

The Capability-Constrained Paradox among Rural Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa

Nyagwaya TJ^{1,*}, Marembo M², Mukarumbwa P³, Hove PK⁴ and Hlungwani PM⁵

¹Department of Marketing, Faculty of Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship, Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

²Faculty Dean of Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship, Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

³Department of Business and Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Bradford, UK

⁴Faculty Dean of Management and Entrepreneurial Sciences, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe

⁵Department of Development Sciences, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Zimbabwe

***Corresponding author:** Nyagwaya TJ, Department of Marketing, Faculty of Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship, Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Zimbabwe; E-mail: nyagwayajames@gmail.com

Abstract

Agricultural entrepreneurship education (AEE) programmes across Sub-Saharan Africa have proliferated as a strategic response to youth unemployment, yet the translation of enhanced entrepreneurial capabilities into sustainable enterprise creation remains obstinately limited. This study theorises the capability-constrained paradox, wherein rural youth acquire sophisticated entrepreneurial competencies through training interventions but encounter institutional environments that systematically preclude their application. Drawing on qualitative data from 47 participants across four wards in Hwedza District, Zimbabwe, and utilising an integrated framework of Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory and Hart's Ladder of Participation, the study examines the mechanisms through which capability development interacts with persistent institutional voids. Findings reveal that AEE cultivates entrepreneurial alertness, strategic risk-management, innovation orientation, and aspirational identities. However, these gains are rendered inoperative by financial exclusion, insecure land tenure, asymmetrical market relations, and extension services divorced from business logic. The study introduces the concept of unauthorised competence thus expertise without institutional permission to operate, to capture the condition of frustrated preparedness characterising trained youth. Ward-level variation demonstrates that the paradox is most acute where institutional presence is densest, as heightened capabilities amplify awareness of blocked opportunities. The study advances theoretical understanding of the education-enablement nexus and advocates for integrated interventions that couple capability development with structural reforms in financial, land, and market institutions. Findings contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 4 and 8 by demonstrating that sustainable rural transformation requires moving beyond individual skill-building toward the redistribution of participatory authority and productive resources.

Keywords: Youth agripreneurship; Capability-constrained paradox; Agricultural entrepreneurship education; Institutional voids; Rural Zimbabwe; Positive youth development; Unauthorised competence

Introduction

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship (SAE) has attracted increasing policy attention as a strategic response to the intersecting crises of youth

unemployment and an ageing farming population [1-3]. The policy logic is compelling: equip youth with entrepreneurial skills and technical agricultural knowledge, and they will catalyse rural economic transformation while building sustainable livelihoods [4,5]. This logic has inspired a proliferation of agricultural

Received date: 14 July 2026; **Accepted date:** 28 July 2026; **Published date:** 07 August 2025

Citation: Nyagwaya TJ, Marembo M, Mukarumbwa P, Hove PK, Hlungwani PM (2026) The Capability-Constrained Paradox among Rural Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. SunText Rev Arts Social Sci 7(2): 211.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51737/2766-4600.2026.111>

Copyright: © 2026 Nyagwaya TJ, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

entrepreneurship education (AEE) programmes, spanning formal vocational training, NGO-led workshops, and donor-funded initiatives, designed to cultivate the mindsets and capabilities deemed essential for agripreneurial success [6,7]. Yet the translation of these investments into measurable enterprise outcomes remains obstinately lacking, as youth continue to exit agriculture or remain trapped in subsistence production despite possessing enhanced knowledge and skills [8]. This challenge extends beyond the narrow parameters of agricultural productivity or employment creation; it is fundamentally a youth question. Across the Global South, young people are increasingly exhorted to become entrepreneurial subjects responsible for constructing their own livelihoods in the face of shrinking formal employment opportunities [9,10]. Yet the capacity of youth to exercise agency remains deeply conditioned by institutional structures that shape access to resources, participation, and decision-making authority. Consequently, understanding youth engagement in agripreneurship requires moving beyond economic outcome measures to examine how young people experience, negotiate, and respond to the tensions between expanded opportunities for capability development and enduring barriers to opportunity realisation. The challenge of translating entrepreneurial skills into tangible livelihood outcomes is not unique to Zimbabwe. In several Global South settings, evidence indicates that while agricultural entrepreneurship programmes reliably improve youth capabilities, they frequently fail to provide the institutional means to act upon those capabilities. Studies from Zambia, Vietnam, South Africa, and Kenya report that training increases entrepreneurial awareness, aspirations, and readiness, yet persistent barriers related to land, finance, markets, and support services continue to constrain enterprise creation [11-13]. These patterns suggest that capability development alone is insufficient, and may, in fact, increase frustration, when opportunities for genuine participation and progression remain institutionally foreclosed. Zimbabwe provides a particularly acute context in which to examine this paradox. Agriculture underpins the livelihoods of over 60% of the population, yet the sector contends with a complex legacy of land reform, recurrent macroeconomic instability, and escalating climate shocks [14,15]. The country's youth demographic bulge, with over 60% of the population under 35 years, coincides with formal unemployment rates among the highest in the region, rendering agricultural entrepreneurship not merely a policy option but a socio-economic [16,17]. National frameworks such as the National Development Strategy 2 (2026–2030) and the National Youth Empowerment Strategy (2025–2030) proclaim youth agribusiness as a central pillar of rural development, supported by international partners and local NGOs [18,19]. However, on-the-ground realities in districts like Hwedza, characterised by patriarchal land governance, financial exclusion, and fragmented

markets, raise fundamental questions about whether skills training alone can overcome entrenched institutional voids.

This study addresses a significant gap in both agripreneurship and youth studies scholarship. While existing research has extensively documented structural barriers to youth participation in agriculture, and separately examined the effects of training on knowledge, skills, and attitudes [1,20], these strands of scholarship have rarely been brought together. Consequently, limited attention has been given to how enhanced entrepreneurial capabilities interact with persistent institutional constraints to shape young people's aspirations, identities, and engagement with rural futures. How youth interpret and navigate the tension between expanding opportunities for capability development and enduring barriers to opportunity realisation remains insufficiently theorised. The present study builds upon and extends the work of Nyagwaya et al. (2026), which examined the quality of participatory structures and institutional recognition shaping youth agency in sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship. Whereas Nyagwaya et al. foregrounded participatory pathways, interrogating the depth of youth inclusion in decision-making processes, the present study pivots analytically to examine the capability-institution disconnect. Specifically, it investigates what happens when agricultural entrepreneurship education successfully cultivates advanced entrepreneurial competencies (alertness, strategic planning, innovation orientation), yet the institutional environment denies youth access to the financial, land, and market resources required to convert those competencies into viable enterprises. In doing so, the study introduces the capability-constrained paradox as a theoretical lens for understanding the condition of frustrated preparedness characterising trained but structurally excluded youth. The study's geographical focus is Hwedza District in Mashonaland East Province, a predominantly smallholder farming area that exemplifies the contradictions of Zimbabwe's agrarian policy landscape. The district is simultaneously targeted for youth agricultural development interventions and marked by high youth composition, underemployment, and reliance on rain-fed production vulnerable to climate variability [3,16,27]. Its land tenure system, collapsed local banking services, and uneven extension coverage make it a microcosm in which to explore how national policy aspirations are negotiated at the local level [3]. By investigating the capability-constrained paradox in this context, the study contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 4 (Quality Education), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Drawing on qualitative data from four wards, the study poses three interconnected questions:

- What specific capabilities does agricultural entrepreneurship education cultivate among rural youth in Hwedza District?

- What institutional conditions prevent the conversion of these capabilities into enterprise outcomes?
- How do youth experience and navigate the resulting gap between enhanced competence and constrained opportunity?

In answering these questions, the study offers both a theoretical contribution, deepening understanding of the education-enablement nexus, and practical insights for designing youth agripreneurship interventions that move beyond training provision to address the structural determinants of capability realisation.

Theoretical Framework

Contemporary youth studies conceptualise youth not as a biological category but as a socially constructed life stage characterised by transitions, identity formation, and the negotiation of agency within structurally unequal conditions [9,10, 21]. Within this framing, agency is understood not as untrammelled freedom but as the capacity to act meaningfully within, and in response to the institutional and social structures that simultaneously enable and constrain individual choices. This perspective provides an essential lens for understanding rural youth engagement in agripreneurship, where aspirations and capabilities are continually negotiated against institutional realities. To investigate the relationship between capability development and institutional enablement, this study utilises an integrated framework combining Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory and Hart's Ladder of Participation. These frameworks are synthesised to generate a more nuanced understanding of both the cultivation of entrepreneurial competencies and the extent to which those competencies can be meaningfully exercised. The integration is not merely additive but mutually constitutive: PYD explains why participation matters for developmental outcomes, while Hart's Ladder explains how the quality and depth of institutional engagement shape those outcomes.

Positive youth development theory

Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory emerged as a counterpoint to deficit-oriented models that framed young people as problems to be managed or risks to be mitigated. Instead, PYD conceptualises youth as active agents whose growth depends on the alignment of individual strengths with supportive environmental conditions. Central to the framework are the "Five Cs": competence (social, academic, cognitive, and vocational skills), confidence (positive self-identity and self-efficacy), connection (positive bonds with institutions and individuals), character (respect for societal and cultural rules, integrity), and caring (compassion and empathy). When these five elements are fostered, they collectively generate a sixth outcome: contribution, or the active, positive participation of youth in their communities [22].

When applied to agricultural entrepreneurship, PYD provides a holistic lens for assessing the multiple dimensions of entrepreneurial capability. Competence encompasses technical agricultural knowledge, financial literacy, and business planning skills; confidence reflects the self-belief required to initiate and sustain an enterprise; connection captures the mentorship networks and institutional linkages that provide support; character embodies ethical commitment to sustainable practices and fair dealings; and caring reflects social and environmental responsibility [23,5]. Critically, PYD recognises that developmental gains are contingent upon enabling environments. Where opportunities for skill application are absent, developmental assets remain latent or deteriorate, and the gap between capability and opportunity generates frustration rather than empowerment [24].

Hart's ladder of participation

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation provides a power-sensitive framework for distinguishing tokenistic inclusion from meaningful engagement. The model's eight rungs progress from non-participation (Manipulation, Decoration, Tokenism) through progressively substantive forms of engagement, culminating in Youth-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults, the highest form of authentic participation [25,26]. This framework enables critical assessment of whether youth involvement in agricultural initiatives constitutes genuine empowerment or merely symbolic inclusion. Within the context of agricultural entrepreneurship programmes, Hart's Ladder sharpens analytical attention to the quality of institutional engagement. Training programmes may invite youth to attend workshops (Rung 3: Tokenism) or consult them on programme design (Rung 4: Assigned but Informed) without conferring influence over resource allocation, agenda-setting, or institutional governance (Rung 6: Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth; or Rung 8: Youth-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults). The distinction between presence and influence is critical: participation without corresponding power may reinforce marginalisation by creating an appearance of inclusion while leaving underlying decision-making hierarchies unchanged [20,24].

Synergy: Theorising the capability-constrained paradox

The integration of PYD and Hart's Ladder provides the theoretical architecture for conceptualising the capability constrained paradox. PYD explains the developmental gains that accrue when youth are supported; Hart's Ladder explains the institutional conditions under which participation becomes genuinely transformative. The synthesis posits that capability development and participation quality are mutually constitutive: higher rungs on Hart's Ladder (shared or youth-initiated decision-making) should correspond with stronger PYD outcomes (competence, confidence,

contribution), while tokenistic or consultative participation yields limited developmental returns and may, in fact, generate frustration when enhanced capabilities confront immovable structural barriers. This study proposes that agricultural entrepreneurship education can effectively produce the Five Cs, particularly competence, confidence, and connection, while the institutional environment remains at low levels of genuine participation (Rungs 3–5), denying youth access to resources, decision-making authority, and institutional recognition. This disjunction between developed capacities and frustrated opportunity gives rise to what we term unauthorised competence: expertise without institutional permission to operate. Young people are taught to think, plan, and analyse as entrepreneurs but are denied the institutional authority to act upon those plans. The gap between elevated individual capability and persistently low institutional participation is the structural mechanism underlying the capability-constrained paradox. This integrated framework drove the study's research design, interview protocols, deductive coding categories, and interpretive analysis. Interview probes were developed to capture both PYD indicators (self-perceptions of competence, confidence, connection) and Hart's participation rungs (decision-making authority, agenda-setting influence, resource control), enabling systematic inquiry into how educational gains interact with institutional contexts to shape youth entrepreneurial trajectories.

Literature Review

This review synthesises scholarship on youth transitions, institutional voids in agrarian systems, and the psychology of constrained capability. Rather than reiterating general debates on youth agency and participation, which have been comprehensively addressed elsewhere [3], this review foregrounds the structural and psychological mechanisms through which capability development becomes decoupled from opportunity realisation.

Youth transitions and the precariousness of adulthood

Contemporary youth studies increasingly emphasise that transitions to adulthood have become prolonged, fragmented, and uncertain [9,27,21]. Traditional markers of adulthood, stable employment, independent household formation, economic self-sufficiency, have become more difficult to attain in contexts of labour market precarity, economic restructuring, and shrinking formal employment opportunities. In Sub-Saharan Africa, these challenges are particularly acute, where youth navigate livelihoods under conditions of economic volatility, climate risk, and limited institutional support [8]. Within this context, agricultural entrepreneurship has emerged as a prominent policy pathway through which youth transitions and future-making are negotiated. Governments, development agencies, and international

organisations increasingly frame agripreneurship as a route through which youth can achieve economic independence while contributing to food security and rural development [1,2]. However, youth studies scholars caution against romanticised portrayals of entrepreneurial agency that overlook the structural conditions shaping individual action [10]. While youth possess aspirations and capabilities, the ability to translate these into tangible outcomes depends significantly on access to resources, institutional support, and meaningful opportunities for participation. Aspirations occupy a central place within contemporary youth research because they provide insight into how young people imagine desirable futures and evaluate available opportunities [28]. Importantly, aspirations are not simply personal preferences but are socially produced and shaped by interactions with family expectations, educational systems, labour markets, and policy environments. Youth continuously negotiate between what they hope to achieve and what appears realistically attainable within their socio-economic contexts. Consequently, aspirations may function both as sources of motivation and as indicators of structural exclusion when opportunities for achievement remain limited.

Institutional voids in agrarian systems

The concept of institutional voids, gaps in the institutional infrastructure that mediate access to resources, markets, and support services, provides a powerful analytical lens for understanding why entrepreneurial capabilities fail to translate into enterprise outcomes [29]. In agrarian systems across Sub-Saharan Africa, three institutional voids are particularly consequential for youth agripreneurship. Financial exclusion constitutes the most pervasive void. Youth are systematically excluded from formal financial systems due to collateral requirements, credit histories, and perceptions of risk [30,12]. Training programmes may teach business planning and financial literacy, but without pathways to capital, these skills remain inoperative. Informal credit arrangements, often on exploitative terms, fill the gap but lock youth into cycles of dependency and post-harvest price surrender [11]. Land tenure insecurity undermines investment in agriculture. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, customary land governance systems often allocate land through patriarchal inheritance patterns that systematically disadvantage youth, particularly young women [14,15]. Youth may farm under the authority of parents or elders, lacking the secure tenure required to make long-term investments in soil health, irrigation, or enterprise development. The training logic, which cultivates long-term investment thinking, collides with tenure arrangements that render such investment irrational. Weak market integration constrains the application of entrepreneurial skills. Even when youth possess market intelligence and strategic planning capabilities, they often lack the

bargaining power, transport infrastructure, and market linkages required to realise value from their produce. Buyer dominance, particularly in remote areas, strips youth of leverage, reducing sophisticated market analysis to an exercise in diagnosing constraints without the capacity to act upon them [13].

The psychology of capability-constraint: frustrated preparedness

The psychological consequences of capability development without opportunity realisation have received limited attention in agripreneurship scholarship. Yet emerging evidence suggests that training programmes, by raising aspirations and expectations, may inadvertently heighten awareness of blocked futures when institutional reforms fail to accompany capability development [8]. The condition we term frustrated preparedness reflects the dissonance between expanded competence and constrained opportunity. Positive Youth Development theory anticipates this dynamic: when environmental supports are systematically withheld, developmental gains do not merely plateau but actively erode [22]. Confidence diminishes when self-belief encounters repeated failure; connection weakens when institutional linkages prove unproductive; contribution recedes when efforts to participate meaningfully are rebuffed. The capability-constrained paradox, therefore, is not a static condition but a dynamic process in which institutional exclusion progressively corrodes the very developmental assets that training programmes sought to build. This psychological dimension has significant implications for youth engagement with rural futures. Where institutional barriers appear immovable, youth may disengage from agriculture, exit rural areas, or withdraw from entrepreneurial pursuits, not because they lack ambition or capability, but because they have learned that effort does not translate into achievement within the existing institutional configuration [27, 28]. Understanding these dynamics requires moving beyond economic metrics to examine how youth experience, interpret, and respond to the gap between enhanced competence and constrained opportunity, a gap that the present study seeks to theorise and empirically investigate.

Methodology

Research paradigm and design

This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm, which posits that social phenomena such as capability development, institutional constraints, and youth agency are subjectively constructed through human interaction and contextual experience [31,32]. This ontological stance prioritises participant meanings, contextual depth, and the researcher's reflexive engagement over objective measurement. A qualitative case study design was employed, focusing on Hwedza District to enable in-depth,

contextually embedded investigation of complex social processes within real-life settings [33]. Given the detailed methodological exposition provided in Nyagwaya et al. [3], which examined participatory pathways using the same dataset, this section presents a condensed account of the study's methodological procedures, highlighting procedures specific to the present analytical focus on the capability-constrained paradox.

Study area and sampling

Hwedza District, located in Mashonaland East Province, exemplifies the contradictions of Zimbabwe's agrarian policy landscape. Four wards thus Watershed West, Sengezi, Chigodora, and Zviyambe were purposively selected to capture intra-district variation in ecological conditions, institutional presence, infrastructure access, and proximity to markets, enabling analysis of how spatial variation in institutional conditions shapes the application of youth capabilities. The research employed a hybrid sampling strategy combining purposive and snowball approaches. Initial participant identification occurred through local agricultural extension officers and youth group leaders, with subsequent snowball referral to peers meeting study criteria. Recruitment continued until thematic saturation was achieved. The final sample comprised 47 participants: 15 key informants (four agricultural extension officers, four NGO and development agency representatives, four community leaders and ward councillors, and three agriculture educators) and 32 youth who participated in four focus group discussions (eight per ward, comprising 19 male and 13 female participants, with diverse entrepreneurial statuses including early-stage entrepreneurs, established entrepreneurs, and those who had discontinued agricultural activities). This stratification enabled examination of how the capability-constrained paradox manifests across different points along entrepreneurial trajectories.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected over eight weeks using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Interview protocols, informed by the integrated PYD-Hart framework, explored institutional dynamics, programme implementation, structural constraints, and participants' perceptions of their own capabilities and participation quality. Focus groups captured shared experiences of training, capability development, and entrepreneurial engagement. All sessions were conducted in Shona, audio-recorded with participant consent, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English, with translation accuracy enhanced through cross-checking and selective back-translation. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis following the six-phase approach outlined by Braun and Clarke [34]. Initial coding combined deductive categories derived from the theoretical

framework (PYD's Five Cs and Hart's Ladder rungs) with inductive codes emerging from participant narratives. For the present study, the analytical focus was specifically directed toward identifying: (a) entrepreneurial capabilities cultivated through training; (b) institutional voids constraining their application; and (c) participant narratives of frustration, negotiation, and response to the capability-opportunity gap. Codes were iteratively refined and grouped into themes reflecting patterns in capability development and institutional constraints. Analytical rigour was enhanced through peer debriefing, maintenance of an audit trail, and participant validation of preliminary findings.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology (MUASt) ethics review board. Protocols included written informed consent in the local language following detailed explanation of research purposes, anonymisation of all identifying information, and respectful observance of cultural protocols through prior engagement with local leaders, secure password-protected data storage, and debriefing sessions to address sensitive topics that emerged during data collection.

Findings

Findings are organised in two parts reflecting the dual dimensions of the capability-constrained paradox. Part one examines the specific capabilities agricultural entrepreneurship education cultivates among rural youth in Hwedza District. Part Two analyses the institutional voids that systematically prevent their conversion into enterprise outcomes. Throughout, comparative analysis across the four wards thus Watershed West, Sengezi, Chigodora, and Zviyambe illuminates how spatial variation in institutional conditions shapes youth experiences.

Part One: Capability Development through Agricultural Entrepreneurship Education

Agricultural entrepreneurship education, where accessible, produced significant cognitive and attitudinal transformation, reshaping how youth conceptualised agriculture and cultivating strategic, analytical capabilities. However, the depth and sophistication of these gains varied considerably by ward, reflecting differential exposure to training intensity and quality.

Entrepreneurial Alertness: From Passive Producer to Market Analyst

The most consistently reported outcome across all wards with training exposure was the development of entrepreneurial alertness thus the capacity to identify market opportunities and interpret

value-chain signals. Training enabled participants to view agriculture through a business lens rather than solely as a production activity. A participant from Watershed West explained how market-oriented training transformed his poultry enterprise:

"Before the training, I sold my chickens to any passerby out of weakness. Now I supply dressed birds to five restaurants at a negotiated price 40% higher. The training gave me the lens to see the opportunity" (PW8).

However, the extent to which entrepreneurial alertness translated into action varied across wards. In Sengezi and Chigodora, participants demonstrated awareness of market opportunities but remained constrained by buyer dominance and limited market access. As one participant noted:

"You pick up information on prices, but our response is limited because buyers control everything" (PC17).

In Zviyambe, where training exposure was minimal, alertness was largely directed toward livelihood survival, including identifying casual employment opportunities and temporary migration options to support farming activities. This gradient from proactive, digitally-enabled alertness in Watershed West to survival-oriented awareness in Zviyambe reveals that training quality fundamentally shapes the cognitive resources youth bring to agricultural engagement.

Risk management thinking: replacing fatalism with strategic diversification

Training introduced concepts of diversification and contingency planning that fundamentally altered participants' orientation toward uncertainty. A participant from Chigodora contrasted this approach with older generations' reliance on fate:

"Our parents' strategy was to pray for rain and plant one crop. When it failed, it was an 'act of God.' Agricultural training taught us to manage risk, not just endure it" (PC15).

Participants increasingly viewed diversification as a business survival strategy rather than an optional practice. However, the application of this thinking varied across wards. In areas with greater training exposure, youth adopted adaptive strategies such as enterprise diversification, crop rotation, and resource management. In Zviyambe, limited training opportunities meant that fatalistic perceptions of agricultural risk remained more prevalent, with participants describing farming as inherently unpredictable and beyond human control. This suggests that training not only provides technical knowledge but also reshapes cognitive frameworks through which uncertainty is interpreted and responded to.

Innovation and problem-solving orientation

Training fostered an experimental mindset, transforming participants from implementers of inherited practices into active problem-solvers. A participant from Watershed West described researching soil pH and testing compost amendments, noting:

"AEE made me a researcher on my own land" (PW32).

Similarly, a key informant observed that trained youth were more likely to seek new information and experiment with value-addition techniques (KI15). However, opportunities for innovation varied geographically. While youth in better-resourced wards drew on digital platforms and social networks to support experimentation, those in Zviyambe remained largely constrained by limited institutional support and access to modern technologies. The cultivation of an innovation mindset, in the absence of the resources to experiment, generated frustration rather than empowerment, a dynamic explored further in Part Two.

Strategic planning and business orientation

Where training exposure was greatest, participants developed stronger business planning and record-keeping capabilities. A Watershed West participant described using production and market data to guide planting decisions: *"The numbers show you the game"* (PW3).

Another participant noted that training helped him view farming as "a business unit with inputs, overheads, and profit margins" (PW7). However, strategic planning varied across wards. While trained youth increasingly adopted business-oriented approaches, participants in less-supported areas continued to rely on informal decision-making and short-term survival strategies due to uncertainty surrounding inputs, rainfall, and markets. This disparity highlights that business orientation, while cultivated through training, requires stable institutional conditions to become operational.

Attitudinal transformation: reclaiming agriculture as aspirational

Across wards, education challenged the stigma attached to agriculture. A Watershed West participant described training as a "revelation" that reframed the farm as "a startup space for young, smart, ambitious people" (PW10). This shift was most powerful when training included exposure to successful youth role models. However, this attitudinal gain was fragile; in Chigodora, where structural barriers remained immovable, trained youth described the resulting frustration as "a hope raised for a system that won't let you succeed" (PC10). This attitudinal transformation extended to identity formation and future-making. Participants frequently associated agripreneurship with independence, social recognition, and community respect. In Watershed West, youth described how training transformed agriculture from a symbol of poverty into a pathway for becoming successful businesspeople and respected community members. One participant remarked:

"Now I see it as something that can make people take you seriously as a businessperson" (PW11).

The desire for social recognition emerged strongly across wards. Female participants particularly associated agripreneurship with financial autonomy and greater decision-making power within households (PW18). However, institutional barriers often prevented these aspirations from being realised, creating a profound gap between imagined futures and achievable realities.

Ward-Level comparison of capability development

Synthesises the variation in capability development across the four wards, demonstrating a clear gradient from high capability cultivation in Watershed West to capability deprivation in Zviyambe (Table 1).

Table 1: *Capability acquisition gradient across wards.*

Ward	Entrepreneurial Alertness	Risk Management Orientation	Innovation Capacity	Strategic Planning	Entrepreneurial Identity
Watershed West	High; proactive, digitally-enabled market analysis	Technological adaptation; diversification as strategy	Active experimentation; online learning and peer networks	Data-informed foresight; systematic record-keeping	Strong agripreneur identity; enterprise orientation
Sengezi & Chigodora	Moderate; diagnostic but constrained by buyer dominance	Diversification for survival rather than growth	Low-tech, social-network-based adaptation	Rudimentary; traditional rules of thumb	Moderate; mentorship-dependent
Zviyambe	Absent; survival-oriented awareness only	Fatalistic; reliance on rain and luck	Minimal; traditional knowledge only	Absent; immediate survival focus	Weak; survivalist framing
Source: Fieldwork Data (2026)					

Table 2: Institutional void mapping across wards.

Ward	Financial Access	Land Tenure Security	Market Leverage	Extension Relevance
Watershed West	Excluded despite awareness; guarantor requirements	Patriarchal control; stewardship proposals unimplemented	Some collective bargaining; partial leverage	Frequent but generic; limited business focus
Sengezi & Chigodora	Exploitative informal credit; no formal access	Inheritance-dependent; land disputes undermine security	Individual price-taking; occasional group selling	Sporadic; traditional agronomy only
Zviyambe North	Total exclusion; no formal presence	Underutilised state land; no secure tenure	Complete isolation; no negotiation capacity	Virtually absent
Source: Fieldwork Data (2026)				

Part two: institutional voids and the failure of capability conversion
The capabilities documented above represent genuine developmental gains. Yet institutional voids systematically prevented their translation into enterprise outcomes. Part Two analyses these voids across financial, land, market, and extension domains.

The education-Enablement Gap: Knowledge without Capital

Financial exclusion operated as the most pervasive institutional void. Youth were taught business planning, financial analysis, and investment strategies without pathways to capital. As one participant summarised:

"They teach you to write a business plan but offer no pathway to the loan needed to execute it. The bank's requirements are a class check, not a credit check" (PW7).

This pattern was consistent across all wards, though its texture varied. In Watershed West, youth were aware of financial institutions and could articulate their requirements but remained excluded by collateral demands and parental guarantor requirements. In Sengezi and Chigodora, informal trader credit filled the gap on exploitative terms, locking youth into cycles of post-harvest price surrender. In Zviyambe, formal financial infrastructure was absent entirely, with even the Youth Empowerment Bank having no physical presence, existing "only in theory" (S1234).

The consequence was a condition of knowledge without leverage, youth possessed sophisticated financial literacy but no capacity to act upon it. Training amplified awareness of financial exclusion without providing the institutional means to overcome it, generating frustration rather than empowerment.

Land tenure insecurity: provisionality undermining investment

Training cultivated a long-term investment logic that tenure arrangements rendered irrational. A Chigodora participant explained:

"My father allocated me land, but the title remains his. When I proposed using it as collateral, he refused. Land is family heritage, not risk. My farming is constrained by his authority" (PC12).

In Sengezi, land disputes over former grazing areas created acute insecurity: youth were allocated plots then dispossessed when customary authorities reasserted grazing rights (KI15). In Watershed West, youth proposed rotational stewardship arrangements as a negotiated pathway, but these remained unimplemented. In Zviyambe, vast state land lay underutilised because youth lacked complementary resources and secure tenure to develop it (KI6).

The mismatch between training logic and tenure reality was stark. Youth were taught to think in five-year investment horizons while operating on year-to-year provisional access. The resulting uncertainty discouraged investment in soil health, irrigation, or permanent infrastructure, rendering the enterprise logic learned in training inoperative.

Market asymmetry: capability without leverage

Sophisticated market analysis collided with structures that denied youth bargaining power. A Watershed West participant described learning collective negotiation:

"When three of us arrive together, we agree on a minimum price and can walk away together. It doesn't always work, but it forces a conversation" (PW9).

Elsewhere, the absence of alternatives stripped this strategy of power. In Chigodora:

"The buyer knows you have no registration, no transport. You accept his price, or he moves on" (PZ22).

Digital market platforms that might have compensated for physical isolation were inaccessible where network coverage was poor,

notably in Zviyambe, where "the future of farming knowledge is being written in a language we cannot access" (K3). Market intelligence, in the absence of market leverage, became an exercise in diagnosing constraints without the capacity to resolve them.

Extension services: production knowledge without business logic

The extension system provided agronomic advice but ignored business dimensions. A Sengezi participant noted:

"They teach us how to grow a crop, not how to sell it or turn it into a business. We end up with a harvest but no strategy" (S1234).

In Watershed West, extension contact was regular but "ritualistic", a brief monologue under a tree with no follow-up (PW8). In remote wards, extension was a "ghost service," last seen conducting a land survey, not providing training (PZ22). The mismatch was starkest for the minority of youth with formal agricultural training, whose sophisticated knowledge crashed against an extension system that dismissed high-value crop diversification as "too risky" (PC14).

Ward-Level comparison of institutional voids

Synthesises the institutional voids across the four wards, revealing a gradient from partial institutional presence in Watershed West to total institutional absence in Zviyambe (Table 2).

Synthesis: the capability-constrained paradox in comparative relief

The ward comparison reveals a consistent yet spatially graded pattern: where institutional presence is densest (Watershed West), capabilities are most developed, but frustration is most acute because the gap between what youth can envision and what they can achieve is most visible. In intermediate wards (Sengezi and Chigodora), partial institutional engagement produces partial capability gains, with youth navigating a terrain of strategic compromise rather than transformation. In Zviyambe, institutional absence is so profound that the paradox takes the form of capability deprivation rather than capability frustration, youth lack even the cognitive resources to measure what they are denied. These gradient underscores three critical insights. First, the capability-constrained paradox is most acute where institutional presence is strongest but remains insufficient, the frustration of heightened awareness without enhanced opportunity. Second, capability development without institutional reform may amplify rather than alleviate youth marginalisation. Third, effective intervention requires geographic differentiation: in high-capability areas, addressing institutional voids could unlock substantial pent-up entrepreneurial potential; in low-capability areas, foundational investments in training access and institutional presence remain prerequisites for meaningful engagement.

Discussion

The study examined how agricultural entrepreneurship education interacts with institutional conditions to shape youth engagement in agripreneurship. The findings reveal a persistent disconnect between capability development and the opportunities required to translate those capabilities into viable entrepreneurial outcomes. This section theorises this disconnect, locates it within broader youth transitions, and derives implications for policy and practice.

Theorising the capability-institution disconnect

The integrated PYD-Hart framework provides a powerful lens for understanding why enhanced entrepreneurial capabilities frequently fail to generate enterprise outcomes. Positive Youth Development theory argues that individual strengths such as competence and confidence develop in environments where they are supported and where pathways for application exist [22]. The findings extend PYD theory by demonstrating that capability development is not only contingent upon enabling environments for its cultivation but also for its sustainment. Where pathways for applying acquired competencies are absent, capability gains may plateau, erode, or generate frustration, a condition we term developmental corrosion. Hart's Ladder of Participation sharpens this analysis by distinguishing the quality of institutional engagement. At all study sites, training programmes elevated young people up a ladder of their own competence (teaching them to think, plan, and analyse as entrepreneurs), while the financial, land, and market institutions that governed access to resources remained at low levels of participation, providing only tokenistic or consultative inclusion (Rungs 3–5). The outcome can be conceptualised as unauthorised competence: youth were allowed to think and plan as entrepreneurs but denied the institutional authority, the access to capital, secure tenure, and market leverage, required to act on those plans. The gap between elevated individual capability and persistently low institutional participation is the structural mechanism underlying the capability-constrained paradox. This theorisation challenges dominant policy narratives that equate training provision with empowerment. It suggests that agricultural entrepreneurship education, in the absence of corresponding institutional reforms, may inadvertently produce a more acutely frustrated youth cohort, one that possesses the cognitive resources to recognise and articulate the barriers to their success but lacks the institutional means to overcome them. The study therefore contributes to ongoing debates in youth studies and agripreneurship scholarship by demonstrating that entrepreneurial outcomes are contingent upon institutional conditions, and that youth transitions are shaped by the interaction between agency and structure.

The capability-constrained paradox as a youth transition problem

The findings suggest that the capability-constrained paradox is not merely an entrepreneurial problem but fundamentally a youth transition problem. Youth studies scholars argue that contemporary transitions to adulthood are increasingly prolonged, uncertain, and shaped by structural conditions that influence access to economic and social opportunities [9,10,27]. In this study, agricultural entrepreneurship represented more than a livelihood strategy; participants associated agripreneurship with independence, social recognition, community respect, and the attainment of adult status. Training programmes therefore cultivated not only entrepreneurial competencies but also aspirations linked to broader life-course transitions. However, the institutional barriers identified in the study disrupted these aspirations. Limited access to land, finance, and markets prevented many participants from converting entrepreneurial capabilities into tangible achievements. Consequently, the inability to establish viable enterprises was experienced not simply as an economic setback but as a delay in achieving socially valued markers of adulthood. Participants sought not only to become entrepreneurs but to become recognised contributors within their families and communities. When institutional conditions prevented these ambitions from being realised, frustration emerged from the widening gap between imagined futures and achievable realities. These findings extend existing debates on youth transitions by demonstrating how institutional exclusion can interrupt the pathways through which young people attempt to secure economic independence and social adulthood. The capability-constrained paradox reflects a broader developmental challenge in which aspirations are expanded through education while opportunities for their fulfilment remain structurally restricted. In this sense, entrepreneurship education may inadvertently heighten awareness of blocked futures when institutional reforms fail to accompany capability development.

Reconsidering youth agency under constraint

The findings challenge interpretations that equate youth disengagement from agriculture with passivity, dependency, or a lack of entrepreneurial motivation. Participants consistently demonstrated entrepreneurial alertness, strategic thinking, and aspirations for business development. Rather than reflecting a deficit of ambition, instances of withdrawal or reduced participation often represented rational responses to institutional environments perceived as hostile to enterprise creation. This interpretation aligns with youth studies scholarship that conceptualises agency as the capacity to act within, rather than outside, structural constraints [21,27]. Participant's exercised agency through a range of adaptive strategies, including livelihood

diversification, collective bargaining, temporary migration, informal market participation, and the selective scaling down of entrepreneurial activities. Such responses reveal that young people were actively negotiating structural limitations rather than passively accepting them. The findings therefore suggest that youth agency should not be assessed solely through successful enterprise creation. Doing so risks overlooking the diverse ways young people respond to uncertainty and exclusion. In contexts characterised by limited institutional support, agency may be expressed through adaptation, resilience, and strategic decision-making rather than business expansion. Recognising these alternative expressions of agency provides a more nuanced understanding of youth engagement in agriculture and highlights the importance of addressing structural barriers rather than attributing limited entrepreneurial outcomes to deficiencies among young people themselves.

Spatial differentiation and institutional waste

The ward-level differences reveal that the capability-constrained paradox manifests differently across institutional contexts. In areas with stronger training provision (Watershed West), enhanced capabilities heightened awareness of blocked opportunities, generating acute frustration. In institutionally marginal areas (Zviyambe), the challenge was capability deprivation itself, with youth lacking even the cognitive resources to articulate their exclusion. These findings highlight the inefficiency of investing in capability development without corresponding institutional reforms. Training programmes that cultivate entrepreneurial skills without simultaneously addressing financial, land, and market barriers may produce a cohort of frustrated, prepared youth who recognise the gap between their capabilities and their opportunities more acutely than those who have never received training. This dynamic represents a form of institutional waste: developmental investments that fail to generate developmental outcomes because the institutional infrastructure required to realise them is absent.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the challenge facing rural youth agripreneurship in Zimbabwe extends beyond the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to the broader question of how young people navigate pathways to adulthood under conditions of institutional constraint. Agricultural entrepreneurship education successfully cultivated entrepreneurial alertness, risk-management thinking, innovation orientation, strategic planning, and aspirations for economic independence and social recognition. More importantly, it enabled youth to imagine alternative futures in which they could achieve meaningful participation and adult status within their communities. However, the findings reveal that these aspirations

are frequently undermined by structural barriers, including limited access to finance, insecure land tenure, weak market integration, and inadequate institutional support. As a result, the capability-constrained paradox emerges not simply as a failure of enterprise creation but as a disruption of youth transitions and future-making processes. The concept of unauthorised competence captures the condition of frustrated preparedness characterising trained but structurally excluded youth expertise without institutional permission to operate. The promise of this study lies in its contribution to bridging youth studies and agripreneurship scholarship. By integrating Positive Youth Development and Hart's Ladder of Participation, the study demonstrates that capability development and institutional enablement are mutually dependent. The findings suggest that empowering youth requires more than training programmes; it requires creating environments in which young people can meaningfully exercise agency and translate aspirations into achievable futures. Supporting such transitions is essential not only for sustainable agripreneurship but also for fostering youth inclusion, participation, and social transformation in rural communities [35-37].

Implications

Implications for theory

Extend PYD's relational proposition. The study empirically demonstrates that when environmental supports are systematically withheld, developmental gains do not merely plateau; they actively erode. Positive Youth Development theory must therefore account not only for enabling conditions but also for the deterioration of competence, confidence, and connection when institutional environments remain exclusionary. We introduce the concept of developmental corrosion to capture this dynamic. Introduce the concept of unauthorised competence. Integrating PYD with Hart's Ladder reveals a critical disjuncture: training can raise individual capability while institutions keep youth at low rungs of participation. This unauthorised competence thus expertise without institutional permission to operate, offers a new analytical category for youth studies beyond agriculture, applicable to any context where education outpaces structural opportunity. Theorise capability conversion as contingent, not automatic. The study underscores that the value of entrepreneurial skills is not intrinsic but depends on the presence of conversion factors, including credit, tenure security, and market access. Future capability-centred research should treat structural enablement as integral, not peripheral, to assessing training outcomes.

Implications for policy

Mandate integrated programme design. National youth policy must require that all state-funded agripreneurship training be bundled

with guaranteed access to a collateral-free start-up loan window, dedicated extension mentorship, and market linkage support. Training alone should no longer qualify as a complete intervention. Reform extension services for the enterprise. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development should update extension curricula to include business planning, market analysis, and financial literacy, and incentivise officers to support youth-led diversification rather than prescribing staple-crop recipes. Institutionalise youth land stewardship mechanisms. Policy frameworks should formalise rotational land stewardship models that balance customary authority with youth inclusion. This requires legal recognition of temporary land-use agreements that provide youth with the tenure security necessary to justify enterprise investment without challenging underlying customary tenure systems.

Implications for practice

Embed post-training enablement into programme logic. Development interventions should extend beyond training delivery to include mentorship, market access, and resource support that enable young people to apply newly acquired capabilities. Programme design should also recognise variations in local institutional conditions and tailor support accordingly. Adopt youth-led monitoring of capability conversion. Programme evaluations should track whether skills translate into enterprise creation, using youth-generated indicators such as the number of businesses launched, credit applications successfully obtained, or land agreements signed, rather than relying solely on attendance and satisfaction metrics. Differentiate interventions by ward-level capability and institutional presence. Practitioners should conduct rapid institutional assessments prior to programme design, recognising that areas with high capability and high institutional frustration require different interventions than areas with low capability and institutional deprivation.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, it is based on a qualitative case study of a single district, which limits the generalisability of the findings beyond contexts with similar agrarian structures and institutional configurations. Second, reliance on self-reported data from interviews and focus group discussions may introduce recall or social desirability bias, particularly in participants' accounts of training impacts and institutional experiences. Third, the cross-sectional design captures youth agency and institutional conditions at one point in time, providing limited insight into how the capability-constrained paradox evolves over individual entrepreneurial trajectories. Fourth, the study focused on youth

who had accessed some form of agricultural entrepreneurship education; the experiences of those entirely excluded from training opportunities remain beyond its scope. Despite these limitations, the study provides in-depth, contextually grounded insights that offer strong analytical and theoretical relevance for understanding the interplay between capability development and institutional enablement in youth agripreneurship.

Areas for Future Research

The capability-constrained paradox identified in this study opens several avenues for further investigation. Longitudinal designs are needed to trace how the gap between enhanced competence and blocked opportunity evolves over time, whether youth who disengage eventually exit agriculture permanently, migrate, or re-enter when institutional conditions shift. Quantitative studies could operationalise the relationship between Hart's participatory rungs and PYD outcomes, testing the proposition that higher-quality participation moderates the translation of training into enterprise creation. Comparative research across additional Sub-Saharan African and South Asian contexts would establish the generalisability of the paradox and identify contextual factors that mitigate or intensify it. Intervention studies that pilot integrated training-plus-enablement models, bundling skills development with collateral-free credit, land stewardship contracts, and market linkages, would provide direct evidence on whether closing institutional voids converts frustrated capability into viable enterprise. Finally, intersectional analyses examining how gender, class, and educational background mediate the experience of the paradox would bring greater precision to both theory and programme design.

Appendix

Ethical Approval

Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee.

Consent to Participate

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before they participated in the study.

Consent for Publication

Participants consented to the use of anonymised data for academic publication.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data Availability Statement

The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants. However, anonymised excerpts and thematic summaries are included in the manuscript. Additional information may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools for language refinement, grammar improvement, and enhancing clarity. All outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of the final manuscript.

References

1. Geza W, Ngidi M, Ojo T, Adetoro AA, Slotow R, Mabhaudhi T. Youth participation in agriculture: A scoping review. *Sustainability*. 2021; 13: 9120.
2. Food and Agriculture Organization. Opportunities and barriers for advancing agrifood systems: Empowering young people for a sustainable future. 2023.
3. Nyagwaya TJ, Marembo M, Mukarumbwa P, Hove P. K. Youth agency and participatory pathways in advancing sustainable agriculture entrepreneurship. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. 2026; 10.
4. Adeyanju D, Mburu J, Mignouna D. Youth agricultural entrepreneurship: Assessing the impact of agricultural training programmes on performance. *Sustainability*. 2021; 13: 1697.
5. Sargani GR, Zhou D, Raza MH, Wei Y. Sustainable entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector: The nexus of the triple bottom line measurement approach. *Sustainability*. 2020; 12: 3275.
6. Fiedler Y. Empowering young agri-entrepreneurs to invest in agriculture and food systems: Policy recommendations based on lessons learned from eleven African countries. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. 2020.
7. Mukwashi T, Mabika V, Mokhema S, Enokenwa Baa O, Davis K. Youth engagement in agripreneurship in Zimbabwe: Report and recommendations. Inter Water Mangt Institute. 2024.
8. Sumberg J, Holland-Szyp C, Yeboah T, Oosterom M, Crossouard B, Chamberlin J. Young people, livelihood building and the transformation of African agriculture: A reality check. *Global Food Security*. 2024; 41.
9. Furlong A. Youth and social change: Individualisation and risk in late modernity (2nd ed.). Open University Press. 2017.

10. Wyn J, White R. Youth and society (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. 2013.
11. Chipfupa U, Tagwi A. Youth's participation in agriculture: A fallacy or achievable possibility? Evidence from rural South Africa. *South African J Econ Management Sci.* 2021; 24: 1-12.
12. Mulema J, Mugambi I, Kansiime M, Chan HT, Chimalizeni M, Pham TX, Oduor G. Barriers and opportunities for the youth engagement in agribusiness: Empirical evidence from Zambia and Vietnam. *Development in Practice.* 2021; 31: 690-706.
13. Ouko KO, Ogola JRO, Ng'on'ga CA, Wairimu JR. Youth involvement in agribusiness as a nexus for poverty reduction and rural employment in Kenya. *Cogent Social Sciences.* 2022; 8: 2078527.
14. Mkodzongi G. The future of Zimbabwe's agrarian sector: Land issues in a time of political transition. Routledge. 2022.
15. Thebe V. Youth, agriculture and land reform in Zimbabwe: Experiences from a communal area and resettlement scheme in semi-arid Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. *African Studies.* 2024; 77: 336-353.
16. Mukwedeyo B, Mudhara M. Factors influencing livelihood strategy choice and food security among youths in Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. *Heliyon.* 2023; 9: e14735.
17. Zimstats. Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency report. Harare, Zimbabwe. 2022.
18. Hlungwani P, Masuku S, Magidi M. Mainstreaming youth policy in Zimbabwe What role for rural youth? *Cogent Social Sciences.* 2021; 7: 1893907.
19. Masuku S, Macheka T. Policy making and governance structures in Zimbabwe: Examining their efficacy as a conduit to equitable participation (inclusion) and social justice for rural youths. *Cogent Social Sciences.* 2021; 7: 1855742.
20. Madende P, Henning JI, Jordaan H. Tailor-made development pathways: A framework to enhance active participation of youth in agriculture. *Social Sci.* 2023; 12: 630.
21. Threadgold S. Youth, class and everyday struggles. Routledge. 2020.
22. Lerner RM, Lerner JV, Murry VM, Smith EP, Bowers EP, Geldhof GJ, Buckingham MH. Positive youth development in 2020: Theory, research, programs, and the promotion of social justice. *J Res Adolescence.* 2021; 31: 1114-1134.
23. Adeyanju DF, Mburu J, Wainaina G, Chumo C, Mignouna D, Mulinganya N, Ashagidigbi W. Can young agribusinesses improve their skills through agribusiness empowerment programmes? Evidence from Africa. *Heliyon.* 2023; 9: e12876.
24. Checkoway B, Richards-Schuster K, Abdullah S, Aragon M, Facio E, Figueroa L, White A. Young people as competent citizens. *Community Development J.* 2003; 38: 298-309.
25. Haklıdır EA, Orbey B, Şahin P. Multiple meanings of child participation in architecture and planning: Revisiting the participation ladder. *Tasarım+ Kuram.* 2023; 19: 406-426.
26. Rahimi M, Sfandaryarfard E, Teimoury M. A systematic literature review of citizens' participatory ladder models. *Creative City Design.* 2023; 6: 37-49.
27. Mac Donald R. Youth transitions, unemployment and underemployment. *J Sociology.* 2011; 47: 427-444.
28. Yeboah T, Chigumira E, John I, Anyidoho N, Manyong V, Flynn J, Sumberg J. Hard work and hazard: Young people and agricultural commercialisation in Africa. *J Rural Studies.* 2020; 76: 142-151.
29. Mair J, Marti I. Entrepreneurship in and around institutional voids: A case study from Bangladesh. *J Business Venturing.* 2009; 24: 419-435.
30. Mmbengwa V, Qin X, Nkobi V. Youth agriculture entrepreneurship: A tool to enhance entrepreneurial success in South Africa. *J Entrepreneurship and Small Business.* 2023; 1: 1-65.
31. Alharahshel HH, Pius A. A review of key paradigms: Positivism vs interpretivism. *Global Academic J Human Soc Sci.* 2020; 2: 39-43.
32. Flick U. Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project. Sage. 2015.
33. Kumar R. Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners. Sage Publications. 2019.
34. Braun V, Clarke V. Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health.* 2019; 11: 589-597.
35. Government of Zimbabwe. National development strategy 2 (2026–2030). Ministry Of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. 2025.
36. Hart R. Children's participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care. 1997.
37. Zimstats. Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency report. Harare, Zimbabwe. 2023.ftab