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## Youth entrepreneurship success: A case study of food processing enterprises in Ghana

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### Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship has received considerable support in Ghana, but most enterprises, especially those started by young people, still have low success rates. This study aims to map youth entrepreneurs in the food sector and examine the determinants of profit and employment in youth-owned micro and small food processing enterprises in Ghana. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews with 244 young food processors from three regions of Ghana in 2021. The results show that young women (82 %) run most of the businesses, and most operators (50 %) are highly educated. The average age of the enterprises was four years, while eight different food categories were processed. Female entrepreneurs dominate starchy food production (13 %), while the fruit and vegetable sector is dominated by male entrepreneurs. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression results show that previous experience in a similar business, membership of a business association, age of the entrepreneur and having a mentor are positively correlated with profit. Access to credit from an institution and being located in the Ashanti region were negatively correlated with profit. Furthermore, access to training, having a business partner, the age of the entrepreneur and being in an urban area have a positive effect on job creation, while access to credit, being in the Ashanti region and being male have a negative effect on job creation. The study concludes that the provision of mentors, support for membership of business associations and training through youth entrepreneurship programmes will improve the success of food-based micro and small enterprises.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurs, food processing, Ghana, micro-enterprises, youth entrepreneurship