations* 6(71), 970-984.
- Amiry, H., Alibeigi, A., & Ghassempouri, H. (2015). Identify the attitudes of agricultural postgraduate students towards motivations on entrepreneurial actions from the viewpoint of three Universities of (Razi, Bu-Ali-Sina and Ramin) in Iran. *Developing Country Studies*, 5(7), 80-84.
- Aphunu, A. & Akpobasa, B. I. O. (2010). Assessment of rural youths' attitude towards agricultural production in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*, 19(1), 1-4.
- Bakar, T. H. S., Hajar, R. S., Abdullah, F. A. L., Nor, M. M., Norhafizah, M. Z. & Rosli, F. (2022). Youth intention on agricultural entrepreneurship. *4th International Conference on Tropical Resources and Sustainable Sciences*, 11(2), 1-8.
- Eromedoghene, E. O., & Ovwohio, B. O. (2019). Original Research Article Construction of Socio-Economic Status Indices for Arable Farmers in Isoko North and South Local Government Areas of Delta State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Environment*, 6(3), 1-14.
- Eromedoghene, E. O., Ovwohio, O., Ovwohio, B. O., & Ofuoku, A. U. (2023). Socioeconomic Impact of Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurial Programme (YAGEP) of Delta State Government on Beneficiaries. *Journal of Xidian University*, 5(17), 720-748.
- Goodluck, A. U., Joseph O. O. Oil Palm Production Value Addition in Nigeria: The Way Forward. (2024). *World Journal of Advance Research and Reviews*, 21(3), 2009-2017.
- Goodluck, A. U., Enoh, E. F., Precious, A. O., Tega, E. O., Okogu, G. O., & Endurance, O. N. (2024).

- Adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices by cassava farmers in Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 10(3), 2452-2464.
- Onuekwusi, G. C., Nmeregini, D. C., and Nnaji, P. S. (2015). Attitude of youths towards agripreneurship In Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State. *The Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Research Conference and Network Meeting of CYIAP held in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo state, Nigeria, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. CYAP-Network Publishing.*
- Owigho, O, Eromedoghene, E. O, Ebewore, S. O, Nwachuckwu, N. C. (2023). Assessment of Youth Perception and Participation in Agriculture in Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Bioscience*, 23(3), 96-107.
- Ureigho, U, N. (2018). Non-timber Forest Products as a Source of Poverty Alleviation for Women. *Production Agriculture and Technology*, 14(2), 20-24
- Shehu, S., Yusuf, O., & Egwuma, H. (2021). Impact of financial service associations' credit scheme on income of beneficiary farmers in Katsina State Nigeria. *Fudma Journal of Sciences*, 5(4), 279-284.
- Yunandar, D. T., Hariadi, S. S., & Raya, A. B. (2019). Students' attitude towards agricultural entrepreneurship in selected Vocational Colleges in Indonesia. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 23(2), 147-153.

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Year	Enterprise (Production)	Aggregate	60% selected
2015 to 2016	Fish	82	49
	Poultry	136	82
	Pig	20	12
	Cassava	2	1
	Tomato	11	7
	Plantain	4	2
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>255</b>	
2016 to 2017	Fish	232	139
	Rice	37	22
	Tomato	55	33
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>324</b>	
2017 to 2018	Fish	118	71
	Rice	11	7
	Tomato	27	16
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>156</b>	
<b>Grand-total</b>		<b>735</b>	<b>441</b>

**Table 2: Respondents' Background**

Variable	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)	Mode
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	354	80.4	Male
Female	96	19.6	
<b>Age</b>			
< 21 years	14	3.3	30 years
21 to 25 years	27	6.2	
26 to 30 years	190	43.2	
31 to 35 years	149	34.0	
36 to 40 years	56	12.8	
41 to 45 years	2	0.5	
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	266	60.5	Single
Married	163	37	
Divorced	6	1.3	
Widowed	5	1.2	
<b>Religion</b>			
Christian	417	94.9	Christian
Muslim	7	1.6	
Traditional	16	3.5	
<b>Education</b>			
No formal	2	0.4	
Below primary	5	1.1	
Primary	12	2.9	
Below SSCE	41	7.3	
SSCE	34	9.5	
NCE	23	5.4	



OND	65	14.7	
BSc/HND	249	56.4	BSc/HND
Postgraduate	10	2.3	
<b>Household size</b>			
1 to 3 persons	132	29.7	
4 to 6 persons	283	64.2	4 persons
7 to 9 persons	24	5.5	
> 9 persons	2	0.5	
<b>Farm size</b>			
< 1 hectare	179	40.8	
1 to 2 hectares	209	47.1	1.2 hectares
2.01 to 3 hectares	41	9.2	
3.01 to 4 hectares	1	0.3	
4.01 to 5 hectares	5	1.2	
5.01 to 6 hectares	6	1.4	
<b>Farming experience</b>			
1 to 4 years	252	57.2	
5 to 8 years	175	39.6	5 years
9 to 12 years	14	3.2	

**Table 3: Youth attitude to the YAGEP programme**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
YAGEP has motivated me to take up agribusiness	3.0	0.84596	Agreed
YAGEP exposed me to new approaches on crop & animal production.	3.1	0.51611	Agreed
YAGEP starter pack was adequate for me	2.9	0.62134	Agreed
YAGEP improved my income	3.1	0.52516	Agreed
I like YAGEP because the instructors are development oriented	3.1	0.67413	Agreed
The government is committed to improving YAGEP objectives	3.0	0.70270	Agreed
I have no regret in participating in YAGEP	3.1	0.67299	Agreed
YAGEP is designed to lessen Youth restiveness	3.0	0.65078	Agreed
YAGEP is well organized	2.9	0.67819	Agreed
YAGEP brings about gainful employment	2.9	0.83394	Agreed
YAGEP has improved my outlook in life	2.8	0.88305	Agreed
YAGEP is efficient	3.2	0.62723	Agreed
YAGEP is well-structured and laid out	3.0	0.50652	Agreed
YAGEP can prevent poverty among youth	2.9	0.76332	Agreed
I will encourage every unemployed youths to participate in YAGEP	2.9	1.09194	Agreed

**Table 4: Anova**

Agricultural zones	N	Mean	STD	Std. Error
Delta North	154	43.2403	4.5360	0.3655
Delta Central	147	44.7619	3.4309	0.2829
Delta South	140	46.3929	4.2708	0.3609
Total	441	44.7483	4.2988	0.2047

**Test of Hypothesis**

**Table 5: ANOVA**

Agricultural zones	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	728.891	2	364.446	21.565	0.000
Within groups	7402.170	438	16.900		
Total	8131.061	440			

**Table 6: LSD Multiple comparisons**

Attitude factor	Attitude factor	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Delta North (DN)	DC	-1.5216	0.4740	0.001
	DS	-3.1526	0.4800	0.000
Delta Central (DC)	DN	1.5216	0.4740	0.001
	DS	-1.6309	0.4854	0.001
Delta South (DS)	DN	3.1526	0.4800	0.000
	DC	1.6309	0.4854	0.001

**Note: DN-Delta North; DC-Delta Central; DS-Delta South**

**Table 7: Sigma Scoring**

Before	Percentage (%)	Prop	Z	(Z + 2) x 2
Yes = 376	85.3	$100 - \frac{85.3}{2} = 57.4 = 0.574$	0.187	4
No = 65	14.7	$\frac{14.7}{2} = 7.35 = 0.74$	0.645	5
<b>After</b>				
Yes = 166	37.64	$100 - \frac{37.64}{2} = 81.2 = 0.812$	0.385	5
No = 276	62.58	$\frac{62.58}{2} = 31.3 = 0.313$	-0.487	3

**Table 8: Sigma Scoring for rooms with concrete floor (Quantitative Item)**

Before	F	CF	CFM	CPM	Z	(Z + 2) x 2
>3	26	441	428	0.970	1.084	6
3	204	415	313	0.700	0.524	5
2	168	211	127	0.287	-0.562	3
1	37	443	24.5	0.055	-1.598	1
0	6	6	3	0.006	-2.457	0
<b>After</b>						
>3	1	441	440.5	0.998	2.878	10
3	36	440	422	0.956	1.706	7
2	140	404	334	0.757	0.687	5
1	200	264	164	0.372	-0.358	3
0	64	64	32	0.072	-1.461	2

Where:

F = Frequency (percentage of those who agreed to each response category)

CF = Cumulative frequency

CFM = Cumulative frequency to mid-point

CPM = Cumulative proportion to mid-point (CPM)

Z = Sigma score