

**NIGERIAN YOUTHS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PROSPECTS,
CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PATHWAYS**

BY

NGOZI JENNIFER CECILIA EZEMA

ABSTRACT

National development is closely tied to the capacity, engagement, and empowerment of a nation's youth population. In Nigeria, youths constitute more than 60% of the population, representing a demographic dividend with immense potential to drive innovation, productivity, and governance reform. Despite this advantage, systemic barriers such as unemployment, poverty, poor educational infrastructure, health disparities, and political exclusion continue to undermine their contributions.

This study critically examines the roles, challenges, and future pathways of Nigerian youths in fostering sustainable national development. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews among youths in Enugu State. Findings reveal that Nigerian youths possess creativity, resilience, and entrepreneurial energy, but their impact is constrained by policy inconsistency, corruption, and limited access to opportunities. While youths are actively engaged in informal entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and civic activism, their potential remains underutilized due to weak institutional support and poor monitoring of government programs.

The study concludes that youth empowerment should be viewed not as welfare but as a strategic national investment. Comprehensive reforms in education, employment creation, healthcare, and governance inclusion are essential to harness the demographic dividend. Recommendations include strengthening youth-centered programs, institutional accountability, and digital economy integration as pathways to inclusive and sustainable development.

Keywords: Nigerian youths, national development, empowerment, challenges, sustainable development, youth inclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Youths are universally acknowledged as the engine of growth and development in any nation. They represent both the present workforce and the future leadership whose innovation, resilience, and adaptability determine a country's economic and social advancement. In Nigeria, youths constitute approximately 60% of the population (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023), offering a significant demographic dividend that, if harnessed, could propel the nation toward sustainable development. Yet, despite this youthful population, Nigeria continues to grapple with underdevelopment, rising unemployment, social unrest, and weak institutional structures.

Globally, the importance of youth engagement has been emphasized in frameworks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 4, 8, and 16, which focus on quality education, decent work, and inclusive institutions. Within Nigeria, the National Youth Policy (2019) recognizes youths as critical agents of socio-economic transformation. However, persistent challenges—including underemployment, poor governance, corruption, and limited access to capital—have constrained their participation in nation-building (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2022; Iringe-Koko & Adedunmola, 2024).

Government interventions such as N-Power, the Youth Investment Fund, and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) were designed to address these gaps. Yet their impact has been marginal due to policy inconsistency, corruption, and weak monitoring mechanisms (Eze & Nwaneri, 2023). Consequently, many youths remain excluded from meaningful participation in governance and economic activities, leading to frustration, brain drain, and involvement in social vices.

This paradox underscores the urgent need for a paradigm shift from tokenistic youth engagement to genuine empowerment. Nigerian youths possess creativity, energy, and entrepreneurial drive, but without deliberate reforms in education, employment, healthcare, and governance inclusion, their potential will remain underutilized. Harnessing this demographic dividend is therefore not optional but imperative for Nigeria's sustainable national development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the enormous human capital potential of Nigerian youths, their contribution to national development remains underwhelming. The prevalence of poverty, rising unemployment, and limited access to productive opportunities have led to frustration, brain drain, and increased involvement in social vices. Government efforts such as N-Power, Youth Investment Fund, and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) have yielded only marginal results due to policy inconsistency, corruption, and poor monitoring (Eze & Nwaneri, 2023). Moreover, political structures continue to marginalize youths, restricting their participation in governance and decision-making processes. The result is a growing disconnect between youth aspirations and national policy implementation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze the contribution of Nigerian youths to national development, examine the challenges limiting their participation, and propose viable pathways for empowerment and inclusion in national growth strategies.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the roles played by Nigerian youths in national development.
2. To examine the socio-economic and political challenges hindering youth contributions.
3. To propose strategic measures for empowering youths toward achieving sustainable national development.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What roles do Nigerian youths play in national development?
2. What challenges hinder their effective participation?
3. What strategies can be adopted to enhance youth empowerment and inclusion?

1.6 Hypotheses

1. Nigeria cannot achieve sustainable development without the active participation of its youths.
2. Government policies and systemic barriers have limited youth engagement in nation-building.
3. Youth empowerment through education, entrepreneurship, and governance participation significantly enhances national development.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing discourse on youth empowerment and sustainable development in emerging economies. Its findings provide empirical and theoretical insights for policymakers, scholars, and development practitioners on how to strengthen youth inclusion in national planning. Furthermore, the research underscores the urgent need for a paradigm shift from tokenistic youth engagement to genuine empowerment through policy innovation and institutional reform.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

Youth

The term *youth* is contextually defined by age, social roles, and cultural expectations. According to the **Nigerian National Youth Policy (2019)**, youths are individuals aged **18–35 years**, characterized by vigor, creativity, and ambition. Sociologically, youthhood represents a transitional stage between dependence and full societal responsibility. In Nigeria, where this demographic constitutes a significant portion of the labor force, their socio-economic engagement becomes a critical determinant of development outcomes (Idike & Eme, 2015).

National Development

National development refers to the holistic and sustainable advancement of a nation's economic, social, political, and technological systems to improve citizens' quality of life. It transcends mere GDP growth to include human capital formation, political inclusion, and institutional efficiency (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2022). Development scholars argue that without inclusive participation—particularly of youths—no society can achieve equitable progress (Ogwuche, Abaneme, & Nwaneri, 2023).

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment involves equipping young people with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to participate actively in social, economic, and political life. It encompasses educational advancement, economic independence, civic participation, and psychological resilience (Utsua, 2023). Empowered youths are better positioned to contribute to productivity, innovation, and governance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964)

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals' education, training, and skills represent critical assets that enhance productivity and national growth. Applied to the Nigerian context, the theory suggests that investing in youth education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training can yield high developmental returns. However, the persistent mismatch between academic curricula and labor market demands has limited the effective mobilization of youth human capital (Rizwan, 2024). Therefore, youth development should be viewed not merely as social welfare but as an economic investment with measurable national benefits.

Youth Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 1995)

The Youth Empowerment Theory provides a psychosocial lens through which youth participation and agency are analyzed. It emphasizes three dimensions: *intrapersonal empowerment* (self-efficacy and control), *interactional empowerment* (critical awareness and resource access), and *behavioral empowerment* (participation in decision-making). This framework underscores that empowerment is both an outcome and a process—young people must perceive themselves as capable change agents while institutions provide enabling environments (Zimmerman, 1995; Iringe-Koko & Adedunmola, 2024).

In Nigeria, this theory helps explain why mere policy creation without structural support—such as access to finance, representation in governance, or job opportunities—fails to yield genuine youth empowerment. When applied in synergy with Human Capital Theory, it becomes evident that national development requires not just skill acquisition but also institutional inclusivity.

Sustainable Development Theory (WCED, 1987)

The concept of sustainable development emphasizes the balance between economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship. Within this study's scope, sustainable development underscores the need to align youth empowerment initiatives with long-term national goals. Programs that equip youths with green skills, promote entrepreneurship, and foster digital innovation can enhance Nigeria's competitiveness while addressing unemployment and social instability (Yandela, Anyangealu, & Apav, 2024).

2.3 Conceptual Model

Drawing from these theories, this study adopts an integrated conceptual model where **youth empowerment (education, skills, and participation)** serves as the independent variable influencing **national development outcomes (economic productivity, innovation, and governance effectiveness)**. This relationship is moderated by institutional factors such as government policy consistency, corruption control, and access to opportunities.

The model thus conceptualizes youth empowerment not merely as a developmental goal but as a **strategic instrument for achieving inclusive and sustainable national transformation**.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 Youths as Catalysts for National Development

Globally, youths are considered pivotal to national transformation because of their innovative potential, adaptability, and demographic strength. According to the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023)**, countries that harness their youth population effectively through education, technology, and inclusion experience accelerated economic growth and social stability. In the Nigerian context, youths contribute significantly to various sectors such as agriculture, technology, and creative industries. However, institutional neglect and limited access to productive resources have curtailed their capacity to drive meaningful development (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2022).

Odoh and Eme (2014) earlier emphasized that youth participation is indispensable in achieving sustainable development. This argument aligns with the **Human Capital Theory**, which posits that when young people acquire relevant education and vocational skills, they become essential contributors to national productivity. However, the mismatch between Nigeria's education system and the demands of a digital economy has resulted in skill gaps, unemployment, and underutilization of human capital (Rizwan, 2024).

3.2 Education and Youth Empowerment

Education remains the most powerful tool for empowerment. In Nigeria, however, the quality and accessibility of education remain uneven across regions. Despite policies promoting universal education, infrastructural decay, underfunding, and frequent industrial actions by tertiary institutions hinder learning outcomes (Ogwuche, Abaneme,

& Nwaneri, 2023). A study by Lawal and Okolie (2023) found that 47% of Nigerian graduates lack employable skills, leading to a widening gap between academic training and labor market realities.

Initiatives such as Enugu State's Green Smart Schools and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) interventions have shown potential in promoting innovation-driven learning, yet they remain localized and insufficient in scale. Strengthening vocational and entrepreneurial education, particularly in the informal sector, can better prepare youths for self-employment and innovation (Utsua, 2023).

3.3 Unemployment and Economic Marginalization

Unemployment among Nigerian youths is one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges undermining national development. The National Bureau of Statistics (2024) reported that youth unemployment and underemployment jointly account for over 40% of Nigeria's active labor force. Economic stagnation, corruption, and inadequate industrial growth have compounded the issue, leading to frustration, migration, and, in some cases, criminal activity.

Yandela, Anyangealu, and Apav (2024) assert that high unemployment rates among Nigerian youths erode social cohesion and contribute to insecurity and political instability. Similarly, Eze and Nwaneri (2023) observed that many government employment initiatives are often politicized, poorly implemented, and unsustainable. These realities underscore the need for institutional reforms that promote entrepreneurship, technology-based industries, and youth-accessible credit facilities.

3.4 Youth Political Participation and Governance Inclusion

Political participation represents another dimension of youth empowerment. Despite being a majority in population, Nigerian youths remain underrepresented in governance. The Not Too Young To Run Act (2018) created a framework for political inclusion, yet its implementation has been largely symbolic (Iringe-Koko & Adedunmola, 2024). Older political elites continue to dominate leadership positions, while systemic barriers such as high nomination fees, patronage networks, and electoral violence discourage youth participation.

Chukwu and Ibrahim (2025) argue that youth disengagement from governance results not from apathy but from institutional exclusion. This political marginalization limits policy responsiveness to youth needs, perpetuating cycles of unemployment and disenfranchisement. Encouraging mentorship, civic education, and youth representation within political parties can enhance democratic development and ensure continuity in governance.

3.5 Health, Productivity, and Social Challenges

Health remains a fundamental determinant of productivity and national development. Nigerian youths face multiple health challenges including drug abuse, mental health issues, and inadequate access to healthcare services (Ogwuche, Abaneme, & Nwaneri, 2023). The World Health Organization (2024) notes that poor health outcomes among youths—such as HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies, and substance abuse—negatively affect workforce efficiency and national productivity.

Furthermore, urban poverty and inadequate housing have compounded social inequalities. Adeyemi and Otu (2023) observed that urban youths, particularly those in informal settlements, experience social alienation that fosters radicalization and criminality. Addressing health and social welfare issues among youths is therefore not just a moral imperative but a developmental necessity.

3.6 Technology, Innovation, and the Emerging Economy

The rise of digital platforms has created new opportunities for youth engagement in Nigeria's emerging economy. The growth of FinTech, AgriTech, and EduTech sectors demonstrates how young Nigerians are leveraging innovation to overcome structural barriers. Olawale and Peters (2024) note that technology-driven enterprises by youths now contribute over 14% of Nigeria's GDP, making innovation a strategic frontier for national development. However, digital inequality—particularly in rural areas—limits the diffusion of these opportunities.

Promoting digital literacy, supporting start-ups, and improving broadband infrastructure are therefore essential pathways for sustaining youth-driven innovation. By aligning these with national development plans, Nigeria can transition from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based one.

3.7 Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature reveals a consistent consensus that Nigerian youths are vital to national development. Yet, systemic barriers such as poor education, unemployment, inadequate healthcare, and limited political participation have undermined their potential. While prior studies acknowledge the importance of youth empowerment, few have provided integrated frameworks linking education, governance, and innovation within a sustainable development context. This study fills that gap by adopting a holistic approach that combines human capital and empowerment theories to propose actionable strategies for youth inclusion in Nigeria's development agenda.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for investigating opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of respondents toward specific social phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design was chosen because it allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data necessary for analyzing the roles, challenges, and empowerment pathways of Nigerian youths in national development. Through this design, the study sought to describe existing conditions and identify patterns and relationships among the key variables without manipulating them.

4.2 Area of the Study

The research was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria, a region representative of the socio-economic diversity of Nigerian youths. Enugu was selected due to its urban-rural blend, youthful population, and active participation in education, entrepreneurship, and civil society movements. The state's mixed economy and strategic position in the South-East geopolitical zone make it suitable for assessing youth contributions to national development.

4.3 Population of the Study

The population consisted of Nigerian youths aged 18–35 years residing in Enugu State. This demographic aligns with the definition of youth provided by the National Youth Policy (2019). The target population included university students, artisans, entrepreneurs, and unemployed youths. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023), youths constitute about 62% of Enugu State's population, indicating their significant representation in social and economic activities.

4.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 200 respondents were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage involved purposive selection of three local government areas (LGAs): Enugu East, Nsukka, and Udi, representing urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, respectively. The second stage employed stratified random sampling to ensure representation across gender, education level, and employment status. From each LGA, 60–70 participants were selected proportionally.

Additionally, 10 key informants (including youth leaders, educators, and civil society advocates) were interviewed to provide qualitative insights and triangulate quantitative findings.

4.5 Instruments for Data Collection

Data were collected using two primary instruments:

1. **Structured Questionnaire** – comprising 25 items divided into three sections:
 - **Section A:** Demographic information
 - **Section B:** Youth roles and contributions to national development
 - **Section C:** Challenges and empowerment strategies

Responses were measured using a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from “Strongly Agree” (5) to “Strongly Disagree” (1).

2. **Semi-Structured Interview Guide** – designed to explore participants’ experiences and perceptions regarding youth inclusion in development initiatives, policy implementation, and governance.

4.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure content and face validity, the questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by three experts in sociology, public administration, and youth development studies. Their feedback was used to refine ambiguous items. A pilot test was conducted with 20 respondents outside the main study area, and necessary modifications were made.

Reliability was determined using Cronbach’s Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency. Qualitative reliability was ensured through consistent coding and cross-verification of emerging themes.

4.7 Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered physically and digitally (via WhatsApp and Google Forms) to ensure wider coverage. Trained field assistants helped distribute and retrieve hard copies, while online responses were automatically compiled. Interviews were conducted both in-person and via Zoom, depending on participant availability, and each lasted approximately 25–30 minutes.

4.8 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages to summarize responses. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically using content analysis, aligning responses with the research objectives. Integration of both datasets enabled a richer understanding of the research problem and ensured triangulation of findings for validity and depth.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Learn to Live Institute Research Ethics Committee. Participation was voluntary, and respondents provided informed consent before data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed; no identifying information was disclosed in reporting results. The study adhered to the ethical standards of the American Sociological Association (ASA, 2018) for social research involving human participants.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Quantitative Findings

Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed several key trends in how Nigerian youths contribute to national development, the barriers they face, and the strategies that can foster greater inclusion.

5.1.1 Youth Roles and Contributions

Most respondents (about 82%) agreed that youths are key drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement in Nigeria. Respondents highlighted their involvement in digital startups, creative industries, and social advocacy. This finding aligns with Edeh (2023), who noted that Nigerian youths have transformed the informal sector through technology-driven enterprises and social entrepreneurship. Youths were also recognized as active participants in community service, political mobilization, and human capital development, especially through volunteer programs and skill acquisition initiatives.

5.1.2 Challenges Hindering Youth Development

Despite these contributions, 76% of respondents identified unemployment, poor funding, and lack of access to credit facilities as major constraints. Other significant issues included limited mentorship, policy inconsistency, and corruption in youth empowerment programs. Qualitative interviews emphasized that government initiatives often fail due to poor implementation and political interference. This echoes the findings of Olawale & Ekong (2024), who observed that many youth empowerment schemes in Nigeria lack continuity and accountability mechanisms.

5.1.3 Empowerment Pathways and Policy Recommendations

Respondents advocated for inclusive governance, digital economy integration, and public–private partnerships (PPP) to enhance youth productivity. Many emphasized the importance of vocational training and entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions.

Approximately 68% agreed that youth representation in decision-making bodies is crucial for sustainable national development. This resonates with World Bank (2023) recommendations on integrating youth voices into policy frameworks for equitable development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

5.2 Qualitative Insights

Interviews with youth leaders and educators reinforced the quantitative findings. Three dominant themes emerged:

1. **Perceived Marginalization:** Youths felt excluded from key political and economic decisions, reducing their motivation to contribute effectively.
2. **Entrepreneurial Resilience:** Many youths are innovating despite systemic barriers, using digital tools to bypass traditional employment gaps.
3. **Policy Distrust:** There is a growing skepticism toward government programs due to past failures in implementation and monitoring.

These perspectives reflect broader structural issues in Nigeria's governance and economic management systems. As Okon & Chukwu (2025) argue, youth participation must be institutionalized rather than treated as ad-hoc engagement.

5.3 Discussion

The findings corroborate earlier studies that position youth empowerment as a central pillar of sustainable development (United Nations, 2022). However, the study adds recent empirical evidence showing how digital literacy and entrepreneurial initiatives among Nigerian youths are reshaping informal economies.

This study also reveals a critical paradox: while Nigerian youths possess high adaptive potential, systemic limitations — such as policy inconsistency, limited access to capital, and weak institutional support — continue to stifle their potential. Addressing these gaps requires a multidimensional approach that links education, technology, and policy.

Furthermore, the evidence supports Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in education and skills development enhances individual and national productivity (Becker, 1993; reaffirmed in Aliyu et al., 2024). By aligning youth policies with this theoretical foundation, Nigeria can harness its demographic dividend more effectively.

In summary, the discussion highlights that the pathway to sustainable national development lies in empowering youths through innovation, inclusiveness, and

accountability. When youths are provided with opportunities to lead, the result is a more productive and resilient economy.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Nigerian youths constitute the bedrock of national development, representing the country's greatest human capital asset. Their dynamism, creativity, and technological adaptability offer vast opportunities for innovation-driven growth. However, the findings reveal that the potential of Nigerian youths remains underutilized due to structural and systemic challenges such as unemployment, poverty, poor educational infrastructure, health disparities, and political exclusion.

The study further establishes that despite these barriers, Nigerian youths are actively involved in informal entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and civic activism. These attributes, if strategically harnessed, can catalyze inclusive growth and democratic consolidation. The evidence therefore supports the conclusion that sustainable national development cannot be achieved without the active participation, empowerment, and inclusion of Nigerian youths at all levels of governance and economic decision-making.

Furthermore, the study underscores that youth empowerment should be viewed not as a welfare program but as a strategic national investment. In this regard, education, skill development, and technology integration are critical enablers of sustainable development. This aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Comprehensive Education Reform:**

The government should strengthen technical and vocational education, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship training across all tiers of education. Curriculum reforms should align academic outcomes with industry needs to reduce the employability gap.

- 2. Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Support:**

Federal and state governments, in collaboration with private sectors, should expand youth-focused job creation initiatives, provide start-up grants, and enhance access to micro-credit facilities. Sustainable funding models—such as innovation hubs and cooperative financing—should be promoted.

3. Inclusive Governance and Political Participation:

Youth representation should be institutionalized within political parties, policy boards, and development councils. Implementation of the “Not Too Young To Run” Act should be complemented with mentorship programs and leadership incubation platforms.

4. Health and Well-being Interventions:

Improved healthcare services, particularly mental health and reproductive health programs, should target youths in rural and urban areas alike. The establishment of youth-friendly health centers will enhance productivity and well-being.

5. Technology and Digital Economy Integration:

Nigeria should leverage youth-driven innovation through investments in ICT, renewable energy, and agricultural technology (AgriTech). This will not only diversify the economy but also enhance youth competitiveness globally.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability:

Existing youth empowerment programs should undergo regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure transparency, sustainability, and measurable impact. Independent review mechanisms can prevent corruption and policy discontinuity.

7. Partnership for Sustainable Development:

Development partners, civil society, and educational institutions should collaborate to design integrated youth empowerment frameworks that align with national development plans and international best practices.

6.3 Closing Remark

In conclusion, the future of Nigeria rests squarely on how effectively it engages, educates, and empowers its youths. The demographic dividend can either become a blessing or a burden depending on the strategic choices made today. A youth-inclusive, innovation-driven, and accountable system of governance remains the surest pathway to achieving sustainable national development and positioning Nigeria as a globally competitive nation.

References

- Aardt, I. V. (2012). *A review of youth unemployment in South Africa, 2004 to 2011*. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 2(1), 54–68.
- Afolayan, A. T., & Olanrewaju, G. O. (2023). *Youth entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Nigeria: Prospects and policy challenges*. *Journal of African Development Studies*, 18(2), 45–61.
- Eze, C. P., & Nwankwo, F. C. (2025). *Digital innovation and youth empowerment in Nigeria: The role of ICT policies in economic diversification*. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 11(1), 23–39.
- Idike, A., & Eme, O. (2015). *Youths and sustainable national development in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(2), 45–57.
- Iringe-Koko, L., & Adedunmola, T. (2024). *Political engagement of Nigerian youths: Challenges and opportunities*. *Journal of African Governance*, 5(1), 12–28.
- Odoh, C., & Eme, O. (2014). *The role of youths in national development*. *African Journal of Social Policy*, 3(1), 67–78.
- Ogwuche, U., Abaneme, S., & Nwaneri, J. (2023). *Youth empowerment and national development in Nigeria*. *Nigerian Journal of Development Studies*, 8(4), 101–118.
- Rizwan, M. (2024). *Education and youth empowerment in developing countries*. *Global Education Review*, 11(2), 45–63.
- Utsua, P. (2023). *Youths and innovation: Pathways to national development*. *Journal of Innovation and Development*, 7(3), 77–92.
- World Bank. (2023). *Youth employment and skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy priorities for inclusive growth*. *World Bank Policy Paper No. 10245*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group.
- Yandela, T., Anyangealu, K., & Apav, J. (2024). *Unemployment and youth underdevelopment in Nigeria*. *African Journal of Economic Studies*, 6(1), 33–50.
- Yusuf, H. A., & Bello, I. M. (2022). *Youth participation in governance and the quest for sustainable development in Nigeria*. *Contemporary Journal of Political Science and Public Administration*, 9(2), 88–104.