

## Analysis of Entrepreneurial Intent among Rural Youths in Njoro Sub-County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Currently, youth unemployment is a major challenge on the African continent. The Kenyan economy is suffering the same problem with more than 70% of youths being jobless. Entrepreneurship was identified and supported as an option to solve this problem but unemployment is still increasing. This study aims to analyze the entrepreneurial intent of rural youths in the Njoro Sub-County. Specifically, the study determines the proportion of youths intending to start a business and ascertains challenges hindering the translation of business ideas into viable projects. A multistage sampling method was adopted for this study and 246 respondents were selected. The descriptive statistics results showed that 93.9% of the youths were intending to start a business to curb the unemployment problem. The results from the Friedman test ranked that the most limiting challenges were lack of capital, high cost of business set-up, legal restrictions, high risks to the business environment, and no access to land were significant in hindering youths' entrepreneurship. Therefore, there is a need for support from government and private institutions in terms of training, workshops, capital, resources, and also tax holidays or discounts for new small firms.

**Keywords:** Africa, challenges, entrepreneurial intent, unemployment, youths, rural

**Abbreviations:** DF- Degrees of Freedom, FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization, GDP – Gross Domestic Products, GoK – Government of Kenya, ILO – International Labour Organization, KNBS – Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, YEDF – Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of the population in Africa are youths between the age of 18-35 years (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). The pyramids of most developing countries reflected that Africa is a youth-bulged continent. The current situation in Africa regarding youth unemployment is alarming. It has been noted that more than 70% of youths in the African continent are suffering from unemployment (World Bank [WB], 2022). Youth play a key important role in the development of economies if they can get full support (Bunei & Mwenzwa, 2011). The underutilization of human capital has caused youths' failure to fully contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of their countries. More than 70% of the youths in Sub-Saharan Africa reside in rural areas and are facing unemployment problems (Rori, 2011).

This situation is the same in Kenya's environment where more than 80% of the youths are unemployed (Global Employment Trend for Youth [GETY], 2013). Kenya is a youth-bulged country. The problem of youth unemployment in Kenya has been there since its independence (GoK, 2013). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics of 2019, it has been noted a bigger population of Kenya youths resides in rural areas. The labour market is failing to absorb more than 400 000 graduates from Vocational Training Colleges and Universities annually hence resulting in a big problem of unemployed youths. Kenya's population is around 47.5 million (KNBS, 2019). In 2019, youths were 6,504,514 males while the females were 7,113,427 (KNBS, 2019). Youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years were 13,618,462. This indicates a fast increase in the youth population

annually. One of the main reasons why youth unemployment is increasing is related to slow economic growth compared to the number of educated youths released into the job market each year (ILO, 2020).

The impacts of youth unemployment include decreased participation of the youth in nation-building (Munyao, 2019). Unemployment also leads to social problems such as drug abuse, early marriages, and high crime rates (Munyao, 2019). Being unemployed for a long period also lowers personal motivation and causes deskilling to the trained youths (Perugini & Signorelli, 2010). Gul (2012), highlighted that financial instability, poverty, homelessness, failure to manage debts, and family tensions are social and economic costs related to youth unemployment. Youth unemployment causes political problems such as demonstrations and civil wars (Lorenzini & Macro, 2012). In some parts of Kenya, it has been observed that unemployed youths have threatened foreign investors (Jacob and Khan, 2012). As a result, foreign direct investment opportunities are curtailed due to political instability (Monyao, 2019).

Decades ago, the government of Kenya saw youth entrepreneurship as the option to solve the problem of unemployment (Government of Kenya, 2019). Entrepreneurship is the process of identifying opportunities, developing, planning, organizing, and investing to run a business for the anticipation of profit whilst taking a financial risk. The Kenyan policy environment around youth entrepreneurship provided a legal framework through the constitution of 2010 in article number 55 which says the government must take measures to support youth through projects, entrepreneurship, and offering business training to all youths (Shahid & Shehryar, 2018). That was a plan to tackle the unemployment problem among the youth. Programs such as Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Kenya Vision 2030, and its Medium-Term Plans were implemented as a means to support youth entrepreneurship in Kenya.

However, even though the government has put programs and efforts to support youth entrepreneurship, youth unemployment is still high in Kenya. Due to this scenario, the entrepreneurial intention of the youths is still questionable. Entrepreneurial intent refers to an individual willing to start a business venture. Thus, it can allude that entrepreneurial programs were promoted without assessing entrepreneurial intent among youths. Moreover, studies about youth entrepreneurship in Kenya have largely focused on promoting self-employment among youths and engaging them in income-generating activities. There is limited information in regard to the willingness of youths to start up their own enterprises. Therefore, the main focus of this study is to analyse the entrepreneurial intent among rural youths in Njoro Sub-County, Kenya.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of entrepreneurial intent among rural youths in Njoro Sub-County Kenya was carried out by considering different variables of importance to youth entrepreneurship which include individual-level factors or demographic, institutional, and economic factors. The demographic factors that were considered in the study include gender, marital status, household size, age, education level, and experience in the family business. Furthermore, the study took into account government policies or institutional factors like legal procedures to obtain a business permit, land accessibility, and also business policies such as taxes. The study also considers economic challenges like lack of start-up capital, high risk in the business environment, poor market access, lack of suitable resources, high cost of starting up a business, and political instability. The interactions of these variables in determining youth intentions for entrepreneurship were considered in this study.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 3.1. Study Area

The study was carried out in the Njoro sub-county under Nakuru county, Kenya. Njoro Sub-County covered 713.3 square kilometers and lies within the great rift valley of Nakuru County (Government of Kenya, 2013). Njoro Sub-County is made up of six wards which are Mau-Narok, Mauche, Kihingo, Lare, Njoro, and Nesuit. Njoro Sub-County is located between the longitude 35° 28' and 35° 36' East and latitudes 0° 12' South (KNBS, 2017). The temperature ranges from 11°C – 24°C annually (Ogeto *et al.*, 2013). The rainfall ranges from 950 mm to 1500 mm per season with some midseason drought between October and December (Government of Kenya, 2013). The Njoro Sub-County population is around 208,354 (KNBS, 2019). The people practice a diversity of activities which includes trading, small-scale farming, and civil servants (Kinuthia *et al.*, 2012).

### 3.2. Sample Size Determination

The selected respondents were 246 proportionally from three wards (Njoro, Mauche, and Mau-Narok). The sample size was calculated using the formula proposed by (Kothari, 2004). This is the best formula for sample size since the actual youth population was not known.

$$n = \frac{pqZ^2}{E^2} \tag{1}$$

where, n- represents sample size, Z-confidence level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), p – the proportion of the population of interest (youths in the study area), q-weighting variable as (1-p), and E-acceptable error. P was 0.8, and q was 0.2 from  $q=(1-p)$ .The sample size was calculated using probability proportional to size from these wards using the formula below:

$$\frac{p}{N} \times T_{SS} \tag{2}$$

Where; p = population of one ward, N = total population of three wards, and Tss = Total sample size (246).

**Table1.** Proportional sample size distribution per ward

Ward	Population	Sample size
Njoro	57429	111
Mauche	34044	66
Mau Narok	35429	69
Total	126902	246

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

### 3.3. Sampling Procedure

Multistage sampling was adopted for this study. In the first stage, Nakuru County was selected as the third biggest county in Kenya with a rapidly increasing population of youths. Second stage Njoro Sub-County was selected from Nakuru County because it has the highest population of people and all wards were rurally located. In the third stage, three wards namely Njoro, Mauche, and Mau-Narok were chosen from six wards that made up Njoro Sub-County. The selected wards were chosen because of the rapid increase of youth populations and urban sprawl which expanding to rural areas. Finally, a list of youths was obtained from Youth Indigenisation Office [YIO]. For the selection of respondents in the field, the researcher employed a random sampling method to allow an equal chance for every youth to be selected. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data with the assistance of trained enumerators.

### 3.4. Analytical Framework

Descriptive statistics which include frequency, mean, standard deviation, percentage, tables, and inferential statistics were used to calculate the proportion of youths that intended in starting a business from the selected wards (Njoro, Mauche, and Lare), in Njoro Sub-County.

The Friedman test was used to rank the challenges faced by youths as they want to translate their ideas into viable businesses. Friedman test is a non-parametric statistics test that was developed by Milton Friedman (1937) and can be used to compare three or more matched groups. Each constraint was ranked according to the extent it affects youth entrepreneurship intention. This was done on a 5-point Likert scale. Friedman test shows the mean and ranks all proposed challenges, it also shows the number of test statistics, degree of freedom (DF), and p-value concerning the challenges limiting the youths.

The Friedman test statistic formula:  $Q = \frac{12n}{k(k+1)} \sum_{j=1}^k \left( R_j \frac{k+1}{2} \right)^2 \tag{3}$

From the above formula,  $Q$  is the probability distribution,  $R_j$ -sum of ranks for challenges  $j$ ,  $n$ -number of independent blocks,  $k$ -number of challenges to be ranked, and degrees of freedom ( $K-1$ ).Finally, the  $P$ -value- will be approximated by the chi-square distribution

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### 4.1. Proportion of Youths Intending to Start a Business in Njoro Sub-County

Table 2 presents the overall estimated proportion of youths who were intending to start a business in Njoro Sub-County. The frequency shows that (93.9%) of youths intended to start businesses whilst a small number of about 15 youths were not interested in starting a business. This is because a bigger number of youths in rural areas want to do business as a way to lift themselves from poverty and hunger. Most rural youths in Kenya are unemployed and another means of survival is being an entrepreneur. The t-test statistic model was significant at 1% with a 99% confidence interval, which means a bigger proportion of youths in Njoro Sub-County intend to start a business. Youth intends to start a business because the unemployment problem has been there for decades in Kenya and youths have proven the labor market's failure. A study by Hieu (2017) supported that entrepreneurship is the fundamental development instrument that can help youth with job creation and solve socioeconomic challenges. The results were also in line with those of Brixioxaand Kangoye (2019) who reported that the employment side can be unlocked with entrepreneurship and more than 90% of the unemployed youths can get an occupation easily.

**Table2.** The overall proportion of youths intending to start a business

Variable	Measurement	Frequency	Percentages (%)	t-test	p-value
Youths intending to start a business	Yes	231	93.9	61.43	0.000
	No	15	6.1		

Source: Primary data collection, 2022

##### 4.2. Gender and Education Level of the Youths Intending to Start a Business

According to Table 3, approximately 54.1% of the male youths intended to start a business whilst 45.9% were female. It means that gender is contributing more in determining youths' intentions for businesses. More male youths are interested in business because some have already finished school and they also have family responsibilities. Another reason is that in Kenya we have traditional reasons linked to land distribution, livestock ownership, and business ownership, which are more confined to men than women. These results were supported by Senouand Soro (2022) findings that revealed that young men engage in entrepreneurship more than young women because in rural areas men access financial resources more than women. Furthermore, the results referenced more developing countries in Africa where women suffer a lot of constraints in accessing resources to start a business (Doing Business, 2020&FAO, 2010). Further findings from different researchers argued that African traditions and cultural values are associated with poor property rights, discrimination of women in accessing collateral security, and lack of flexibility to manage family and business, therefore triggering lower entrepreneurial intentions for women to start a business (Anambane & Adom, 2018; Aterido *et al.*, 2013; Dutta & Banerjee, 2018).

There was a significant relationship between youths' level of education to start a business at a 1% significance level. In terms of education, the majority of youths managed to access education. Among those intending to start a business, 55.8% had secondary education, 26% accessed primary, and 18.2% accessed tertiary. Education plays a key important role in determining youths' intent to start a business because being able to read and write is important for the business owner to know what is required. This result is supported Brixiova and Kangove (2019) who confirmed that intention for entrepreneurship improved through the level of education. In line with the above results Alaref *et al.* (2020), said that entrepreneurial-focused education supports the development of business ideas and unlocks an entrepreneurship mindset among the youth. While extant literature supports the notion that education is fundamental for successful entrepreneurship, other authors argue that it is not enough (Arminda *et al.*, 2013& Dutta *et al.*, 2011)

**Table3.** Gender and Education level of the youths intending to start a business (%)

Variable	Description	Intend to start	Not intend to start	t-stat	p-value
Gender	Male	54.1	53.3	16.98	0.000
	Female	45.9	46.7		
Education level	Primary	26.0	13.3	64.20	0.000
	Secondary	55.8	73.3		
	Tertiary	18.2	13.3		

Source: Primary data collection, 2022

**4.3. The Mean Difference across Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics among Youths Intending to Start and those not Intending to Start a Business**

Table 4 presents the mean and association between age, household size, family business experience, and land size for those intended to start a business or not. Youths intending to start a business had a mean age of 24.48 years as compared to 22.07 years of those not intending to start a business. There was a significant difference in the mean age of youths intending to start a business at a 5% significance level. Youths’ age is very important in entrepreneurship because funding is bound to the age limit. Youths mostly tend to have more business intentions because they are sure about unemployment in the country. Some researchers supported that youths take decisions from the ages of 25 to 34 years to start their businesses (Choo & Wong, 2006; Delmar & Davidsson, 2000). In contrast, there is a lack of consensus among authors on the role of age in entrepreneurship (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018; Choo & Wong, 2006; Hatak *et al.*, 2015; Kautonen *et al.*, 2010; Minola *et al.*, 2016). The lower likelihood of youth being entrepreneurs is associated with age and is also inversely related to intentions for entrepreneurship (Chaudhary, 2017; Hatak *et al.* 2015).

The mean household size of members who were between 18 to 35 years and intend to have a business was lower than those not intending to have a business. This is because a bigger proportion of youths in rural areas don’t have access to resources like land, entrepreneurial skills, and capital for them to start their enterprises. The availability of enterprises from the youth requires a conducive environment that involves tax holidays and a flexible loan repayment system. Family background and household size act as significant pillars that can provide youth with resources for them to start entrepreneurship (Mohd *et al.*, 2014). This is in line with Kenya National Youth Policy (KNYP) a gender which upholds the need for rural youths to be supported for their developmental projects to reduce unemployment. In addition, Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was released to support youths to access resources like training and capital to start businesses (Government of Kenya, 2013).

The mean experience in the family business for those intending to start a business was higher at 1.94 years compared to those not intending to start. Youths with more experience know how to manage risks and also the kind of businesses that are profitable. The findings are consistent with the results of Basuand Virick (2008), who said there is a positive relationship between family business experience and entrepreneurial intent. Working in a family business can motivate and build youths to have an entrepreneurial mindset which can allow them to have experience before they have theirs (Verd *et al.* 2019). The results contradict Malebanoand Swanepoel (2015) who reported that there is no positive relationship or significant effect between family business experience and the entrepreneurial intentions of youths.

**Table4.** Mean difference across selected socioeconomic characteristics between those intending to start and those not intending to start a business

Variable	Intent to start	Mean	St. Err	t-stat	p-value
Age	yes	24.48	0.34	0.075	0.010
	no	22.07	0.90		
Household size	yes	1.26	0.06	0.547	0.000
	no	1.40	0.19		
Family business experience	yes	1.94	0.14	0.005	0.023
	no	0.40	0.19		

Source: Primary data collection, 2022

**4.5. Challenges Limiting the Translation of Business Ideas into Viable Projects among the Youth in the Njoro Sub-County**

The t-test statistic of Friedman was significant at a 1% significance level with p-value=0.000. This means that there are several challenges that are an impediment to the process of entrepreneurship. Friedman test further ranks those challenges according to their level of influence on youths.



**Table5.** Friedman test ranks of challenges hindering the translation of business ideas into real projects

Challenges	Friedman Ranks
Lack of start-up capital	2.79
High cost of starting up a business	3.45
Legal/restrictions (business policies, taxes)	4.90
High risks to the business environment	5.41
No access to land	5.48
Political instability	5.48
Poor market access	5.58
Lack of suitable resources	5.61
Lack of entrepreneurship training	6.30
N	246
Chi-square	412.444
Degrees of freedom	8
P-value	0.000

**Source:** Primary data collection, 2022

At first, the Friedman test ranked lack of start-up capital at 2.79 as the most limiting factor which is causing youths’ failure to translate their business idea into real projects. This is because start-up capital is the foundation to start a business. Youths mentioned financial capital as the most important constraint because all resources required for projects are accessed by paying money. Young (2011), supported that the major stumbling block for youth to engage in entrepreneurship is the start capital since setting up a business the whole process involves financial expenses. Lack of start-up capital is noted as a persistent problem because of the inaccessible business finances by youths due to a lack of collateral security (Nobert, 2011&World Bank, 2019).

High cost of starting up a business was ranked at 3.45 and is also among the top limiting factors for youth to start their projects because in Kenya the registration process is not free for those starting projects. There are no discounts for registering a company or a partnership for youths starting a new enterprise to curb unemployment. The results are in line with Van (2010), who noted the rigid and bureaucratic nature of the government registration process for business registration as rigid, involving high cost, unproductively time-consuming, and labor-restrictive. Fong *et al.* (2020) assert that one of the fundamental challenges is the high cost of starting up a business which has been triggered by the high cost of land in Kenya for the past decades.

Legal restrictions ranked at 4.90 involve business policies and taxes, which also affect many youths when they think of starting businesses. These policies normally limit the motivation of youths to start projects because it is not guaranteed that youths will break even in the first month for them to cope with these costs. Harrington *et al.* (2010) reported the fact that excluding youths from tax holidays limits the intent of starting up a business.

High risks in the business environment are ranked at 5.41 as the third most challenging factor. Youths in rural areas found that risks and uncertainty in the business environment involve competition, business interruptions, unpredictable policies, violence, pandemics, and inflation. All these make it difficult for youths to start businesses. These challenges cause a lot of fear to the youths thereby causing failure to cope with these risks. Zimmerman and Chu (2013) argued that in developing countries, challenges that limit youths to venture into entrepreneurship involve instability in the business environment which involves political demonstrations, looting, and difficulties in obtaining property rights. Inflation is eroding money value daily which is now a threat to new entrepreneurs whether to invest or not (Verd, 2019)

The test ranked no access to land and political instability at (5.48), as the fourth limiting factor in the translation of business ideas into real projects. Youths mentioned that due to the politics of tribes, it is difficult to access land from another region where the dominance is not your tribe. To some extent, it can happen, but still, people are living in fear because some properties were destroyed during the political violence period because of tribal reasons. Even though some areas have good business opportunities youths cannot invest in those places. This is supported by Keats and Wigg (2016) who highlight the fact that Kenyan youths in rural areas face land challenges for business or farming because a bigger proportion of land is under inheritance and family control.

Poor market access ranked at (5.58) as the fifth challenge because in rural areas youths found a difficult moment after producing horticultural products such as tomatoes, carrots, and leaf vegetables. After all, the road network is poorly developed and poorly connected to markets. In some areas, communication network for cell phones is still a problem. Dealing with competition in the market is also a big problem for youths who are new since they are still in the beginning stage of their business. The result above is in line with Fong *et al.* (2020) who confirmed that in business, there are external challenges which are in the market environment like the inaccessibility of markets, dealing with competition, and other unforeseen circumstances like unexpected lawsuits.

Lack of suitable resources ranked at 5.61 and lack of entrepreneurship training was the last at 6.30. Turning business ideas into real projects requires resources like raw materials, land, facilities, buildings, machinery, computers, supplies, vehicles, educational, and emotional resources. For successful use of these resources, youths must be trained to get the skills, and a lot of youths have secondary education which is not resourceful in terms of entrepreneurship teaching. The results of research conducted by Jongh and Meyer (2017) confirm that among the youths who want to be entrepreneurs, the barrier is a lack of suitable resources like land, management skills, finances for business, and labour. Sean (2020), emphasized that due to a lack of sustainable entrepreneurship training, skilled employees and professionals become a problem and also incapable to cope with technological change.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Studies have been carried out on youths' entrepreneurial intent but still, there was a literature gap in terms of which proportion of youths are intending to do business and on the available challenges which one is the most limiting challenge to the youths when they want to start business or entrepreneurship. The results showed that more than 93.9% of the youths in Njoro Sub-County were intending to start a business with a gender distribution of 54.1% males and 45.9% females. The majority of youths intending to start a business attained primary and secondary education, and the mean age for those intending to start a business was higher than those not to intent start. Youths with experience in family business show that they intend to start a business more than those without and the land size of those intending to start a business was smaller. The results indicated that lack of start-up capital, high cost of starting up a business, legal restrictions (business policies, taxes), high risks to the business environment, no access to land, political instability, poor market access, lack of suitable resources, and lack of entrepreneurship training were significant as limiting challenges to youth's entrepreneurship. Since youths are interested in starting businesses, support can be provided by both government and non-governmental organizations by giving them capital. There is a need for follow-up in terms of supporting youths with training, seminars, and workshops to get the exact businesses they are interested in and train them on how to deal with the mentioned challenges.

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