

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **The consequences for the absence of practical agriculture and TEVET in primary and secondary schools in Malawi on agribusiness employment**

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Malawi has high youth unemployment rate and at the same time agribusiness employment opportunities. This study sought to analyse the determinants of youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunities in northern region of Malawi. The study was exploratory in nature and employed phenomenological qualitative design to generate in-depth information. The sample frame was district agribusiness officers and youth agribusiness clubs. Purposive and snow ball sampling were used to identify participants in different agribusinesses and geographical locations. Photovoice, focus group discussions and oral interviews were used to generate data. Data were analysed using content, discourse and thematic approaches. Education background was found to be one of the determinants that explain youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunities. The absence of practical agriculture and TEVET in primary and secondary schools deny learners skills needed for their future and also build negative perception towards agribusiness. A curriculum without practical agriculture and TEVET generally motivates learners towards 'white collar jobs.' Creating job seeking attitude than 'green collar jobs,' inspiring job creation through agribusiness. The majority of the youth drop out school in primary and secondary schools and without skills. The study recommended introduction of practical agriculture and TEVET in all primary and secondary schools in Malawi.

**Key words:** Youth unemployment, phenomenological qualitative approach, agribusiness, education wastage.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education and training in early grades are some of the important determinants and motivator of one's future employment. Malawi's education system constitutes eight years in primary school, four years in secondary school and then post-secondary training for different durations. Currently, the practice in education system at both

primary and secondary does not include practical agriculture or TEVET. Instead, learners undergo a number of theoretical subjects that prepare them for future training. This means those who dropout of primary or secondary school do not acquire practical skills in agriculture which is the country's main economic activity

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and source of employment. Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2017) have written extensively on Agriculture and youth unemployment in Malawi. In addition, FAO (2014) contends that the traditional methods of teaching agriculture at school do not impart practical skills in the youth. This assertion suggests that the youth seem not to be well prepared for agribusiness. The Malawian Government's National Agriculture Policy (NAP) of 2016 recommended that the Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) Authority include agriculture as a course offered in colleges. However, Hendrix and Carley (2018) caution that simply offering theoretical courses may not equip the youth with the skills they need to succeed in their chosen agricultural careers. It is from this discussion that Erickson (2018) advises for the need for real life situation such as attachment of trainees in the field. In agreement to the preceding statement, David et al. (2022) propose that there is need for school farms for the youth to acquire practical skills. Preparing the youth properly can support national economic growth as noted by Maina and Mathenge (2015) who contend that youth can be an asset of development if human capital investment measures are well taken.

Malawi Government (2013) in the national youth policy, define youths as all persons from age 10 to 35 years regardless of their age, sex, race, education, culture religion, economic, marital and physical status. A critical review revealed some contradiction to Malawi Government (2006), which recognizes children as people under the age of 16. This study adopted the age of 17 to 35 as the youth.

Ihensekhien and Asekome (2017) state that the average youth unemployment for Sub Saharan Africa was 9.4%. Furthermore, 32.4% of the youths were employed in paid work and 15.6% employed in unpaid work, and 51.9% not employed. Unlike in developed countries, in low-income countries agriculture is their primary sector of occupation. The proportion of the youth employed in salaried agriculture was 5.5 and 20% in manufacturing and services. There has been an observed shift that some youths were engaging in self-employment, for instance, 43.5% in self-employment and 31 percent in manufacturing and services.

Malawi has a largely youthful population and an unemployment rate of 18.5% (National Statistical Office, 2018). Agriculture is an important economic sector in the country, contributing 39% to its GDP, employing 85% of its workforce in food and cash crop production, and accounting for more than 90% of its foreign exchange earnings. In Karonga, Salima, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Mangochi, Zomba, Chikwawa, Mzuzu and Mwanza, 83.2% of the youths were of the view that agriculture remains the main employer directly in production and agribusiness (Zidana, Kaliati and Shani, 2020).

In Malawi, the youth were engaged in self-employment in various agribusiness enterprises such as poultry,

vegetables (onions, tomatoes, and potatoes), sheep and goat fattening, cereal production and dairy production (Tarekegn et al., 2022). The youth selected enterprises that were perceived to be profitable.

Motivation is one of the key factors that explain youth engagement in agribusiness, according to Rigg et al. (2018), who state that young farmers are hesitant to work on farms due to their perception of limited opportunities to increase their income. Kafle et al. (2018) argue that agriculture is laborious, but pays less, low returns and high-risk enterprise which demotivate youths. Similarly, Adenkule et al. (2009) provides that low profit margin, lack of agriculture insurance. Low public perception about the sector and parental influence to move out of farming are some of such situations. Furthermore, Low profitability as demotivating to the youth has also been highlighted by Susilowati (2014).

On farm and non-farm activities have also been closely related to youth engaged in agribusiness. More rural people are now engaging in different non-farm activities like small scale business, on farm labour and off farm wage labour to diversify their livelihood activities (Mangulama and Shengkun, 2016). Due to the decline in incomes through agribusiness, on average 44% of rural African households participate in non-farm wage employment or self-employment (Ackah, 2013; Adjognon et al., 2017).

Youth can be motivated to participate in agribusiness in Malawi if the following challenges were resolved: provision of agribusiness management training; availability of agriculture extension services; improved access to land; increased access to capital; provision of agricultural infrastructure; value addition; and positive perception towards agriculture and agribusiness (Zidana, Kaliati and Shani, 2020). The cited challenges contribute to unemployment.

Since youth unemployment was recognised to be an issue of concern worldwide attention began to grow in form of stimulating debate and actions. The, United Nations General Assembly (2015) highlight issues of youth unemployment under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals. At continental level, African Union (2011) highlights youth unemployment in the '*African Youth Decade 2009-2018 plan for action: Accelerating Youth Empowerment for sustainable development*'. At national level, Malawi discusses youth unemployment in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, Malawi Government, (2017) but also in the National Youth Policy, Malawi Government, (2016) among other documents. Youth unemployment discourses and policy formulation at different levels suggest the importance of the subject matter. There has also been a growing attention on projects addressing youth unemployment. One of such projects is the 'Jobs for Youth.'

While youth unemployment persists, agribusiness is one of the highly featured terms and practice in rural development, economic empowerment and creation of

jobs in Africa and Malawi in particular. Agribusiness is believed to be one of the viable solutions in solving the youth unemployment paradox. Okali and Sumberg (2012) predicted that most African youth in Sub Sahara region would pursue agricultural livelihoods. As for Malawi, there is a narrow private sector base to employ the youth. The northern region in particular does not have industries to employ the youth. This situation presents agribusiness as the main available source of employment.

### **Problem statement**

Youth employment opportunities is said to be readily available in agriculture as noted by African Green Revolution Forum (2017) that agriculture can ably employ the youths. As for Malawi, the nation is endowed with several natural resources to support agribusiness. Nkhoma (2011) highlights land and water as some of such endowments which are critical factors in agribusiness production. The government, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders continuously put effort in promoting agribusiness for youth employment. Given these conditions, the ideal situation would have been low unemployment rates as most of the unemployed youths would take up agribusiness employment opportunities. However, despite the efforts in promoting agribusiness, unemployment rate remained as high as 18.5 percent as noted by National Statistical Office (2018). This situation presented a pragmatic gap on why the youth continued to suffer unemployment even though agribusiness employment opportunities were available.

Youth unemployment is said to have a number of effects on the society and the economy. Among others, the effects on the society at large include increased crime rates, social unrest, social exclusion, poverty, financial hardships, boredom, stigma, stress, shame, erosion of self-confidence and self-esteem. On the economic side, unemployed youth represent a waste of human capital for economic development. Furthermore, unemployed youth represent a burden to their families and the government. High youth unemployment also promotes migration from rural to urban areas as well as across border. This study was conducted in order to generate information that could help in understanding youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunity situation. The study explored factors that hinder youth from taking agribusiness employment opportunities available in their communities. As such, the study focused on internal factors (about the youth themselves) and the external factors which concerned other issues surrounding youth employment in agribusiness.

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of this study was to generate data that

would help understand the determinants of youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunity situation. Such an understanding would be crucial in crafting solutions such as policies and interventions towards creating agribusiness youth employment and thereby reducing youth unemployment.

### **Theoretical framework**

The study adopted Victor Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation to help understand youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunity nation. Youth unemployment was being studied under the lenses of the theory which includes expectancy, instrumentality and valence. These lenses further helped in digging out information related to what might have contributed to motivation and demotivation the youth to engage in agribusiness.

### **Research question**

The study was guided by the main question: "What are the determinants of youth unemployment in agribusiness employment opportunities in Malawi?"

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study used a phenomenological qualitative design. According to Ndengu (2012), the design helps to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of those who experience it. Interpretivist and critical theories as paradigms further guided the study.

The study was carried out in northern districts of Malawi which included; Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Likoma, Chitipa, Rumphi and Karonga. Agribusiness youth groups were sampled from district agricultural offices. Photovoice, focus group discussions and oral interviews were used to generate data. A total of 213 participants (107 males and 106 females) were engaged in the study from various agribusiness clubs across the northern districts. Table 2 on sex of participants in agribusiness employment under results and discussions contains details of population size by gender.

Verbal data gathered through oral interviews and focus group discussions was analysed using narrative and discourse techniques. Textual data gathered through photovoice and transcriptions of interviews was analysed using content analysis. This analysis led to further abstraction and grouping of related data and themes developed. This article has zeroed in on theme one, background of the youth having an influence on their engagement in agriculture and agribusiness. Table 1 presents themes developed in the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Sex of participants in agribusiness employment**

On sex, the majority of youth farmers were males. An in-depth enquiry revealed several factors responsible for the trend. The first one was connected to land ownership

**Table 1.** Thematic analysis showing codes, categories and themes.

Code	Category	Theme
Age Sex Family size Marital status Edu. Level	Characteristics of participants	Background of participants
Maize, rice Soya beans, Unyunya, Ground nuts, Beans Tomato, onions, Irish p, Cabbage Cotton Goats, pigs Beekeeping <i>Oil processing-palm, groundnuts, soya, sunflower</i> Loc. Chichen <i>Layers</i> Dairy farm. <i>Fishing and fish processing</i> <i>Nutri-flower</i>	Forms of agribusiness	Common agribusiness enterprises by geographical location
For income p. bn farming No alternative For food Ferti. Free <i>Suitable climate</i>	Why such enterprises	Reasons for engaging in agribusiness
4 m. haf.ac. MK100,000 3mths, 500t. K150,000 r. season 3m, 700t, MK80,000, d. season	Seasonal incomes	Agribusiness incomes and seasons
Long t. incomes Dirt work low prices Low incomes Uncertainty tough work For old people Child labour Lack capital goal not achieved Low yields Low profits Pests & diseases Low prices Dry spel No inputs	Why the youth dislike agribusiness	Why do the youth shun away agribusiness employment opportunities?
Groceries Kitchen utensils	General off farm and non-farm activities	The importance of off-farm and non-farm activities in agribusiness

Table 1. Contd.

Airtime		
Shoes		
Clothes. Zitenje		
Mobile electronics		
Piece work		
Chips		
Meat		
Bicycle taxi		
Carpentry		
<i>Bricklaying</i>	TEVET skills as non-farm activities	
Sew. Machine		
Buy fertilizer		
Pay extra labour	Reasons for engaging in off-farm and non-	
Buy chemicals	farm activities while in agribusiness	
Diversify incomes		
Lack of seeds		
Lack of inputs. Fert		
Expensive. Fert	challenges related to inputs	
Lac. of seeds.		
No loan		
Use hoes,		
watering cans	Challenges in using of hand tools in	
Tiresome treadle pump	agribusiness	
Scarce insecticides		
Weevils	Challenges in management and care	Challenges that youth face in
Vendor dependent prices		agribusiness
<i>Pershing goods. Tomatoes, fish</i>		
Far markets	Challenges in marketing and sales	
Bad roads		
Fake scale, big buckets		
No money		
Crooked and corrupt sales clerk	Inefficiencies with ADMARC	
Open 1 day a year		
In experienced extension workers		
Low extension service	Extension service-related challenges	
Politicians promising free things		
Borrowers being party supporters		
Borrowers consider loan as party benefit	Politicians affecting loan repayment	Democratic political leadership and
Politicians influencing beneficiaries		Agric- loans
YEDEF and MEDF loans jumping beneficiary		
frame		
Tomato processing	Lack of factories for value addition	
Dairy farming		
<i>Low scale traditional oil processing</i>		
Oil extraction	Sustainability of factories managed by	Technology and value addition
Wovwe rice	communities and cooperatives	
<i>Likoma refrigerator. white elephant</i>		
Ngara factory. white elephant	Sustainable usage of agribusiness	
	processing plants,	

Table 1. Contd.

Migration rural-urban Migration Malawi-RSA. Bicycle taxi Motorcycle taxi Passenger vehicle assistant Mobile electronics vending TEVET skills	Push migration and agribusiness  Informal none agribusiness economic activities	Migration and other informal economic activities as youth responses to agribusiness challenges.
Tomato rot. Market Rice. prices down Cotton low. p romour	Covid 19 affecting agribusinesses	Impact of covid 19 as emerging crosscutting issue on agribusiness.
Maintain schemes Solar irrigation New irrigation schemes Land reclamation Low fert no subsidy Pesticides Improved seeds Pri. Demo. Plot Youth motivate Primary and seconday school practical agriculture Mindest from white collar to agribusiness Exper. Ext workers Ded. Ext workers Fixed sell. Price Reliable markets Admarc role Quick markets for perishables Processing plant Youth agri-loans Fair revo. Fund Inputs package Hatching machine Oil extraction Tomato processing <i>Fish preservation and griding machine.</i> Size of machinery Min price adh	Maximizing use of available land  Improve on access to inputs  Motivate the youth  Improve on extension service  Support sales marketing  Managing perishables  Support with inputs  Support with user friendly technologies	Improving agribusiness for more youth employment
	Government policy	

Source: Authors

issues. Both study areas were carried out in patrilineal setup where men traditionally own land. As such, men become decision makers on agribusiness. Malawi Government (2016) acknowledged this challenge and pledged to solve this. This study however found that land ownership issues were still hampering women participation in agriculture. Secondly, traditionally men were expected to be breadwinners for their families. In this study, men were in majority because agribusiness

was a means for providing for their families.

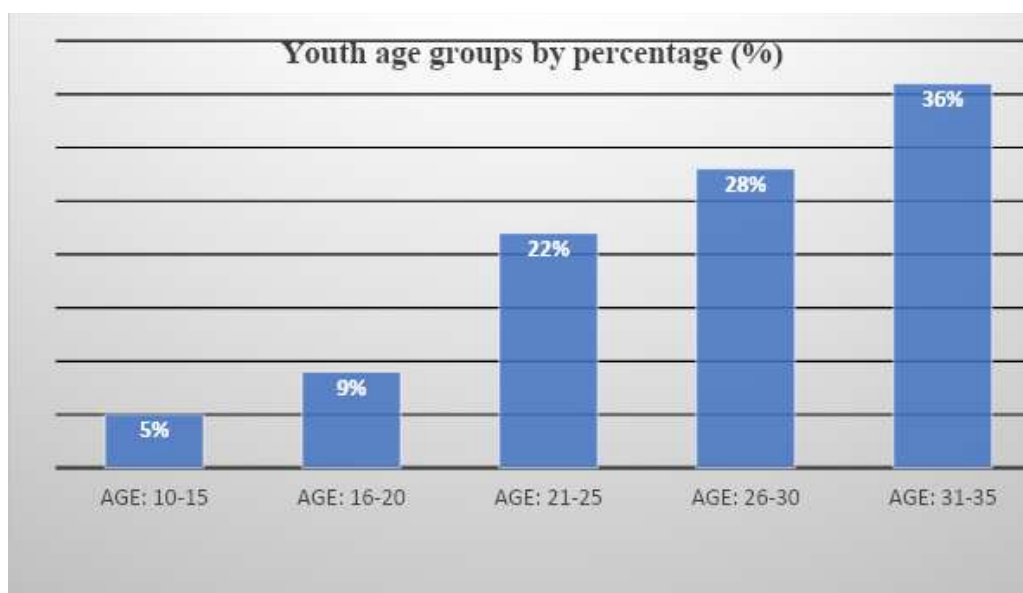
#### **b. Age of youth in agribusiness employment in the study**

The succeeding bar graph presents age of youth in agribusiness employment engaged in the study. As shown in the preceding Figure 1, the majority of youth

**Table 2.** Sex of participants in agribusiness employment.

Sex	Photo voice	FGD	Oral interviews	Number of participants	%
Male	17	76	14	107	50.2
Female	7	89	10	106	49.8
Total	24	165	24	213	100.0

Source: Authors



**Figure 1.** Age of the youth in agribusiness employment.  
Source: Authors

participants fell in the age group of 31 to 35, followed by 26 to 30 then 21 to 25 then 16 to 20 and lastly 10 to 15. As seen in the graph, some youth farmer clubs had members of age as low as 10 to 16 years old. An in-depth enquiry revealed that children were being trained in their future roles. One veteran farmer reasoned that;

*'...wachinymata wanyake wakuleka sukulu pa nthowa, ka pala mwana walekera sukulu mu standard 7, ka waphindulako luso wuli lakuti wakhalire pakaya?'* translated as *'...if a youth drops off from school in standard 7, what skills has the youth gained to enable them survive at home?'*

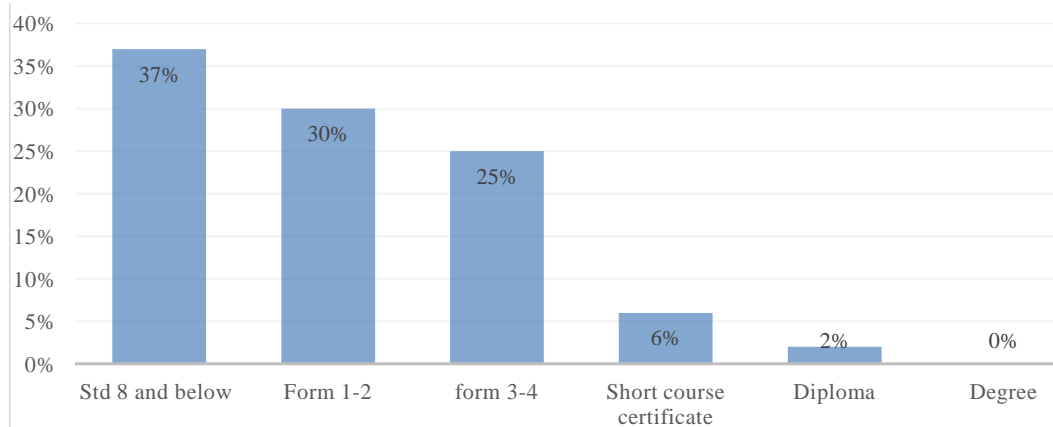
Discussion revealed that attending school to some pupils was clear to hold no future for them. The study had also uncovered that while marriage for persons under the age eighteen is prohibited, the practice is still rampant in rural areas. One member in a group discussion revealed that;

*'nanga uli boma likukanizga nthegwa za awo wandakwane vilimika 18, kweni kuno kumakaya vichali chomene. Ise mu club yithu wanyake walimo*

*wapanthengwa wa vilika 15 na 16 makamaka wazimayi'* translated as *'...while the government prohibits marriage for persons below the age of eighteen, the practice is still rampant in our communities. In our club, we have some married members whose ages are fifteen and sixteen, especially ladies'*

An in-depth enquiry revealed that once married, it is traditionally expected that one assumes all adulthood roles including engaging in economic activities. In this study some youth farmers below the age of 16 were engaged in agribusiness because they had to provide financial support for their families. Findings on early marriages agree with Gausi (2020).

However, the issue of enrolling children below the age of 15 was tricky because of issues of child labour. However, Participants defended this practice as right as it prepares the young ones on their possible role which was the main economic activity. According to one of the respondents, a veteran farmer, the issue of child labour has been misunderstood by many to an extent that children not take part in most agribusiness activities which are also meant to be part of training. As a result, children grow up



**Figure 2.** Summary of education levels for youth participants.  
Source: Authors

disliking farming especially that it is laborious and associated with dirt.

### c. Education level of youth in agribusiness in the study

The next bar graph presents education levels of youths engaged in this study. As shown in Figure 2, 37% of respondents had attained primary school education at various levels up to standard 8. 30% had attained Form 1 and 2 which is junior secondary education, 25% Form 3 and 4 which is senior secondary education. Only 6% had some post-secondary short course training and 2% with diploma and none with a degree. Most of the youth dropped out of school in late grade primary school or early grades secondary school. Such education levels could affect their performance in agribusiness as noted by Tschering (2002) and Xhaba and Masuku (2013).

Apart from affecting performance, the study revealed that the majority of the youth leave the education system with no practical skills in agriculture and agribusiness. One veteran farmer said that;

*'wana sono wakumalizga sukulu kwambula luso panji khumbiro la ulimi chifukwa sono kuma sukulu kulije tuminda twakuyezgelerapo. Nyengo ya ise kilasi lililose kwambira standard 5 mpaka 8 likawa na kamunda kake ndipo tikasambilanga kalimilro na kupikisana kalimilo kawemi na vakukolora pa umaliro. Ichi chikakuzganga chidwi na luso mwakuti wana wasukulu wakakajulanga tuminda twawo kumakaya kwawo? Translated as 'nowadays children complete studies without passion and skills in farming because schools do not have demonstration plots. During our time, every class from standard five to eight had a garden where we practiced farming and we could compete to produce quality harvest. This practice imparted passion and skills in us to establish own small garden at home to practice as*

*individuals'*

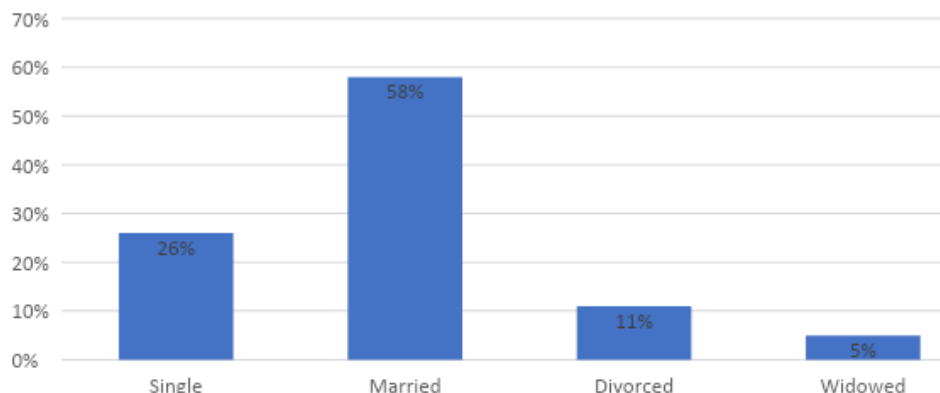
Findings from the veteran farmers were also echoed by one of the agribusiness officers who indicated that the removal of practical agriculture in the curriculum has been creating youth who develop a negative attitude towards agriculture and agribusiness. According to him, such youth dream more of 'white collar' jobs unlike 'blue collars' jobs. According to this respondent, during his primary and secondary school days in the late 1980's, schools had gardens where pupils would plant different crops. This practice inculcated a spirit of loving agriculture in the process. In this study, participants whose education level was up to secondary school level constituted 92% of the youth. This means that the majority of the youth lack skills and motivation in agriculture and agribusiness due to the absence of practical agriculture in the curriculum.

This grouping on education levels was arrived at after noting that using the conventional one which group by actual qualification like Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE), Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) could not work. This format could not work because most of the participants had pursued education up to junior and secondary levels but had not obtained actual qualifications. An in-depth enquiry revealed that the stripping off of Junior Certificate examinations in 2016 and later re-introduced in 2021 left many youths completing the four-year secondary education without any qualification. Some participants felt that this was education wastage as the four years did give neither a certificate nor a skill.

### **Marital status of the youth in agribusiness in the study**

The next bar graph presents marital status of the youth in





**Figure 3.** Summary of marital status for the youth in the study.  
Source: Authors

**Table 3.** Farm gate versus actual selling prices.

No.	Crop/commodity	Minimum farm gate price (MK/ kg)-Government policy	Actual selling price (Mk/ kg)-Study findings	Comments/observations
1	Maize	200	70-110	Far below farm gate price
2	Rice (Polished)	600	300	Far below farm gate Price
3	Rice (Unpolished)	280	175	Far below farm gate Price
4	Soya Beans	300	230	Far below farm gate Price
6	Mixed Beans	350	350	Break even
7	Groundnuts (Shelled)	480	350	Below farm gate Price
9	Sesame	550	500-550	Slightly below farm gate price and break even
10	Cotton (Grade A)	389	309	Below farm gate price

Source for farm gate prices: Ministry of Agriculture; 2019 -2020 farm gate prices.

agribusiness engaged in this study. As shown in Figure 3, on the marital status of the youth in agribusiness in the study, 58% of the participants were married, seconded by 26% who were single, 11% divorced and 5% widowed. An in-depth enquiry revealed that once married, the young family is traditionally expected to be independent economically. With limited source of income in rural areas, agriculture and agribusiness becomes the first option, hence married youth engaging in agribusiness.

**Why do the youth shun away agribusiness employment opportunities?**

One key factor that demotivated youth in agribusiness was low selling prices of agribusiness products. This study noted that most products were being sold at lower prices than government stipulated farm gate prices. This resulted in making little or no profits. Such experiences were promoting youth to shun away from such farming. Table 3 summarizes selling prices against farm gate prices.

Other factors that influenced the youth to shun away agribusiness employment opportunities include; mindset that agribusiness is dirt work, seasonality of incomes, lack of capital, unpredictability on levels of incomes, effects of child labour mindset whereby after getting out of the childhood age, little is done to engage them into farming. The youth also run away from the risks associated with agriculture as noted by Hardaker et al. (2015). Findings on lack of capital were supported by studies of two decades ago, Tschering (2002). This means lack of capital has been long outstanding. The study also uncovered that after shunning agribusiness, some youth opt to migrate to other countries in search of employment. The issue of migration has been supported by Niboye (2018) who discuss youth migration to South Africa.

**The importance of off-farm and non-farm activities in agribusiness**

The seasonal incomes from most agribusinesses also

persuaded other youth farmers to engage in both off farm and non-farm activities such as oxcart transport, bicycle taxi, motorcycle taxi and grocery units. Such activities were reported to be supporting agribusiness such as paying for labour and procuring inputs.

Off farm and non-farm activities were also considered important as they were a means of income diversification and resilience building as noted by Mangulama and Shengkun (2016). Income diversification has been discussed further by Gordon and Craig (2001) who contend that livelihood diversification is often characterized as being driven by two processes; distress push where the poor are driven to seek non-farm employment or want adequate on non-farm opportunities; and demand pull, where rural people are able to respond to rural opportunities.

This study established that most agribusiness enterprises that youth engaged in were seasonal. As such, incomes were also seasonal. It was proposed that in order to make use of time when off season, the youth could be engaged in TEVET related income generation. For instance, rice growers proposed to undergo courses like bricklaying so that during dry season when they have little activities on rice fields, they could be earning some money from constructing houses in their communities. Introduction of TEVET among youth farmers was also noted by Kambombe (2009).

This study has also established that low youth employment levels in agribusiness to be attributed to several reasons. One part is that of internal reasons, concerning the youth themselves. The youth lack passion and skills for engaging in agribusiness. The youth who complete primary and secondary education with lack the passion and skills because the twelve years of school (8 in primary and 4 in secondary schools) does not offer skills and passion in agriculture and agribusiness. This finding has also been echoed by Hendrix and Carley (2018). This paper agrees with David et al. (2022) that there is need for school farms for the youth to acquire practical skills and also introduction of TEVET in schools. While not ignoring the other factors that contribute to low youth employment in agribusiness, the study also discussed external reasons which include challenges associated with agribusiness such as lack of farm inputs, seasonal incomes and low selling prices of agricultural products against high input costs. These findings were in agreement to Zidana, Kaliati, Shani (2020) among other researchers. Bokelmann and Adamsegal (2016) contend that it is possible to transform agriculture. This means that factors (both internal and external) that bar the youth from getting employed in agribusiness can be resolved.

## Conclusion

In summary, this study sought to uncover determinants of youth unemployment in the presence of agribusiness employment opportunities. The study adopted

phenomenological approach in order to gain in-depth contributions from those affected, the youth. Findings and discussion imply that the status of many youths who were unemployed in the presence of agribusiness employment opportunities could be corrected by introducing appropriate education curriculum that speaks to the needs of the society, in this case, practical agriculture and agribusiness employment opportunities. However, other external factors such as challenges related to inputs and marketing of products also need to be addressed in school budgets every financial year. The study may have been limited by research samples and selection. The youth are in majority. This research engaged only those that were in agribusiness clubs to inform the study from lived experiences (phenomenological approach). It is possible that those who completely shun agribusiness may have other input on the subject. Future studies on the subject may need to research on youth who are not in agribusiness at all and a study on skills that may be included in primary or secondary curriculum depending on resources available in specific societies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study drew the following recommendations;

- 1) Government needed to expedite review of land ownership so that both sexes would claim ownership, which is critical in production.
- 2) Promote TEVET among the youth as alternative form of employment to agribusiness.
- 3) There is need to assist farmers with proper storage facilities especially for perishable products.
- 4) The government needs to review to curriculum by incorporating practical agriculture which is the economic back bone of the rural youth.
- 5) Maintain Junior Certificate Examinations as it serves a security valve when one is unsuccessful on Malawi School Certificate of Education. This is because the qualification is still important in terms of securing some formal employment but also act as an entry qualification for some skills training.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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