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## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN AFRICA

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# Fostering Agribusiness Entrepreneurship for Kenyan Youth through Practice-Based Education<sup>\*†</sup>

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**Abstract** Approximately 1 million Kenyan youth enter the labour market each year, a number which the formal sector has been incapable of absorbing. As a result, youth unemployment and underemployment rates are high, with two-thirds of youth aged 15–24 not engaged in the labour force. The lack of formal wage opportunities pushes these young people into entrepreneurial activities; however, due to the theoretical focus of the current education system, many secondary school-leavers do not possess the practice-based skills to start their own businesses. This article argues for building partnerships between secondary schools, largely in rural areas, and agribusinesses to foster skills-building that will enable young people to start entrepreneurial activities in the agricultural sector. It draws on interviews with agribusiness owners and stakeholders in the education sector, and survey data from secondary school students and on youth employment to identify how to improve youth employability through business-led experiential programmes.

**Keywords:** agribusiness, youth, entrepreneurship, experiential learning, education, training, (un)employment, self-efficacy.

## 1 Introduction

Youth unemployment remains a global challenge, with the percentage of 15–24-year-olds who are not in the labour force being as high as 70.5 per cent, 64.4 per cent, and 50.5 per cent in the Arab States, Southern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa respectively, while the world average is 56.8 per cent (ILO 2018). Particularly in Africa, most countries continue to experience a ‘youth bulge’ – a situation in which more than 40 per cent of the population is 15–29 years old (Evoh 2012; Guengant and May 2013) – and have economies whose structure is incapable of benefiting from this demographic dividend. This demographic trend and the resultant economic challenges have rendered the formal sector incapable of absorbing the growing numbers

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of young Africans entering the labour market (AfDB and OECD 2012); thus, the majority of young people will likely remain working in the informal sector (Filmer and Fox 2014) or unemployed.

Similarly, both Kenya's overall population, as well as specifically its youth population, have been on the rise, with the overall population increasing from 29.7 million to 46.6 million in the last two decades (GoK 2018b). Approximately 1 million Kenyan youth enter the labour market each year without competitive skills (ILO 2014). As a result, in 2018, 65 per cent of youth aged 15–24 are not in the labour force (ILO 2018) as there are not enough job opportunities, and it is often challenging for young school-leavers to start sustainable micro and small enterprises, particularly due to a lack of the requisite skills. While the definition of who constitutes 'youth' varies within and across countries and development organisations (Ayele, Khan and Sumberg 2017), here I utilise the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census categorisation of youth, which encompasses people aged 15–35 years old (GoK 2010). However, the article specifically focuses on those aged 15–24 years old because the unemployment rate is most pronounced among this group of youth (ILO 2018).

Cognisant of the country's youth bulge and unemployment situation, the Kenyan government has shown interest in policy-level transformation of youth empowerment. This transformation has a key focus on youth employability, life skills, and entrepreneurship development (GoK 2018c) through programmes such as Kazi kwa Vijana (Jobs for the Youth) and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (Sikenyi 2017). While these programmes are essential strategies for economic development and the realisation of Kenya's Vision 2030,<sup>2</sup> they have been crippled by mismanagement and corruption (*ibid.*), and therefore have not contributed much to economic development or improvement of young people's livelihoods. A further strategy by the Government of the Republic of Kenya (GoK 2018c) is supporting private sector growth through various programmes coordinated by the departments of Devolution, Industrialisation, Enterprise Development, and Public Service and Youth Affairs.

Particularly, the Department of Public Service and Youth Affairs is keen to ensure stakeholder collaboration that leverages investment targeted at youth empowerment, as well as the integration and mainstreaming of youth intervention programmes in sectoral and macro policies at both the county and national levels. It is expected that the private sector, especially those specialising in agribusiness, will benefit as the government is keen to create a more enabling investment environment for this sector (*ibid.*). I argue that this new government approach should support experiential learning – also referred to as 'learning by doing' – through medium-sized agro-processors, and where possible, reinforce practice-based learning among schoolgoing youth by initiating collaborations with family-based micro and small agribusinesses.

Kenya's economy has experienced continuous growth in the past two decades, from the low increases in gross domestic product (GDP) of 0.6 per cent in the early 2000s to an average annual growth of 5.56 per cent between 2013 and 2017 (GoK 2018d). Despite this growth in GDP, evident growth in the private sector, and support from the government and international organisations, youth unemployment – conceptualised in this article as the situation in which an individual is not currently working despite his/her efforts in actively looking for a job – is growing (ILO 2014), and it is considered a threat to social, economic, and political stability.

Thus, this article aims to offer insights on issues of business-led entrepreneurship development and practice-based knowledge among Kenyan youth, by exploring the potential of reinforcing their entrepreneurial identity in the agriculture sector. By entrepreneurship, I mean the process of identifying the potential opportunities for innovation, and starting and growing a business (Dhliwayo 2008). This can be done specifically through developing entrepreneurship education and training curricula, with the objective of equipping young people with entrepreneurial skills and knowledge as to how to identify business opportunities within the agriculture sector. This would enable young people to effectively engage in productive and potentially economically viable agricultural activities as a means of livelihood. This can also be done by reinforcing business-led collaboration among crucial government institutions to design effective youth experiential learning opportunities through apprenticeship programmes. It is also important to foster partnerships between secondary school systems and key stakeholders within the private sector in order to equip young people while still enrolled in secondary schools with modern agricultural practices, practical skills for identifying value chains in agribusiness, and knowledge on how to market their agricultural products. These approaches are conspicuously missing in policy dialogue, the current secondary school curriculum, and the development agenda in Kenya, and this article therefore seeks to fill this research gap.

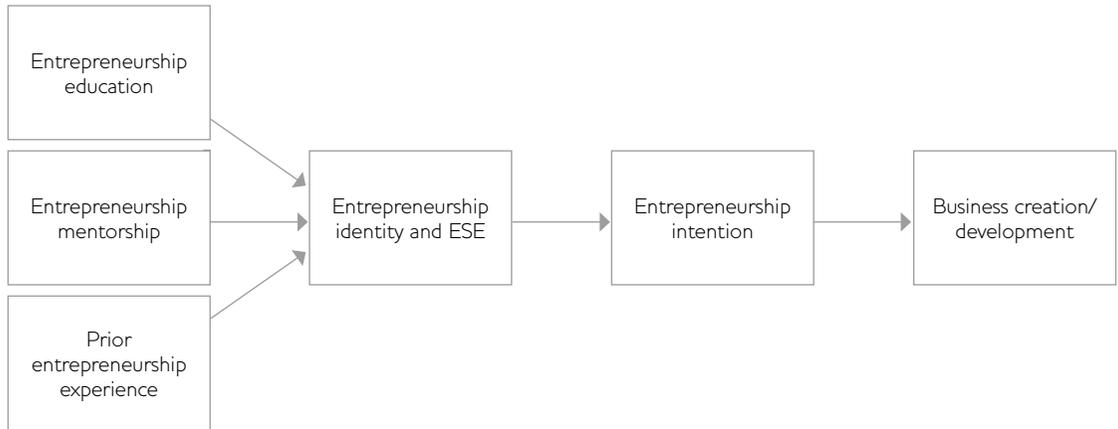
The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of business-led entrepreneurship development and experiential learning, and discusses how promoting agribusiness is likely to reduce the youth unemployment rate. Section 3 discusses the methodology of the study, while the findings are discussed in Section 4. Section 5 concludes and presents some policy recommendations.

## **2 Business-led entrepreneurship development through experiential learning**

### **2.1 Experiential entrepreneurship education**

Limited and lack of formal wage employment opportunities push young people into entrepreneurship as an alternative option (Amin 2009). However, these young people, especially those from developing African economies, face a daunting task as they are not equipped with the requisite entrepreneurial skills and fundamental knowledge to establish

Figure 1 Conceptual framework for entrepreneurship development



Note ESE – entrepreneurial self-efficacy.  
Source Author's own.

a venture or grow an already established business (Schoof 2006; Shittu 2017). Thus, it is important to understand how experiential learning – ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’ (Dhliwayo 2008: 330) – enhances young people’s entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE).

The framework in Figure 1 is an illustration of how entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mentorship, and entrepreneurship experience develop young people’s entrepreneurial identity, and ESE, and consequently trigger their entrepreneurship intentions and actual entrepreneurial behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

Notably, while experiential entrepreneurship learning could be gained by the rural youth by engaging in farm activities/agribusiness skills, these activities only represent a part of what is needed because entrepreneurship development generally involves innovative practices in agribusiness, as well as exposure to other real-life practices. A formal education system that utilises practice-based opportunities such as using entrepreneurial role models in the agriculture sector or taking students on field trips is an equally effective channel to enhance young people’s entrepreneurial skills. It is also worth noting that for most of the schoolgoing youth who are less likely to have started their own businesses, their entrepreneurial experience comes from being involved in family business operations. This is important as previous studies show that a positive correlation exists between prior entrepreneurial exposure gained from working in family businesses and entrepreneurial outcomes (Athayde 2009; Carr and Sequeira 2007). It has also been demonstrated that intentions are immediate precursors to the creation of start-ups/ small enterprises (Kickul *et al.* 2009), and therefore, identifying significant predictors of young people’s ESE is a crucial step towards solving Kenya’s high unemployment.

In addition to the role of experiential learning in developing young people's rural livelihoods through entrepreneurship capabilities in agribusiness (Robinson-Pant 2016), literature on entrepreneurial identity has been highlighted as important in agriculture entrepreneurship (Fitz-Koch *et al.* 2018). One of the strategies that has the potential to develop entrepreneurial identity and ESE is mentorship for novice and aspiring young entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship education (Donnellon, Ollila and Middleton 2014; Rhodes and DeBois 2008). However, literature on how exactly youth mentorship works in developing countries is very limited, which is a hindrance to public policy, especially pertaining to youth entrepreneurship programmes (Shittu 2017). Thus, I posit that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in agriculture, especially in agro-processing, have the potential to enhance youth entrepreneurship outcomes. Through interactions during experiential learning opportunities, the youth will develop partnerships and other necessary social networks with those who are already in the agribusiness sector. This could enable youth to create more innovative and sustainable start-ups in this sector of the economy. Though youth are more likely to create micro-enterprises, these have the capacity to eventually grow into small and medium businesses, thus consequently creating more employment opportunities for future generations.

Besides the gap in the literature on experiential learning and youth mentorship, evidence exists on the significance of agricultural role models in motivating and preparing youth for successful careers in agribusiness (Hagglblade *et al.* 2015). Approximately 22 per cent of the role models in Hagglblade *et al.*'s (2015) study highlighted the importance of initiating mentorship activities with youth at early stages of their education, in primary and secondary schools. The study also recommends that it is important to link students to private sector role models who will be able to demonstrate that agriculture can be a profitable business opportunity, because 'large segments of Africa's youth remain dismissive of agriculture and disinterested in agriculturally related careers' (*ibid.*: 171). This is despite the fact that agriculture has historically been Africa's largest employer (World Bank 2007), and that most of the entry-level jobs which are likely to absorb the growing youth population into the labour market are projected to come from domestic agriculture and the agribusiness sector (Fine *et al.* 2012); this is particularly due to demand for packaged food products and value chains over the next few decades to cater for the growing urbanisation in most African countries (Hagglblade *et al.* 2015).

Agriculture as well as other technical subjects are only taught as elective subjects at secondary school level in Kenya, with only one topic dedicated to entrepreneurship. In addition, the current curriculum inherited from the colonial system is purely theoretical and thus evidently not relevant for the less industrialised Kenyan economy. Therefore, the students are not adequately instilled with the practical skills and knowledge related to enterprising. However, studies have shown that through promoting hands-on training with medium-sized

agro-processors and other willing agricultural enterprises, students' entrepreneurial capabilities, problem-solving skills, and other non-cognitive abilities will be developed – skills which have been proven to greatly enable the identification of entrepreneurship opportunities (Karimi *et al.* 2016).

## 2.2 Youth employment and agribusinesses in Kenya

In this article, agribusiness is conceptualised as a sector of the economy that involves agricultural activities such as crop farming, animal rearing, processing, adding value to agricultural products, and the trading of farm inputs. In Kenya, agribusiness MSMEs operate either formally or informally, employing a range of employees: a micro family-owned enterprise may employ five people whereas medium-sized agricultural firms and agro-processors may have 100 employees. Agribusiness is identified as a crucial economic sector as it has greater youth employment potential compared to sectors such as manufacturing and some service industries (ILO 2018).

Agriculture therefore continues to be the dominant sector of employment for the majority of youth in Kenya and in other African countries (Brooks 2012; see also Wossen and Ayele, this *IDS Bulletin*). Thus, in addition to practice-based entrepreneurship education, rural transformation (diversifying rural economies from agriculture activities to regional and global agri-food systems and value chains, and enhancing urbanisation (Berdegúe, Rosada and Bebbington 2014; see also Wossen and Ayele, this *IDS Bulletin*)) is an important pathway for youth employment opportunities. This is a particularly fitting strategy as most of the youth in Kenya work in the agricultural and service sectors (Brooks *et al.* 2013; ILO 2018). Nevertheless, the contribution of agricultural activities to GDP, specifically those involving crop-growing, has increased from 18.4 per cent in 2013 to 24.9 per cent in 2017 (GoK 2018a).

The agriculture sector has historically provided a large percentage of employment opportunities for Kenyans, but there has been a steady decline in the last 15 years, while employment in the industry sector has seen a positive increase and the service sector has been stable (ILO 2018). Specifically, the general employment rate in the agriculture sector stands at 38 per cent in comparison to 46 per cent in 2000, while the employment rate in the service and industry sectors has averaged 48 per cent and 14 per cent respectively since 2016 (GoK 2018a). With this notable recent decline in agriculture as the main source of employment in Kenya, it is prudent to re-examine the skills and knowledge that youth are exposed to in their early stages of education. This is particularly important since a mismatch between the development of skills and demand in the labour market has been identified as a major contribution to youth unemployment (Omolo 2012). Youth currently represent 34.1 per cent of the Kenyan unemployed labour force, of which 19.2 per cent are 20–24 years old (GoK 2018a).

**Table 1 Sectoral contributions to GDP, 2013–17 (Ksh)**

Economic activity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Gain since 2013*
Agriculture	1,254,760	1,483,077	1,897,347	2,311,862	2,442,371	1,187,611
Manufacturing	506,612	537,999	588,896	653,839	648,397	141,785
Wholesale and retail trade	380,646	431,985	473,395	524,303	588,540	207,894
Transport and storage	378,525	462,457	510,488	561,757	599,438	220,913
Real estate	375,588	417,829	474,318	532,121	575,347	199,759

Note \*Author's own calculations.

Source GoK (2018a), quarterly GDP and balance of payments release.

Table 1 shows that between 2013 and 2017, the agriculture sector was the leading source of GDP in Kenya and its contribution surpassed that of other leading economic sectors, including manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, and real estate (*ibid.*). This indicates that agriculture is an area within the private sector that will potentially help not only reduce youth unemployment in Kenya but also enhance sustainable rural transformation.

Undoubtedly, the acquisition of practical agro-entrepreneurial skills is vital for African youth development, and it is believed that it might be 'what will make the difference between persistent poverty and sustainable livelihoods, between widespread frustrated aspirations and social stability' (Moore 2015: 195). These are timely development approaches because demand for fresh fruit and vegetables in Kenya has increased at an annual rate of 10–12 per cent during the last decade to cater for local consumption as well as regional and global value chains (ITC 2014; Krishnan 2018).

Furthermore, incorporation of value-addition mechanisms for agricultural products is likely to increase the profit-level margins of young rural agro-entrepreneurs, making agribusiness an attractive employment opportunity. However, this can only be best achieved once the youth have attained reliable experiential skills from MSMEs. Youth should therefore be exposed to alternative agribusiness activities such as diversification into horticulture, which includes fruits and vegetables (Weinberger and Lumpkin 2007). They should also be offered information on how they can engage in agro-entrepreneurship through contract farming whereby they can supply agricultural products to supermarkets, a market opportunity that has come about to cater for the rising urban population, with a projected demand of US\$1 trillion's worth of food by 2030 (Adenle, Manning and Azadi 2017).

### 3 Methods and data sources

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, utilising surveys and 12 interviews gathered from key educational stakeholders and owners of

agribusinesses. Excerpts of qualitative interviews used in this article include:

- An interview with a secondary school curriculum expert from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD);
- Two interviews with high school principals;
- Four interviews with secondary school business teachers;
- Two interviews with directors of studies; and
- Three interviews with agribusiness owners.

The interviews were conducted at different times between September 2016 and June 2018. The school interviews were used in examining the extent to which the formal business education curriculum instills students with effective entrepreneurial knowledge. In-depth interviews with owners of agribusinesses examined the current state of the agribusiness sector and the skill levels demonstrated by youth working in the sector, in order to inform policy recommendations on how to create more employment opportunities for young people. Eleven schools were identified from six counties in Kenya (Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Machakos, Uasin Gishu, Homabay, and Kakamega) through purposeful and convenient sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling was used to best understand the current state of entrepreneurship education in Kenya considering the socioeconomic and demographic landscape in the country.

In addition to the qualitative component, quantitative data were gathered using a survey methodology. A total of 1,324 students completed a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire that was based on DeNoble, Jung and Ehrlich's (1999) measure of ESE. This survey sought to measure young people's ESE; that is, their beliefs about business-related capabilities, which include: developing new products and services, recognition of business opportunities based on market demands, and developing relationships with potential business partners and human resource personnel to ensure growth of their business(es). Students' prior entrepreneurship experience from family-owned enterprises was the predictor and was measured by assessing their personal and demographic information as well as how they responded to the question: 'Do you help your parents in running their business[es]?'. Using a youth student sample in the study was very appropriate because they had less than six months to secondary school completion, with the majority highly likely to enter into the labour market rather than enrolling in post-secondary institutions.

#### **4 Findings and discussion**

##### **4.1 Entrepreneurship education must include practical learning**

Evidence from the qualitative data supports the need for practice-based entrepreneurship education and training as it identifies that youth do not have the appropriate skills required for innovative entrepreneurial

activities and value-addition, whereby products are processed to increase their economic value in the competitive agricultural sector. Specifically, interviews with educational stakeholders reveal the deficiency in the current curriculum and present recommendations as to how to develop students' ESE. An interviewee from KICD underlined that there is a challenge in the basic education system as the focus is on instilling students with theoretical knowledge. He said that students 'are not taught practically... they will get very good grades [and] go to the university, but they will never get the practical information because of the theory and not practical focus.'<sup>4</sup> However, as highlighted by the same interviewee, the majority of the students never go to university but join the growing number of unemployed youth.

The lack of practice-based learning opportunities was confirmed by interviews with the high school principals and teachers. Evidence from these interviews revealed that organising experiential activities for youth could improve their entrepreneurship interest in the future as well as their success in starting their own businesses. For instance, a director of studies said:

*Maybe if we change the curriculum in such a way that the teaching techniques is [sic] more practical, like Art is more practical, so we do it more experimental, more practical, in examples it will totally change students' capabilities of starting their own businesses in the future.*<sup>5</sup>

Her recommendations were supported by a school principal: 'If we can be able [sic] to bring in the practical aspect of these subjects, particularly agriculture and business, these are the subjects that can make a student develop those skills of entrepreneurship.'<sup>6</sup> Her sentiments were supported by another principal who acknowledged the need for reforms which are being conducted by KICD as the current curriculum is very academic-based. Ensuring that the curriculum incorporates practical learning was strongly recommended by most of the stakeholders interviewed. For instance, a business studies teacher mentioned that 'the curriculum needs to be reviewed, we need to incorporate practical lessons in the curriculum.'<sup>7</sup> Without practical experiential learning within the education system, youth will not be exposed to modern and effective agribusiness activities.

It was evident from the interviews that the curriculum is not relevant to the realities of the business world; for instance, a director of studies in a school in the western region of Kenya said:

*There is no linkage from secondary to the entrepreneurial business world. Students are never exposed to know more on how to start a business, how or what are the opportunities that are available. So, exposing them [students], maybe in a market to see how people make money and how people do business or start businesses or any entrepreneurial activities, will be [more] effective rather than teaching theoretically.*<sup>8</sup>

With minimal evidence of state-led agribusiness entrepreneurship development as a strategy to reduce the unemployment rate, MSMEs

are a potential agent of supporting rural transformation and experiential learning, as the private sector is more in touch with the enterprising aspects of the agriculture industry. Interviews conducted with agribusiness owners pointed out that youth who are transitioning into agricultural activities from schools lack innovative strategies and the practical skills to engage in agribusiness activities or to successfully identify a potential market for their products. A commercial maize farmer from Kakamega County with 24 years' experience in the sector therefore recommended practice-oriented training to be supported by central government, such as through the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, as well as the county government to improve youth skills. This was confirmed by the other two agribusiness owners from Kirinyaga County. One of these owners is a commercial farmer with over 25 years' experience ranging from coffee farming to horticultural and dairy farming, and who has more than 15 full-time employees. According to this interviewee, it is imperative for youth to be exposed to practice-based agribusiness training through apprenticeship opportunities. Participating in agribusiness apprenticeship will help the youth 'learn how to process agricultural produce, [which] will make them earn more money.'<sup>9</sup> But with the minimal evidence of such experiential learning opportunities in Kenya, this agro-entrepreneur thinks that 'the government should partner with successful and experienced agribusiness people to offer apprenticeship to the youth such as modern techniques like greenhouse farming.'<sup>10</sup>

It was not evident from the interviews with the agribusiness owners whether the youth who acquired practice-based skills were offered permanent employment by their employers, but some of those who acquired capital were able to utilise the skills they had gained to start their own businesses. While the interviews did not clearly show youth employment outcomes through engaging in agricultural activities, the three agribusiness owners highly recommended mentorship programmes. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the challenge of having a successful youth mentorship programme without a well-structured collaboration plan between the private sector and government institutions.

#### **4.2 Experiential learning influences youth entrepreneurial self-efficacy**

Though the interviews with agribusiness and educational stakeholders highlighted how experiential learning contributes to the development of entrepreneurial skills and identity, the employment outcome was not very clear. Thus, I used quantitative data in which ESE is an outcome variable and practice-based experience is the predictor variable to complement the interview data. The results of the regression model are discussed in this section.

As demonstrated through the regression analysis from a survey completed by 1,324 participants enrolled in 11 secondary schools in Kenya, experiential entrepreneurship experience gained through helping in family businesses influenced students' ESE. The linear

**Table 2 Results of the regression analysis with entrepreneurial self-efficacy as the outcome variable and practical entrepreneurial experience as the predictor variable**

Predictor variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	92.21	0.50		185.28	<.001
Practical entrepreneurial experience	4.28	0.61	0.20	7.08	<.001

Source Author's own.

regression model used to show the relationships between the predictor variable and the outcome variable is:

$ESE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{practical entrepreneurial experience} + \epsilon_p$ , where ESE represents entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which is the outcome variable,  $\beta_0$  represents the intercept,  $\beta_1$  represents the slope, and  $\epsilon_p$  represents the error term.

The intercept is the expected mean value of students' ESE when practical experience is zero, and the slope/gradient is the rate of change in students' ESE with the change in their practical experience.

The results are given in Table 2, with ESE being  $92.21 + 4.28$  (practical entrepreneurial experience) + standard error. Results show that practical entrepreneurial experience is a statistically significant predictor of students' ESE,  $p < .001$ . The results also show that when practice-based experience was used as the outcome variable, the model was significant ( $F_{1, 1201} = 50.06, p < .001$ ) and practice-based experience explained 4 per cent of the statistically significant unique variance of ESE. While this is a weak variance, measuring entrepreneurial attributes is challenging as it should involve sociological, personal, demographic, psychological, and business-related factors (Ruiz, Soriano and Coduras 2016) and this could be associated with the low variability in the model. The higher F value of 50.06 and its associated P value which is  $< .001$  for  $\alpha = < .05$  indicates that the linear regression model has predictive capability, so I reject the null hypothesis because of that statistical significance.

Given a unit increase in practical entrepreneurial experience, ESE is equivalent to a score of approximately 96.49. Therefore, the regression model presented shows that practical entrepreneurial experience has an influence on students' ESE. This shows that there exists a positive relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable.

Among the independent variables examined in the larger study to measure predictors of students' ESE among final year secondary school students in Kenya – including level of business studies education, tribe/ethnic culture, family entrepreneurship history, family socioeconomic status, the type of school the students are attending and their gender – practical entrepreneurship experience gained from

helping in family-owned businesses accounted for most of the variance in ESE. Therefore, integrating practical-based (experiential) learning in formal youth education and training develops young people's ESE. This is supported by previous studies which have shown that there is higher impact on students' entrepreneurial outcomes when accompanied by hands-on training experience (Anderson, Envick and Padmanabhan 2012; Kassean *et al.* 2015).

The present study is therefore consistent with prior studies which have shown that young people who have grown up in family businesses develop practice-based experiences which have an influence on their ESE and entrepreneurial intentions (Carr and Sequeira 2007). In addition, skills gained from helping in these family-owned businesses consequently enable school-leavers to start their own businesses in the future or support the already existing family business at later stages in life (Athayde 2009).

Developing young people's ESE is a crucial step in creating entrepreneurs. According to DeNoble *et al.*'s (1999) study, there is a significant positive correlation between ESE and intention (with  $r = .37, p < .001$ ). Similarly, our findings support the need for practice-based entrepreneurship learning among young people as this form of exposure has an influence on the development of their ESE. Furthermore, the results of the study reveal the importance of ESE among young people, because without the self-belief that one can be successful in establishing a business, it is daunting to develop any entrepreneurial intention and subsequent action.

### **5 Conclusions and policy recommendations**

Lack of self-employment skills continues to be a major impediment for young people in Kenya. With recent government surveys showing that there are not enough jobs for youth, there is a need for collaboration between the policy drivers in government, stakeholders in the private sector, and those in education and training institutions. One area that can benefit from such partnerships is agriculture because it has the potential to create more employment opportunities and improve rural youth livelihoods. Evidence from the data analysed in this article suggests the need for business-led entrepreneurship development and curricula reforms, whereby young people will not only be exposed to entrepreneurship knowledge to identify potential agribusiness opportunities, but also how to develop competitive businesses within the agriculture sector. As a strategy for solving the increasing rate of youth unemployment, this article also advocates for experiential entrepreneurship education and training as it was found to be an effective way of developing young people's ESE. While the above-mentioned strategies have the potential to foster entrepreneurship development, in order to ensure a well-structured plan in which youth acquire the relevant entrepreneurial skills, I make the following policy recommendations.

First, with the ongoing curricula reforms spearheaded by KICD, I recommend the integration of life skills and experiential entrepreneurial elements into the basic education curriculum by involving the relevant private sectors because they generally have real entrepreneurship experience in various crucial industries. This recommendation is supported by prior studies which have shown that when practice-based education and training is incorporated into the secondary school curriculum, students get opportunities to engage in projects similar to experiences in the actual entrepreneurial environment, which consequently improves their entrepreneurial outcomes (Bell 2015; Hynes, Costin and Birdthistle 2010; Kassean *et al.* 2015). However, for effective entrepreneurial outcomes, I acknowledge that it will be prudent to initiate teacher-training programmes to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the new curriculum and to positively influence students' perceptions about engaging in agribusiness activities. Also, since just the few students taking business studies and agriculture subjects are exposed to the scant educational materials on entrepreneurship and agribusiness knowledge in the current curriculum, business studies should also be made compulsory for all students up to tenth grade and agriculture made compulsory for all rural-based secondary schools.

Second, the Ministry of Education should collaborate with the Ministry of Industrialisation and Enterprise Development, and the Directorate of Youth Affairs in designing experiential learning opportunities for the youth through apprenticeship programmes. In rural Kenya, exposing youth to real-life entrepreneurial activities offered by agribusiness MSMEs will develop their ESE, as demonstrated in the regression model and will equip them with the competitive agribusiness skills as demonstrated by the interviewed agribusiness owners. Consequently, this will enable the youth to start sustainable agribusiness-related micro and small enterprises.

Lastly, I recommend the involvement of successful agribusiness owners in youth educational field trips as this will allow young people to acquire the relevant entrepreneurship skills such as venture identification, teamwork, and problem-solving, as well as life skills and critical thinking skills. Through interacting with agribusiness owners, particularly those from the local community, some young people will not only develop tacit knowledge but also acquire social networks that will potentially help them to navigate the competitive agribusiness sector in the future. Young people will also develop strategies as to how to venture in agribusiness, ranging from establishing micro-enterprises to small enterprises. These collaborative strategies with stakeholders within the business world will enhance students' analytical skills and instil them with an entrepreneurial mindset.

### Notes

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- 1 Florida State University.
  - 2 Kenya's Vision 2030 (GoK 2008) is a government programme that was launched in 2008 with the aim of transforming the country into a globally competitive and industrialised middle-income economy.
  - 3 Note that business creation is not always a linear process as Figure 1 may suggest. For example, entrepreneurial intentions could be reinforced by entrepreneurial education or mentorship but those with entrepreneurial intentions could also seek mentorship to enhance their capability to create and grow businesses.
  - 4 Interview, September 2016.
  - 5 Interview, May 2017.
  - 6 Interview, June 2017.
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