



CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria, particularly in the northeastern region where insecurity, poor infrastructure, and limited industrial activity exacerbate joblessness. This study will examine the challenges and prospects of youth employment in Yobe State using a quantitative research approach. A structured questionnaire will be administered to 380 youths across selected local government areas in the state, and the data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS version 26. The findings will reveal a significant proportion of the youth population is either unemployed or self-employed in informal sectors with limited income and stability. Major challenges that will be identified include lack of access to vocational training, limited startup capital, corruption in program implementation, and inadequate government and private-sector job opportunities. Although several youth employment and empowerment programs exist, their effectiveness remains limited due to poor targeting, low funding, and weak monitoring frameworks. However, the study will also highlight potential prospects for reducing youth unemployment through targeted investments in skills acquisition, entrepreneurship development, and the revival of local industries. The research will recommend a holistic and transparent approach to youth employment policy implementation, with emphasis on education reform, vocational training, stakeholder collaboration, and improved governance mechanisms. The study also provides empirical evidence that can guide government and development agencies in designing more effective youth employment strategies tailored to the realities of Yobe State.

1.0 Introduction

Youth employment is a critical concern in Nigeria, where over 35% of the youth population remains unemployed or underemployed. The problem is especially pronounced in Yobe State due to several factors including insecurity, limited infrastructure, low industrial capacity, and ineffective policy implementation. Despite various government initiatives aimed at promoting youth employment, the impact has been marginal. A scientific analysis of the challenges and prospects of youth employment in Yobe is necessary to inform future policies and interventions.

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It is universal fact that unemployment constitutes one of the major five macroeconomic problems. Others include; lack of economic growth, high inflation, the balance of payment disequilibrium, and high-income inequality. Unemployment is the main economic problem, which Nigeria faces currently. Unemployment has existed since independence but it becomes a source of concern lately as unemployed youth seem to devised some anti-social means of providing for themselves. In the last decade, the rate of crimes ranging from armed robbery, kidnappings for ransom, terrorism, etc has tremendously increased. Therefore, the need for strategies that will lead to job creation for the teeming youths and social development is needed. Hence, in order to address the youth unemployment in Nigeria, there is need for holistic approach; as short-cut will not work any longer (Echebiri, (2005).

Within this national landscape of pronounced regional inequality, Yobe State emerges as a location of particular scholarly and policy significance. Situated in northeastern Nigeria, Yobe exemplifies the convergence of multiple development challenges that collectively constrain economic opportunities for its youthful population. The state ranks among the least industrialized in the federation, with an economy predominantly dependent on agriculture and small-scale trading activities that offer limited prospects for formal sector employment. This economic structure, characterized by limited diversification and low value-added activities, fundamentally shapes the employment landscape confronting young people as they transition from education into the labor market.

The security situation in northeastern Nigeria adds another layer of complexity to the youth unemployment challenge in Yobe State. The region has been profoundly affected by insurgent activities, most notably the Boko Haram conflict, which has persisted for over a decade with devastating consequences for economic development and social stability. Research has documented how these security challenges "discourage businesses and investors," creating an environment inimical to private sector development and job creation. The resulting economic contraction and dislocation have disproportionately affected young people, who face not only reduced employment opportunities but also the psychosocial consequences of living in conditions of protracted conflict and uncertainty.

The relationship between youth unemployment and security in Yobe State is not unidirectional but rather dialectical: while insecurity undermines economic activity and employment generation, high levels of youth unemployment themselves constitute a risk factor for continued instability. Academic inquiry has increasingly focused on this reciprocal relationship, with studies examining how "various causes of insecurity and unemployment among the youth in Yobe state" interact to perpetuate cycles of deprivation and conflict. This interconnection suggests that addressing youth unemployment is not merely an economic imperative but also a fundamental component of peace building and sustainable development in the region.

The challenge of youth unemployment has emerged as one of the most pressing socioeconomic issues confronting nations across the Global South, with Nigeria representing a particularly acute case within sub-Saharan Africa. As Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, Nigeria is experiencing what demographers and development scholars have termed a "youth bulge" a demographic phenomenon

wherein a disproportionately large segment of the population comprises children and young people. Current estimates indicate that approximately 43 percent of Nigeria's population is under 14 years of age, while a further 33 percent falls within the 15 to 24 years age bracket, with this growth trajectory projected to persist until at least 2050. This demographic configuration presents both extraordinary opportunities and significant challenges: the potential for a demographic dividend that could drive economic transformation exists alongside the pressing reality of widespread unemployment and underemployment among young people of working age.

The unemployment crisis affecting Nigerian youth cannot be understood in isolation from the broader structural context within which it is embedded. Scholars have observed that this crisis possesses "deep historical roots and exists within a wider context of poor governance, insecurity, conflict, and poverty". These intersecting factors create a complex web of causation that transcends simplistic explanations focused solely on labor market dynamics. The situation is further complicated by substantial regional variations in employment outcomes, with the Northern regions of the country and particularly the Northeast geopolitical zone experiencing significantly higher levels of youth unemployment than their Southern counterparts. This geographical disparity in employment prospects has led some observers to characterize Nigeria as comprising "Two Nigerians" in terms of job opportunities: one sector offering high growth and income potential, and another characterized by traditional low-productivity subsistence activities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Unemployment among youth in Yobe State continues to rise despite various empowerment programs. Factors such as insecurity, low skill acquisition, corruption in program delivery, and a lack of sustainable private-sector opportunities have compounded the issue. Most existing studies on youth employment are national or qualitative in nature. There is a need for a localized, data-driven, quantitative study that investigates the underlying challenges and explores possible solutions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To investigate the challenges and prospects of youth employment in Yobe State using quantitative methods. While the specific objective are:
- ii. To assess the current employment status of youths in Yobe State.
- iii. To identify major challenges affecting youth employment.
- iv. To examine the effectiveness of existing youth employment programs.
- v. To explore prospects for improving youth employment in the state.

2.0 Empirical Literature

2.1 Review of Empirical Studies

Youth unemployment and social disintegration are pressing challenges in Nigeria, with significant implications for the country's economic and social development. This review analyzed existing empirical studies on these intertwined issues, identifying key findings, gaps in knowledge, and potential pathways towards economic empowerment and social cohesion. Studies consistently report high youth unemployment rates in Nigeria, exceeding 33% in recent years. Factors contributing to this problem include rapid population growth, inadequate educational systems, lack of relevant job skills, limited access to finance, and an unfavourable business environment. Youth unemployment has detrimental consequences for social integration, fostering feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and alienation. This can lead to increased social vices, reduced civic engagement, and weakened social cohesion (NBS, 2013; NBS, 2018). Awogbenle&Iwuamadi (2010) documented that individuals aged between 15 and 35 years accounted for approximately 80 million in Nigeria, constituting 60% of the country's population. They further stressed that out of this demographic, 34 million were unemployed, while 1.6 million were underemployed. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2013) report, individuals within the same age range comprised about 62% of the nation's population, with 39% of them classified as unemployed and underemployed. More recently, as reported by NBS (2016), the unemployment rate for the 15-35 years age bracket was 44.52% in the third quarter of 2016. A careful examination of these figures reveals a significant and rapid increase in the trend compared to the data observed in 2012 and 2016. Unemployment has been associated with conflict, manifesting in issues of social insecurity, crime, and violence. In his study addressing insurgency in Nigeria, Muzan (2014) asserted that an unemployed individual is often idle, and this idleness can lead to engagement in antisocial behavior as a way to occupy time and energy. Even if the person is educated and possesses employable skills, a lack of productive employment can result in frustration, aggression, and ultimately, conflict. Kakwagh&Ikwuba (2010) study highlighted how the global trend of unemployed youths played significant roles in instigating conflict situations. In the Nigerian context, they noted that unemployed youths were frequently the primary actors in various conflict scenarios. They argued that the involvement of youth in such situations stemmed from their social exclusion and marginalization, preventing them from making positive contributions to society. Emeka&Olaowei, (2015) contended that unemployment brings about misery and hopelessness among those without work. In their efforts to escape this state, individuals often resort to promoting social unrest by engaging in criminal activities, which can lead to conflicts between individuals and, in some cases, between communities. Agba, Akwara, &Idu(2013) observed in their study that a majority of individuals apprehended by law enforcement agencies as criminals are either unemployed or underemployed.

Several national studies have explored the youth employment crisis in Nigeria. Adebayo (2013) found that despite increased spending on youth employment initiatives, the unemployment rate continued to rise due to poor policy implementation and corruption. Okafor (2011) emphasized that youth unemployment is linked to social unrest and insecurity.

According to the NBS (2022) report, the unemployment rate in Northern Nigeria, particularly in the North-East, is significantly higher than the national average due to the prolonged Boko Haram insurgency, lack of private sector growth, and poor infrastructure.

A study by Yahaya and Abubakar (2020) in Bauchi and Yobe states identified key challenges including lack of access to capital, poor entrepreneurial skills, political exclusion, and program mismanagement. Isa (2023) examined youth empowerment against poverty in Yobe State and found that about 39% of youth engage in self-employment, while 22% remain unemployed, despite government initiatives. Mamman et al. (2021) stressed that insecurity, especially in the North-East, disrupts job creation and drives youth into informal sectors with poor working conditions. Their study concluded that even where programs exist, they are poorly targeted, underfunded, and lack sustainability. Numerous youth employment programs exist in Nigeria, including N-Power, GEEP, YouWin, and the NYSC Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) scheme. However, Olayemi (2017) observed that the success of these programs is limited in rural northern states due to corruption, lack of awareness, and inadequate funding. Despite these challenges, several scholars remain optimistic. Salihu and Ahmed (2022) argue that with proper restructuring of youth-focused policies, investment in technical and vocational education, and revival of dormant industries in places like Potiskum and Damaturu, youth unemployment can be significantly reduced.

According to Musa (2021), local government collaboration with federal schemes and NGOs can expand job opportunities if there is better coordination, transparency, and community engagement. Similarly, the Yobe State 2023 Development Plan proposes creating 5,000 jobs through the revival of moribund industries and the establishment of youth enterprise zones.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This paper reviews and applies both Human Capital Theory and Critical Theory to the phenomenon under study. Human Capital Theory emerged in the mid-20th century, pioneered by economists like Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961). The theory posits that investments in education, training, and health are akin to capital investments in physical assets. Essentially, individuals enhance their productive capacity through these investments, contributing to overall economic growth and development. The core tenet of the theory revolves around viewing individuals as valuable assets to the economy. Education, vocational training, and healthcare are regarded as essential investments that increase a person's productivity and economic potential. The theory contends that individuals with higher levels of human capital (education, skills, and health) are likely to earn more over their lifetime. This aspect highlights the economic returns associated with investing in human capital. Human Capital Theory posits that a nation's economic growth is closely tied to the quality and quantity of its human capital. A skilled and healthy workforce is considered crucial for sustained economic development (Heckman, 2000). Critics argue that the theory tends to overlook existing social structures and inequalities. Not everyone has equal access to education and training opportunities, leading to a perpetuation of social disparities. Some other critics contend that the theory places too much emphasis on quantifiable elements, such as education

and training, while neglecting the importance of other factors like social capital and emotional intelligence. Again, Human Capital Theory is criticized for reducing the value of education and training to purely economic outcomes, neglecting broader societal benefits and the intrinsic value of education for personal development (ILO, 2017; Olaleye, 2019; UN, 2013). Critical theory is the second theory adopted, reviewed and applied to the phenomenon of youth unemployment and social disintegration in Nigeria. Emerging from the Frankfurt School in the early-to-mid 20th century, Critical Theory is a philosophical framework that seeks to challenge and deconstruct societal structures, questioning power dynamics, norms, and inequalities. Rooted in the work of theorists like Horkheimer (1982) and Adorno (1944/2019), Critical Theory extends beyond academia to address practical social issues.

2.3 Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

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2.4 Challenges of Youth Employment in Northern Nigeria

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2.5 Government and NGO Interventions

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In Yobe State, Ali and Ibrahim (2022) examined the implementation of youth empowerment programs and noted issues such as favoritism in beneficiary selection, poor monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms, and low program scalability. However, they also acknowledged some success in improving access to micro-credit and business training for youth.

2.6 Prospects for Youth Employment

Despite these challenges, several scholars remain optimistic. Salihu and Ahmed (2022) argue that with proper restructuring of youth-focused policies, investment in technical and vocational education, and revival of dormant industries in places like Potiskum and Damaturu, youth unemployment can be significantly reduced.

According to Musa (2021), local government collaboration with federal schemes and NGOs can expand job opportunities if there is better coordination, transparency, and community engagement. Similarly, the Yobe State 2023 Development Plan proposes creating 5,000 jobs through the revival of moribund industries and the establishment of youth enterprise zones.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Source of Data

Data for this work mainly came from primary sources. The primary data will be obtained through the use of questionnaire and interviews to elicit information from respondents. Secondary information was used in this study. Such information was sought through conference papers, international journals etc

3.2 Study Area

Yobe State is located in the northeastern region of Nigeria and was created on August 27, 1991, out of the old Borno State. It shares international boundaries with the Republic of Niger to the north and borders Borno State to the east, Bauchi State to the west, and Gombe State to the southwest. The state has 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Damaturu (the capital), Potiskum, Fika, Bade, Nguru, and Geidam.

Yobe is characterized by a semi-arid climate with long dry seasons and short rainy periods. The dominant ethnic groups in the state include Kanuri, Fulani, Hausa, Ngizim, Karai-Karai, and Bade. The economy is largely agrarian, with most of the population engaged in farming,

livestock rearing, and small-scale trading. However, industrial and private-sector development is limited, contributing to high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth.

The state has faced several developmental challenges, including the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency, which has led to displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and a decline in socio-economic activities. Despite various youth empowerment programs initiated by the federal and state governments, unemployment and underemployment remain critical issues, especially among young people aged 18 to 35 years.

Damaturu, Potiskum, and Fika LGAs have been identified as focal points for this study due to their relatively high population density, availability of youth-focused programs, and concentration of both urban and rural youth. These LGAs also represent a mix of socioeconomic conditions that provide insights into the broader youth employment situation across the state.

This study area offers a meaningful context to explore the challenges hindering youth employment and the potential opportunities for sustainable job creation in Yobe State.

3.3 Data collection

This study will be based on field survey. Therefore, data will be generated from the sample of population from the study area. Accordingly, 380 questionnaires will be administered in within the state. The sample technique that will adopted is the non-probability sampling method using availability sampling technique. This is more convenient because it will provides better opportunity for the researcher to administer the questionnaires directly and individually to the respondents available within the study area

3.4 Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected from the selected sample, the researcher use table, percentage distribution method and descriptive analysis to test questionnaires and present the collected data. An orderly presentation of information gathered will indicate the relationship between variables is done by the use of tables which are appropriate for easy presentation of data and comparison of two or more variables as well as for easy interpretation or analysis of data. Chi-square was use as a statistical tool to assist the researcher in evaluating the probability of obtaining differences between the actual (observed) frequencies and the expected frequencies. Finally, chi-square was used as a basis for testing the null hypothesis against the alternative hypothesis.

The formula for chi-square statistics is denoted by:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where as;

X^2 = Critical value

F_o = Observed frequency

F_e = Expected frequency

\sum = Summation

Results (Expected output Result)

The results are likely to show that employment outcomes vary significantly by local government area (urban vs rural) and by education level, with more educated youths slightly more likely to be employed but still facing significant barriers.

4.0 Results and Presentation

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in Yobe State, including sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, duration of unemployment, and local government area of residence. A total of 380 youths participated in the survey. Table 4.1 presents a concise demographic profile of the respondents. The results indicate that 61% of the respondents were female, while 39% were male. This shows a higher representation of female youths in the study, suggesting active female engagement in issues related to employment and livelihood in the state.

The age distribution reveals that the majority of respondents (45%) were between 25 and 30 years, followed by those aged 18–24 years (32%). Respondents aged 31–35 years constituted 24% of the sample. This implies that most participants were within the economically active and job-seeking age group, making them suitable for examining youth employment dynamics. With respect to marital status, 65.6% of the respondents were single, 33.4% were married, while only 1% were divorced. The predominance of single youths suggests that employment challenges are particularly common among young adults who are still establishing their careers.

The educational profile of the respondents shows that a substantial proportion had attained tertiary education (76.5%), while 18.3% possessed secondary school education. Only a small fraction had vocational training (2.8%), primary education (1.0%), or no formal education (1.0%). This indicates that youth unemployment in Yobe State largely affects educated youths, pointing to a possible mismatch between educational outcomes and available employment opportunities.

In terms of employment status, 20.7% of the respondents were self-employed, 18.6% were employed in the public sector, and 6.2% worked in the private sector. Meanwhile, 17.3% were unemployed, and 37.0% were students or engaged in other activities. This demonstrates that a considerable proportion of youths are either unemployed or not yet fully integrated into the labour market. Among those who were unemployed, 74.6% had been without work for six months to one year, while 21.0% had been unemployed for less than six months. Only 3.4% had remained unemployed for over one year.

Table 4.1 Background Information of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	148	39
Female	232	61
Age Range		
18–24 years	120	32
25–30 years	170	45
31–35 years	90	24
Marital Status		
Single	245	65.6
Married	130	33.4
Divorced	2	1
Education		
No Formal Education	4	1.0
Primary School	4	1.0
Secondary School	71	18.3
Tertiary	296	76.5
Vocational	11	2.8
Employment		
Employed (public sector)	72	18.6
Employed (private sector)	24	6.2
Self-employed	80	20.7
Unemployed	67	17.3
Student / Other	143	37.0
Employment Status		
Less than 6 months	38	21.0
6 months to 1 year	135	74.6
1-2 years	3	1.7
Over 2 years	3	1.7
Not applicable		
Local Government Area (LGA)		
Nguru	134	34.6
Potiskum	56	14.5
Damaturu	43	11.1
Gujba	28	7.2
Geidam	26	6.7
Fika	23	5.9
Fune	15	3.9
Nangere	15	3.9
Other LGAs	73	12.2
N = 380		

This suggests that most youths experience short to medium-term unemployment, possibly reflecting continuous job search efforts amid limited employment opportunities. The respondents were drawn from various local government areas across Yobe State, with the highest representation from Nguru (34.6%), followed by Potiskum (14.5%) and Damaturu (11.1%). Other LGAs accounted for the remaining

proportion. This wide geographical coverage enhances the representativeness of the findings across the state.

4.2 Reliability Test of the Research Instrument

This section presents the reliability analysis of the scales used to measure the challenges and prospects of youth employment in Yobe State. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was employed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. As shown in Table 4.2, the scale measuring the challenges of youth employment, which comprised seven items, recorded a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.825 based on 307 valid responses. This value exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. Similarly, the scale assessing the prospects for youth employment, consisting of five items, produced a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.833 with 331 valid cases. This also demonstrates strong reliability and consistency of the measurement instrument. The excluded cases resulted from listwise deletion where respondents with incomplete responses were omitted from the analysis. Consequently, the Cronbach’s Alpha values for both scales fall within the range of good reliability, confirming that the questionnaire items were dependable and suitable for further statistical analysis in this study.

Table 4.2 Reliability Test

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's α	Valid Cases (listwise)	Excluded ^a
Challenges of Youth Employment	7	0.825	307 (79.3%)	80 (20.7%)
Prospects for Youth Employment	5	0.833	331 (85.5%)	56 (14.5%)

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

4.3 Employment Status of Youths in Yobe State

This objective examines the current employment status of the respondents in order to assess the nature and extent of youth employment in Yobe State. The results presented in Table 4.1 show that 37.0% of the respondents were students, representing the largest proportion of the sample. This indicates that a considerable number of youths are still in the process of acquiring education or skills and have not yet fully entered the labour market. Among those who were economically active, 20.7% were self-employed, suggesting that entrepreneurship and informal economic activities serve as important sources

of livelihood for many youths in the state. Furthermore, 18.6% were employed in the public sector, while only 6.2% were engaged in private sector employment, reflecting limited private sector job opportunities in the region. However, a notable proportion of respondents, 17.3%, were unemployed, highlighting the persistent challenge of youth joblessness in Yobe State. This level of unemployment among predominantly educated youths underscores structural issues in job creation and labour market absorption. Thus, the findings reveal that while some youths are engaged in self-employment and public service, a significant number remain unemployed or outside formal employment, confirming the existence of youth employment challenges in the state. Youth employment in Yobe State is largely characterized by high student participation, dependence on self-employment, limited private sector absorption, and a considerable unemployment rate.

4.4 Challenges Affecting Youth Employment in Yobe State

Table 4.3 examines the major challenges influencing youth employment in Yobe State using mean and standard deviation scores derived from respondents' ratings on a five-point Likert scale. The results indicate that the most severe challenge faced by youths is the lack of job opportunities in both the public and private sectors (Mean = 4.27, SD = 0.94). This suggests that even with educational qualifications, employment openings remain insufficient to absorb the growing youth population. This is closely followed by political favoritism or nepotism in job selection (Mean = 4.24, SD = 0.99), implying that employment processes are often influenced by connections rather than merit. Similarly, corruption in youth empowerment programs recorded a high mean score (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.97), indicating widespread dissatisfaction with how such initiatives are administered. Furthermore, respondents strongly agreed that inadequate government support for entrepreneurs (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.98) and lack of vocational and technical skills (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.98) significantly hinder youth employment prospects. This highlights both policy weaknesses and skills mismatch in the labour market.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of Challenges Affecting Youth Employment

Rank	Challenge	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Lack of job opportunities in the public/private sector	349	4.27	0.942
2	Political favoritism or nepotism in job selection	331	4.24	0.991
3	Corruption in youth empowerment programs	335	4.18	0.968
4	Inadequate government support for entrepreneurs	330	4.09	0.977
5	Inadequate vocational/technical skills	336	4.07	0.983
6	Insecurity and unstable environment	329	3.96	1.063
7	Lack of access to quality education	339	3.93	1.087

Valid N (listwise) = 307

Insecurity and an unstable environment (Mean = 3.96, SD = 1.06) were also identified as major obstacles, reflecting the impact of socio-economic instability on job creation. Lastly, lack of access to quality education (Mean = 3.93, SD = 1.09), though still significant, ranked as the least severe among the challenges. Generally, the findings demonstrate that youth unemployment in Yobe State is driven primarily by structural economic constraints, governance issues, and limited entrepreneurial support, rather than educational deficiency alone. The dominance of job scarcity, nepotism, and corruption suggests that youth unemployment in Yobe State is largely systemic and institutional in nature. The following one-sample t-test strengthens your second objective statistically by showing that all identified challenges are not just perceived, but are significantly serious problems.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the mean responses on the identified challenges significantly differed from the neutral midpoint of the Likert scale (Test Value = 3). The results are presented in Table 4.4. The findings reveal that all seven challenges recorded mean values significantly higher than the neutral point at the 5% level of significance ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that respondents strongly agreed that each of the listed factors constitutes a serious obstacle to youth employment in Yobe State. Specifically, the lack of job opportunities in both the public and private sectors emerged as the most statistically significant challenge ($t = 25.178, p < 0.001$), confirming widespread concern over limited employment openings. Political favoritism or nepotism in job selection also showed a strong significant effect ($t = 22.738, p < 0.001$), suggesting that merit-based recruitment is perceived as weak.

Table 4.4: One-Sample t-Test Results for Challenges Affecting Youth Employment

Challenge	Mean Diff.	t-value	df	Sig. (p)	Decision
Lack of access to quality education	0.926	15.693	338	0.000	Significant
Inadequate vocational/technical skills	1.068	19.932	335	0.000	Significant
Lack of job opportunities (public/private)	1.269	25.178	348	0.000	Significant
Political favoritism/nepotism	1.239	22.738	330	0.000	Significant
Insecurity and unstable environment	0.960	16.392	328	0.000	Significant
Inadequate government support for entrepreneurs	1.094	20.339	329	0.000	Significant
Corruption in youth empowerment programs	1.179	22.284	334	0.000	Significant

Note: Test value = 3 (Neutral point on Likert scale)

Similarly, corruption in youth empowerment programs ($t = 22.284, p < 0.001$) and inadequate government support for entrepreneurs ($t = 20.339, p < 0.001$) were found to significantly constrain youth employment prospects. This highlights institutional inefficiencies in employment policy implementation. In addition, inadequate vocational and technical skills ($t = 19.932, p < 0.001$), insecurity and unstable environment ($t = 16.392, p < 0.001$), and lack of access to quality education ($t = 15.693, p < 0.001$) were all statistically significant, reinforcing their roles as key contributors to youth unemployment. Overall, the inferential results confirm that youth employment challenges in Yobe State are systemic and multidimensional, extending beyond individual shortcomings to structural economic and governance-related factors. The one-sample t-test results provide empirical evidence that the identified challenges significantly hinder youth employment in Yobe State.

4.5 Effectiveness of Youth Employment Programs in Yobe State

Table 4.5 and 4.5a present the analysis that examines the relationship between youth participation in government and NGO employment or empowerment programs and their current employment status using a Chi-square test of independence. The results presented in Table 4.5 reveal a statistically significant association between participation in youth employment programs and employment status ($\chi^2 = 18.198, df = 4, p = 0.001$). This indicates that involvement in such programs significantly influences the employment outcomes of youths in Yobe State

Table 4.5: Chi-Square Test of Participation in Youth Programs and Employment Status

Statistic	Value	df	Sig. (p)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.198	4	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	18.099	4	0.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.479	1	0.000
Valid Cases	382		

4.5a: Crosstabulation of Program Participation and Employment Status (N = 382)

Participation	Public Sector	Private Sector	Self-employed	Unemployed	Student	Total
Yes	32	12	55	37	101	237
No	39	12	25	29	40	145
Total	71	24	80	66	141	382

The crosstabulation presented in Table 4.5a further shows that youths who participated in employment programs were more likely to be self-employed (55 respondents) and engaged in public sector employment (32 respondents) compared to non-participants. Additionally, a higher number of participants were students, suggesting that some programs may focus on training and skill acquisition. Conversely, non-participants recorded lower representation in self-employment and formal employment categories, indicating limited employment opportunities among those who did not benefit from such initiatives. Therefore, the findings provide empirical evidence that youth employment and empowerment programs have a significant impact on improving employment outcomes, particularly in promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating entry into formal sector jobs. Additionally, participation in government and NGO youth employment programs significantly improves employment prospects among youths in Yobe State.

4.6 Prospects for Improving Youth Employment in Yobe State

Table 4.6 and 4.6a explores respondents’ perceptions of potential strategies for improving youth employment in Yobe State using descriptive statistics and one-sample t-tests. The results in Table 4.6 show very high levels of agreement across all proposed measures, with mean scores ranging from 4.38 to 4.48, indicating strong support for policy-driven employment interventions. The establishment of vocational centres in every local government area recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.48, SD =

0.77), suggesting that skill acquisition is viewed as a critical pathway to employment. This was closely followed by the inclusion of entrepreneurship training in all schools (Mean = 4.47, SD = 0.76), highlighting the importance of early business and practical skill development. Similarly, respondents strongly supported increased involvement of NGOs and the private sector in job creation (Mean = 4.39, SD = 0.78), as well as the allocation of more funds to youth employment initiatives (Mean = 4.39, SD = 0.80). The revival of local industries to stimulate employment opportunities also received high approval (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.90).

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics of Prospects for Improving Youth Employment (N = 331)

Rank	Proposed Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Vocational centres should be established in every LGA	341	4.48	0.769
2	Entrepreneurship training should be included in all schools	359	4.47	0.761
3	NGOs and private sector should play a bigger role in job creation	350	4.39	0.782
4	More funds should be directed to youth employment initiatives	342	4.39	0.799
5	Government should revive local industries to create jobs	346	4.38	0.903

Table 4.6a: One-Sample t-Test Results for Youth Employment Prospects

Proposed Measure	Mean Diff.	t-value	df	Sig. (p)	Decision
Entrepreneurship training in schools	1.474	36.673	358	0.000	Significant
Revive local industries	1.379	28.394	345	0.000	Significant
NGO/private sector role	1.394	33.343	349	0.000	Significant
More funding for youth initiatives	1.395	32.281	341	0.000	Significant
Vocational centres in every LGA	1.475	35.423	340	0.000	Significant

The one-sample t-test results presented in Table 4.6a further confirm that all proposed strategies were statistically significant when compared with the neutral midpoint of the scale ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that youths overwhelmingly perceive these measures as effective solutions to unemployment in Yobe State. Thus, the findings suggest that sustainable youth employment in Yobe State requires a combination of skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, private sector engagement, industrial revitalization, and increased government investment.

5.0 Recommendations

1. Invest in entrepreneurship education, make it compulsory across primary to tertiary levels, and equip local centres with infrastructure and trained manpower.
2. Revive state industries in Potiskum and other towns to create formal sector opportunities, raising IGR and offering youth apprenticeships and jobs.
3. Strengthen program governance by enhancing transparency, community participation in beneficiary selection and ongoing monitoring of youth empowerment initiatives.
4. Leverage federal social investment programs such as N-Power, GEEP, and YESO to deliver targeted training, stipends, credit, and support in Yobe communities.
5. Target marginalized youth groups IDPs, rural youth, poorly educated—with tailored vocational and microcredit support schemes.
6. Periodic impact evaluation and feedback loops to adjust implementation based on data and stakeholder input.

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