

# Determinants of Youth Participation in Agricultural Enterprises as Job Creation Initiative: Evidence from Southern Ethiopia

Kassa Tarekegn\*, Kusse Kameylo, Duge Galtsa and Endrias Oyka

## Abstract

*Rural job creation initiative gained its momentum in southern Ethiopia by ensuring participation of youth in different agricultural enterprises in the form of groups and cooperatives by 2015. Even though agriculture has huge potential to absorb a large number of people, youth tend to stand away from the sub-sector. Hence, this study was intended to assess the determinants of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises in selected districts of Southern Ethiopia. Multi-stage sampling techniques were applied to select 160 sampled youths and the probit model was applied to analyse the determinants. Seasonality of agricultural income, fear of risk of agriculture, lack of initial capital, the problem of getting the group members and ineffectiveness of previously grouped enterprises are the main factors hindering youth participation in agricultural enterprise as rural job creation works. The probit model result also shows that education level, bureaucracy in obtaining loan credit getting bureaucracy, lack of initial capital, fear of being group and risk and uncertainty and lack of working place are adverse determinants of youth participation. Hence, monitoring of the organized enterprises at the ground before credit disbursement and division of credit individually, and introduction of agricultural insurance scheme through agricultural enterprises are suggested. Further, the stakeholders need to revisit the initial saving percentage, interest rate, and payback period to increase youth participation.*

**Keywords:** Agricultural enterprise, job creation, youth participation, Southern Ethiopia

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Corresponding Author: \*Agricultural Economics and Gender Research, Arba Minch Agricultural Research Centre. Southern Agricultural Research Institute, P.O. Box. 2228, Arba Minch, Ethiopia, Email: [kassatar12@gmail.com](mailto:kassatar12@gmail.com).

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## **1. Introduction**

Ethiopia is an agrarian country where more than 68% of the employed population works in the agricultural sector in 2017 (World Bank, 2017). However, rural youth in predominantly agrarian countries face distinctive and multifaceted challenges (Tigabu and Gebeyehu, 2020). Over the last three decades, the entire labour force of Ethiopia has tripled. Employment creation for such a rapidly increasing labour force has become increasingly challenging (Boulanger et al. 2019). Rural youth employment presents a challenge to Ethiopia due to high underemployment, growing youth landlessness, poor rural infrastructure and limited financial access for the youth to start their own business, insignificant rural job creation, leading to an increase in excess internal migration to urban areas and migration abroad (Bezu and Holden, 2014; Broussara and Tekleselessie, 2012; CSA, 2017).

With full and active government backing, the agricultural sector has huge potential and thriving businesses provide an enormous opportunity to entrepreneurs (Silva, 2010). Even though the sector has the potential to absorb a large number of people, youth tend to stand away from the agricultural sector in Ethiopia (Emily and Firew, 2016). It had been also reported that an enormous number of people; particularly young graduates from higher education are being faraway from agriculture due to several problems in the countryside. The greater parts of them are not undertaking agriculture as their main livelihood with only 9% getting to join the sector due to many challenges (Bezu and Holden, 2014). These challenges might be due to a lack of good governance (corruption, bias, bureaucracy and discrimination), lack of social networks, a divergence between skills and the labour market and low-quality educational policy and system (Tadesse, 2020).

Having recognized the importance of the agriculture sector, the Ethiopian government has exerted great effort to promote awareness among the youth about the potentials of this sector (Tadesse et al., 2017). Currently, there is job scarcity in other more established fields such as government and the private sectors. The agricultural sector has space to create a suitable working environment for the youth as well as other classes of the age of rural citizens. Above all, there is a pressing need to change the interest of youth towards looking at the agricultural sector as one of the opportunities for them to be self-employed.

The Ethiopian government has been encouraging young people to start small businesses to reduce the rate of youth unemployment (Boulanger et al. 2019). Based on this approach, young people who want to become entrepreneurs are encouraged to organize themselves as groups and associations to access microfinance. In the whole region of the country, youth are organized in groups and associations based on the size of a member of individuals and type of enterprises they are willing to participate in their respective woredas office of youth and sport (Tadesse 2020). Even if, by having high encouragement of government to start micro and small agricultural enterprises in the country, they tend to have low willingness to initiate and

start their micro and small agricultural enterprises. After they organized themselves into groups and association and obtained credit, some of them are not starting business enterprises as they planned. Moreover, some of them do not effectively run their enterprises properly based on agreements with the government.

As a result, a huge amount of money from the government which was invested in youth enterprises used ineffectively. The question is: what are the reasons behind why they have low interest to participate and withdraw themselves from the enterprises? Why they become ineffective and not starting enterprises fully? The factors that hinder them in such enterprise initiation has not been studied so far in the southern Ethiopia. The objective of the study is to assess the determinants of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises in selected zones of Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Ethiopia.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### *2.1: Sampling and Sample Size Determination*

This study was conducted in Basketo special woreda, Gamo, Gofa and Konso zones of Southern Ethiopia. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sampled youths. In the first stage, including Basketo Special Woreda, one woreda from each of the three zones were selected purposively based on the presence of a higher number of youth groups and associations at rural and peri-urban areas as compared to other woredas.

In the second stage, two kebeles were selected from each woreda based on the concentration of a larger percentage of youth groups that are participated in micro and small agricultural enterprises as compared to other kebeles in the woreda. At the third stage, from the list of the youth at kebele level, 20 youths were selected randomly. Accordingly, a total of 160 youths have participated in this study.

### *2.2: Type of Data and Method of Data Collection*

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected by using structured questionnaire among the youths. Primary data on access to land, access to credit, source and availability of information for initiation and attitude was collected to know their extent of influence on the willingness of rural and peri-urban youth to participate in micro and small agricultural enterprises, and data on acceptance, type of small agricultural enterprises, the early problem for business initialization, training to enhance skill and knowledge, product type, time of initiation and completion, the role of the institution, and market access to be collected to investigate their extent of influence on effectiveness in the enterprises they participated. Finally socio-economic, political, and cultural constraints and opportunities on participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises were

collected by using observation, key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion Secondary data was collected from both published and unpublished documents.

### 2.3: Method of data analysis

Both descriptive statistics and econometric analysis were used. Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were used to analyze and quantitative data. For econometric analysis probit model was used to analyze the determinants of youth's willingness to participate in enterprises.

To choose the fittest econometric model, the dataset was thoroughly checked. As the result the binary models such as logit and probit models were the alternatives used for this study. In these models, the probabilities are bound between 0 and 1 and they fit well to the non-linear relationship between the probabilities and the explanatory variables. However, Gujarati (2004) has noted that in most applications, the cumulative normal function (probit) and the logistic function (logit) are quite similar, the main difference being that the logistic function has slightly fatter tails. In addition different studies indicate suggested the use of probit model is more advantageous due its normal distribution nature latent error terms (Etim et al. 2020; Nsikak-Abasi and Edet, 2018; Joseph et al 2021). Thus, based on the assumption of normal distribution of dependent variable; the probit model was used to estimate the probability of youth participation in agricultural enterprises as job creation.

Youth participation in agricultural enterprise was measured by using a dummy variable that took a value of 1, when the youth participated in any agricultural enterprise as job creation works, and 0 otherwise. The general functional form of the binary probit model is given in Equation (1).

$$Y_i = \beta_i X_i + \mu_i \mu_i \sim N(0,1) \quad (1)$$

$Y_i$  = is a dependent variable (Participation in agricultural enterprise) that takes 1 if the youth participate in agricultural enterprise as job creation work and 0 otherwise

$X_i$  = is vector of explanatory variables hypothesized to affect youth participation decision

$\beta_i$  = is a parameter to be estimated that measures the effects of explanatory variables on participation

$\mu_i$  = is a normally distributed disturbance with mean (0) and constant variance and captures all unmeasured variables.

## 3: Results and Discussions

### 3.1: Descriptive statistics result

Out of the total sample size of respondents surveyed, 10.63% were female whereas 89.38% were male in the study area (Table 1). This finding implies that male is found to be dominant participants in micro and

small agribusiness as compared to their counterparts. The reasons for low participation of female could be attributed to fears to take responsibility and lack of awareness.

With regards to education level, the majority of the youths are under the high school level (grade 9-12). Only about 14% of youths have a diploma and above. This indicates that as the education level of youth increases, youths are searching for a decent work rather than participating in agricultural business enterprise. Majority of youth are married. This could have a cultural effect in the study area as the community in general expects their sons/daughters to be got married as soon as attained age which may have repercussion in involving agribusiness.

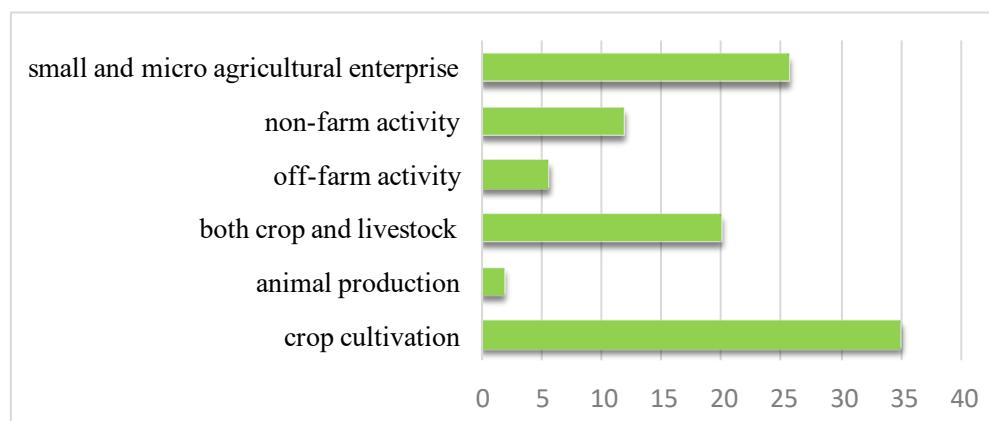
**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents**

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	143	89.38
	Female	17	10.63
Age	15-20	5	3.125
	21-25	7	4.375
	26-30	50	31.25
	31-35	68	42.5
	Above 35	30	18.75
Education level	Read and write	1	0.625
	1-8 completed	70	43.75
	9-12	67	41.875
	Diploma	20	12.5
	University graduate	2	1.25
Marital status	Single	51	31.88
	Married	108	67.50
	Divorced	1	0.63

Source: Field Survey, 2020

#### 4.2: Livelihood activity

Youth in the study area were found to be involved in livelihood activities such as crop production, livestock production, non/off-farm activities and to some extent small and micro-enterprises. According to the survey result, the proportional share of their livelihood to small and micro enterprise was the main livelihood activity for youth next to crop cultivation (Figure 1).

**Figure.1.** Livelihood sources (percent)

#### 4.3: Types of agricultural enterprises in which youth participates

Identifying types of micro and small agricultural enterprises, especially the main types of micro and small agricultural enterprises in which youth are involving was one of the specific objectives of the study. Accordingly many types of micro and small agricultural enterprises were identified in which many youths are engaging as employment for livelihood improvement in the area. These include cattle fattening, poultry production, sheep and goat production, dairy production, and crop production (Figure 2).

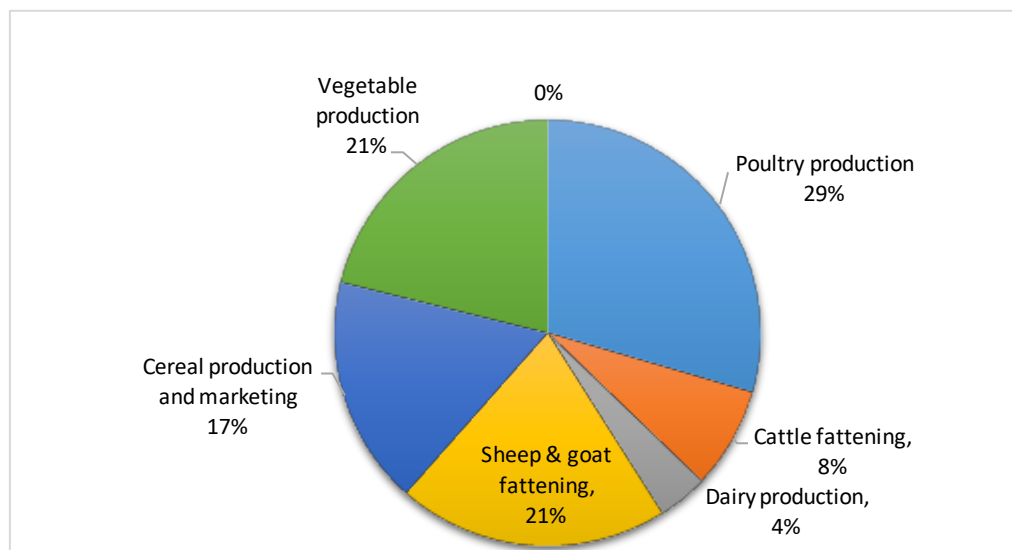
The majority of the organized youths are based on livestock enterprise (63.3%) while the remaining 37% of the youths are organized in crop-based enterprises. Goats, sheep, cattle and poultry are the dominant livestock in the area. Cattle fattening in which youth are involving is playing an important role in serving people in the area. Mostly oxen are fattened by owners in in which people buy oxen with low quality and bring for the market after quality improvement. They sell the fattened oxen in all local markets, in which some collectors bring their product for other bigger markets whereas some are sold to nearby markets for hotels. In line with fattening, dairy production was also an emerging alternative economic activity for youths in the area mostly by focusing on hybrid cows. They buy a minimum of two-five improved female hybrid calves to sell milk. Especially the newly introduced breeds are serving the people by providing high yield compared to a local one. Producers of milk products supply their products to local collectors and hotels.

Cattle fattening was also a good business for youth throughout the study area. It is being practiced by buying the oxen and keep for at least three months by adjusting the selling time on their own. The problem here is lack of market linkage by the cooperating government bodies and some of the youth lack common grazing and keeping land since government only supports by providing the credit only. As the result, this activity was mostly done by taking credit in a group and keeping the fattening animals individually which is too difficult for the management of the group. Thus, these types of business

management leads to failure in continuing business together in the shelters of group/cooperatives and thereby fail in the promotion to large businesses. Sheep is the main small ruminant produced in the area especially at Gamo highlands and was also an extent to which youths are involved. While goat fattening is also practiced at Konso and Gofa zones areas by youths as an alternative means of job creation enterprises. Poultry is the one enterprises in which the highest percentage of youths are engaged in the study area. Since it is the simplest and easiest business that generates income in a short period, it is highly preferred by youths as compared to others.

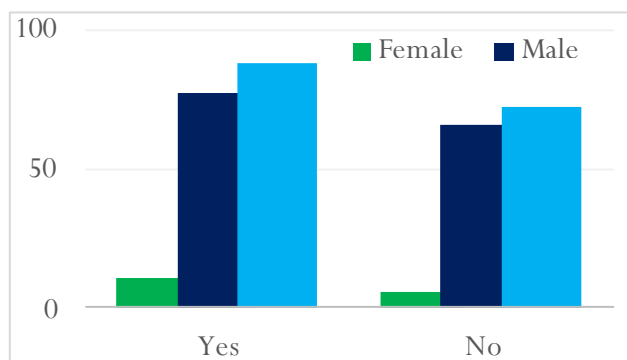
Under crop production, cereal production like teff, sorghum and maize were the part of business opportunity on which the youths are involved. The problem here is the effect of climate change such as lack of rainfall on time leading to delay on cropping season and yield reduction. In addition, the disease is also the main problem. Finally, vegetable production like potatoes, onion and tomatoes are also produced in the area especially during winter by application of small irrigation. It covers about 21 percent of the total enterprises that youths are organized.

**Figure 2.** Types of agricultural enterprises



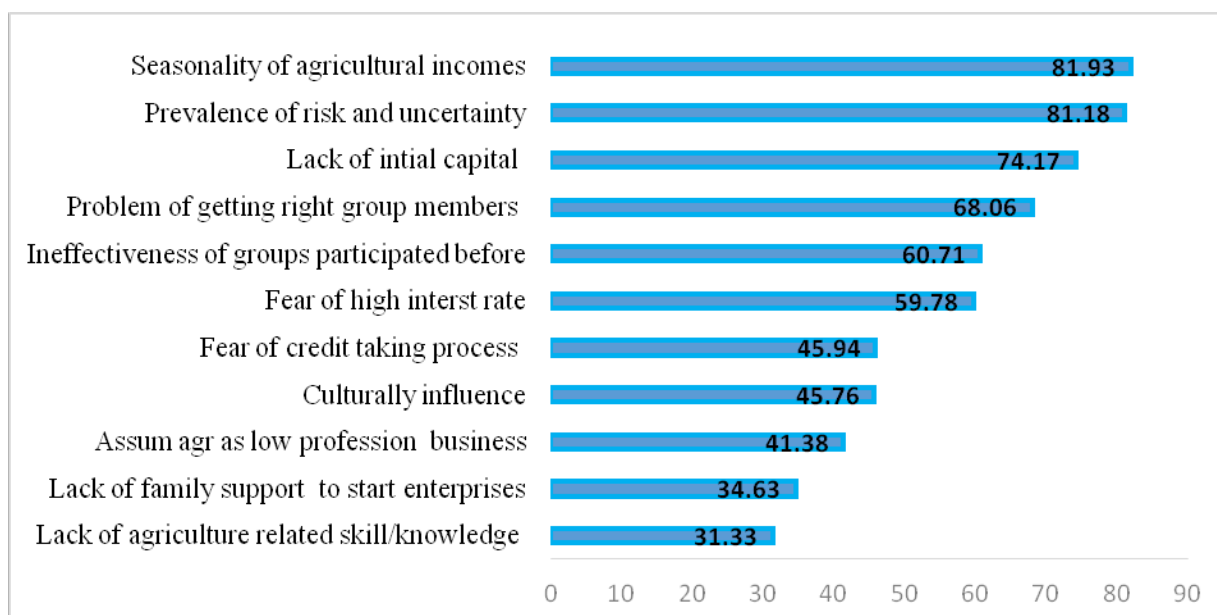
*4.4: Determinants of rural youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises:* Before proceeding to assess the determinants of youth participation, it is better to discuss the participation level of youth in agricultural enterprise in the study area. According to the survey result in Fig 3, from the sampled youths about 55% were organized youth participants in the agricultural enterprise as job creation. From this almost 90 percent of the participants are males.

**Figure 3: Youth participation**



Overall, the participation of youth in agricultural enterprises is low as compared to the sector’s job creation potential. The reasons for youths not being organized into the agricultural enterprise are summarized in figure 4 below. The result shows that seasonality of agricultural income and risk and uncertainty, are leading factors affecting youth willingness for not participating in the study area. Lack of initial capital to receive credit, the problem of getting the right group members having the common conscience of working together are also other important factors that affect the participation of youth. Sowing the effectiveness of organized enterprises, fear of high-interest rates and negative perception of youth by considering agriculture as low profession work were also other challenges.

**Figure 4: Factors affecting youth participation**



Even though the youths are organizing themselves in agricultural micro-enterprises groups, there is the problem of running the organized enterprises. For instance, among the organized youths (55%), only about 59% were running their business enterprise. The remaining 41% of them did not start their

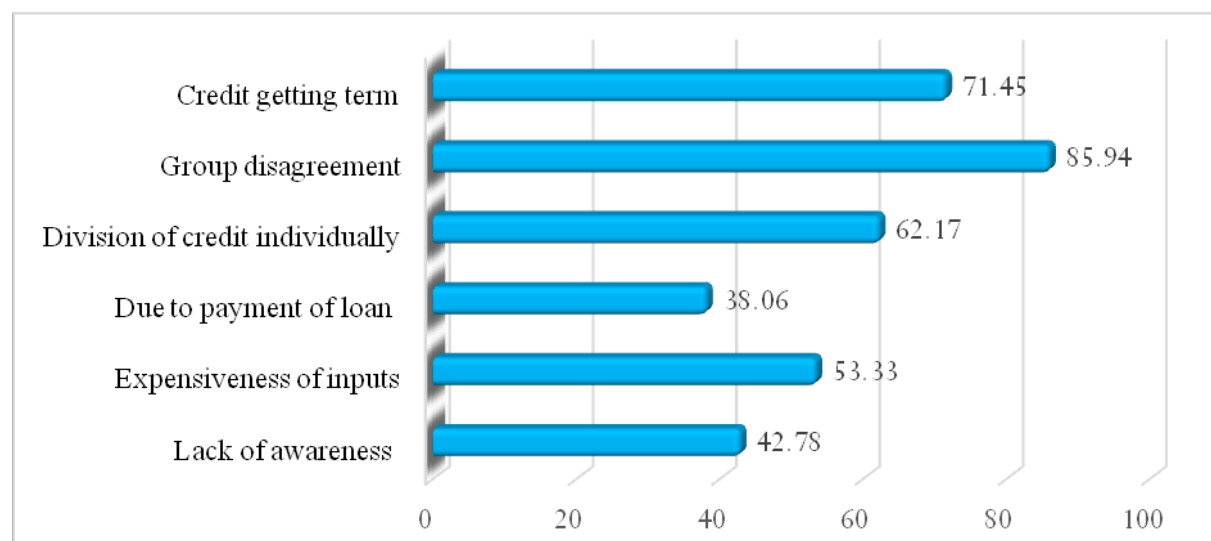


organized enterprise. The reasons were portrayed in Figure 5. Accordingly, group disagreement is the main reason for not running the enterprise they cooperated on. During grouping themselves, they come together with the same goal and after getting credit the grouped youth changed their idea by requesting to divide the credit individually.

The focus group discussion also confirms that after getting the credit the group member divides the credit individually. This implies that the youths are aiming to form a group legally to fulfil the criterion of cooperative promotion office to receive credit and then to work together. As a result, they are not running the planned grouped enterprise since the divided credit received in pieces of money is too small and not enough to do any planned activity. This further led to purchase clothes and other temporary materials and facing difficulty in repaying the revolving funds.

Cumbersome procedures in obtaining loans and expensiveness of the inputs concerning the revolving fund (credit) the youth receiving are also another challenging factor for youth for not running the organized enterprises. Credit provision is not at one term it is rather in three terms. The youths planned to start their enterprise at one time however the challenge here is the provided credit is not adequate to run the business. After getting the first term of credit most of the enterprises start to construct the house only or they divide the credit individually until they get the second term of credit. The second term credit provision is after the grouped youths had purchased and or constructed all planned materials in the first term. The problem here is the amount of credit, term of receiving credit and type of enterprise they are engaged are not matching since the activities vary from enterprise. As the result, the organized groups are not functioning due to the delay in providing credit on a basis of the plan.

**Figure 5:** Reasons for not running the grouped enterprises



3.5: *Determinants of youth participation in agricultural enterprise (Probit model result)*

The results from empirical estimation of probit model shows the coefficients, standard errors, significance levels, marginal effects, LR Chi-Square, and Pseudo R-square as depicted in table 2. The result of probit regression shows the log-likelihood ratio (LR  $\chi^2$ ) is significant at 1%; meaning that the explanatory variables included in the model jointly explain the probability of youth to participate in the micro and small agricultural enterprise. Among the hypothesized variables, education level, extension contact, bureaucracy in obtaining loan, lack of initial capital, fear of being in a group and lack of working place were significantly determining variables.

The extension services on youth job creation are significantly and positively influenced youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises at a 5% significance level. The coefficient of extension contact is positive and implies that extension contact positively influence the probability of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises. With its marginal effect, it implies that as extension contact increase by a unit, the probability of youth participation in micro and small agriculture enterprise will increase by 11.0%, keeping other variables constant. The study by Joseph et al (2021) observed a similar finding confirming that extension services for youth would increase the probability of youth engagement in agribusiness in Vietnam and Zambia.

Working place (land) availability was also found significant at a 1% significance level with its marginal effect of 0.323. The coefficient of land availability is positive which implies that land availability positively affects the probability of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises. The model result shows that working place (land) availability will increase the probability of youth participation in agricultural enterprises by 32.3%, keeping other variables constant. This means that youth for whom land is made available, have a higher probability of participating in the micro and small agricultural enterprise than their counterparts. This was consistent with the result reported by Tura *et al* (2016) and Lucy (2016) and also shows that land access was positively and significantly related to youth participation in agriculture.

Bureaucratic red tape in obtaining loan was another variable found significant at a 1% significance level with a marginal effect of 0.258. The coefficient of bureaucracy in obtaining loan is negative and implies that bureaucracy in credit negatively affects the probability of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises. With its marginal effect, it shows that credit getting bureaucracy will decrease the probability of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises decreases by 25.8% keeping other variables constant. Mostly credit getting for youths depends on the keen relation of the youth and their family. As the result, the youth groups who have a keen relationship with those credit-giving organizations get credit easily without any bureaucracy as compared to other

counterparts. A study by Adella *et al.* (2020), confirms that youth with access to credit is more likely to be involved in horticulture agribusiness compared with youth who have no access to credit in Tanzania.

It was also found that fear of being a group becomes significant at a 1% significance level with a marginal effect of -0.613. The coefficient of fear of being a group is negative and implies that fear of being a group negatively affects the probability of youth participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises. With its marginal effect it implies that for those who did not fear being a group, the probability of their participation in micro and small agricultural enterprises will increase by 61.3% than their counterparts, keeping other variables constant. This means that youth who didn't fear being in a group to participate in agricultural enterprises as their means of livelihood in the future have a higher probability of participating in micro and small agribusiness. This finding is similar to the finding of a study by Akpan *et al.* (2015).

The education level of youths and lack of initial capital are other negatively and significantly influencing variables. For instance, as education increase by 1 grade (level), the probability of youth participation in agriculture enterprise decreases by 18%, holding other factors constant. As compared to those youths who have access to initial capital, the probability of youth participation in agriculture enterprise decreases by 36% from those youth who lacks initial capital, holding other factors constant. A study by Etim *et al.* (2020) find similar results in Nigeria while Twumasi *et al.* (2019) found the dissimilar result in Ghana.

**Table 2: Determinants of youth participation in agricultural enterprise**

Participation	Coefficients	S.E.	Sig.	dy/dx
Experience in agricultural activities	0.473	0.381	0.221	-0.033
Sex	-0.549	0.494	0.110	-0.062
Marital status	0.243	0.417	0.561	0.017
Education level	-0.925***	0.078	0.001	-0.184
Extension services	0.565**	0.276	0.030	0.110
Family income level	0.929	0.631	0.141	0.175
Lack of initial capital	-1.932***	0.596	0.001	-0.357
Credit getting bureaucracy	-1.347***	0.318	0.001	-0.258
Fear of being in group	-3.161***	0.645	0.000	-0.613
Fear of risk and uncertainty	-0.284	0.561	0.613	-0.055
Working place (land) availability	1.658***	0.605	0.006	0.323
Constant	1.435	0.103	0.134	

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Seasonality of agricultural income, fear of risk and uncertainty of agriculture, lack of initial capital, the problem of the minimum recommended group members, and ineffectiveness of previous grouped enterprise are the main determinants of youth from participation in an agricultural enterprise. While, group disagreement, credit getting terms, division of credit individually, expensiveness of inputs and loan payment after getting credit are the identified main reasons for not ruining the enterprises after grouping.

From the econometric result, this study concludes that education level, extension contact, credit getting bureaucracy, lack of initial capital, fear of being group and risk and uncertainty, lack of working place (land) are significant determinants of youth participation. Finally, terms of credit provision, group disagreement, division of credit individually after getting it OMF, planning from top-down, and climate variability are the top reasons for the ineffectiveness of agricultural enterprises in the youth job creation process.

Therefore, monitoring and evaluation of the organized enterprise at the ground before credit disbursement, solving problem with regards to credit from the OMF side, introduction of agricultural insurance through this youth agricultural enterprises were recommended. In addition, the policy issues with regards to initial saving, interest rate and payback period credit should be revisit based on the nature to increase youth participation.

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