**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**




# The Efficacy of Youth Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. A Case Study of Mbare.

BY

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Supervisor: Mr Mhuri

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance.

Bindura, Zimbabwe

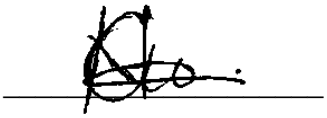
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## ABSTRACT

Youth entrepreneurship has become a key strategy for promoting economic empowerment and tackling the ongoing challenge of unemployment in developing economies. In Zimbabwe, where the largest part of the population is under thirty-five, youth entrepreneurship offers a potential pathway toward achieving sustainable livelihoods, inclusive growth and socio-economic transformation. This study examined how effective youth entrepreneurship is in fostering economic empowerment among young people in Mbare Matapi, Harare. It aimed to explore the current state of entrepreneurship in youth, analyse the link between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, identify major challenges and opportunities and suggest strategies to use youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for sustainable economic independence. The research used a qualitative case study approach, including interviews and focus group (discussions) with thirty (30) youth entrepreneurs. Results show that entrepreneurship significantly increases household income, self-reliance and skill development, thereby boosting economic empowerment and reducing social vulnerability. However, the impact remains limited due to poor access to startup capital, weak infrastructure, limited market linkages and insufficient business training. Despite these hurdles, youth show resilience, creativity and adaptability through informal businesses and cooperative networks. The study concludes that youth entrepreneurship in Mbare Matapi has strong transformative potential if supported by inclusive financing, capacity building, access to technology and supportive policy frameworks. Strengthening these areas could unlock entrepreneurship as a sustainable driver of economic independence and national growth.

# DECLARATION FORM

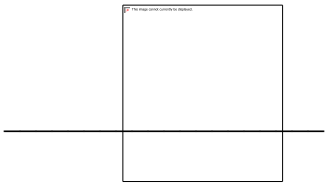
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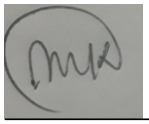
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Supervisor's Signature

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Chairperson's Signature

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is specifically dedicated to my parents Mr. M and Mrs. I Chihumbiri for their unwavering support throughout my tertiary education. Thank you mom and dad for being my support system financially and my pillar of strength during the course of my academic journey. Your love and encouragement will forever be cherished and appreciated.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EE – Economic Empowerment

EEs – Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GEM – Global Entrepreneurial Monitor

ILO – International Labour Organisation

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

YE – Youth entrepreneurship

ZYC – Zimbabwe Youth Council

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# CHAPTER ONE

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Youth entrepreneurship has become a successful policy tool in promoting economic development, innovation and job creation worldwide. The world has both a window of opportunity and a challenge for economic and social development in this youth bulge with almost 1.2 billion young people aged 15-24 (United Nations, 2023). There is now a global consensus that youth entrepreneurship will reduce unemployment, stimulate innovation and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goal 8 which is centered on decent work together with economic growth, supported by national governments and development partners, including the likes of UNDP and the World Bank.

Around 60% of the African population is under the age of 35, with the population expected to continue growing over the coming decades (United Nations, 2023). The youth in Sub- Saharan Africa continue to face problem of soaring economic dependency and youth unemployment hence, the twin challenges that fuel poverty traps and exposure to civil unrest and conflict. The youth unemployment rate is estimated to be around 12.7% by International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023); however, there is high rate of underemployment and informal employments whereby over 60% of working youth are engaged in informal or subsistence work. But when young people are empowered to start their own enterprises, be it in farming, technology, small-scale manufacturing or services, they not only generate employment for themselves and others. They therefore acquire a new skill and find a sense of purpose and dignity in the society. Youth entrepreneurship is a

pragmatic approach to addressing poverty as it enables young people to achieve financial independence and mitigates the risk of conflict in the area.

Some regional and national programmes have been instrumental in providing youth with entrepreneurial training, access to finance and conducive policy environments. Young people in Sub-Saharan Africa, the African Development Bank (2023) states, they are two times more likely than adults to be entrepreneurs. Promoting youth entrepreneurship is therefore not only a matter of economic stimulation but also implies a perception of its powerful tool for peace, violence reduction and for nurturing a more stable and prosperous future for the region. Still, the nexus between youth entrepreneurship, economic independence and conflict prevention has been under-researched and under-empirically substantiated in Sub-Saharan Africa literature. For this reason, making sense of youth entrepreneurship can be a way to economic independence and peacebuilding.

The youth comprise quasi-67% of the population at largest share, according to ZimStat (2022) in Zimbabwe. The nation confronts perennial youth unemployment, which Mhlanga (2020) estimated at between 40 and 60 per cent. Faced with the scarcity of formal work and de-industrialisation, young people have been driven to informal entrepreneurship for survival. The Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) facilitates programs like the Zimbabwe Youth Empowerment and Development Fund for youth entrepreneurship. But how effective is youth entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe's case? Ncube & Zengeni (2016) confirm that there are structural issues that continue to constrain sustainable youth enterprise development. That is a critical question that challenges whether entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe really empowers young people, or whether it is simply a survival mechanism in a volatile economy. The study examined the contribution of youth entrepreneurship with a specific focus on economic empowerment, skill development and market access.

### 1.2 Purpose of the Study

To examine the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship to economic independence and youth empowerment in Mbare.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment and underemployment in Zimbabwe had reached crisis levels, with the 15–24 age group, or 'ama2000', making up at least 60% of the unemployed according to ILO 2023 data, leaving most dependent on family support and fueling discontent and unrest. While economists and the government, including President Mnangagwa under Vision 2030, promoted youth entrepreneurship as the solution, the formal economy offered few jobs due to deindustrialization and low investor confidence and graduates received little practical support after training. Despite claims that entrepreneurship was a key tool for economic empowerment, there was limited evidence of its actual impact, particularly in high-density areas like Mbare Matapi. This study therefore examined the real effects of youth entrepreneurship programmes in Mbare to determine whether they created jobs, supported economic inclusion and contributed to peace.

### 1.4 Research Objectives

1. To explore the state of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare.
2. To assess the nexus between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment among young people.
3. To understand the challenges and opportunities being faced in Zimbabwean youth entrepreneurship, particularly in Mbare Matapi.

4. To propose strategies for enhancing youth entrepreneurship as the driver for sustainable economic independence among young people.

### 1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the status of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare?
2. In what ways does this youth entrepreneurship contribute to achieving economic independence?
3. What challenges and opportunities exist for youth entrepreneurship in Mbare?
4. How can youth entrepreneurship be effectively harnessed to promote sustainable economic independence among young people?

### 1.6 Assumptions of the Study

1. Youth entrepreneurship is a transformative road to economic self-reliance because it promotes young people becoming financially self-sufficient, acquiring skills and generating income over the long term.
2. Youth entrepreneurship initiatives, when supported by inclusive policies and community engagement, contribute to reduced vulnerability to conflict by promoting social cohesion, economic stability and constructive youth participation in society.

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is of significance because it provides so much empirical evidence on the extent to which youth entrepreneurship can be promoted as an effective tool for economic empowerment. These findings are equally critical for policy makers, development actors, educators and financial institutions as they offer evidence-driven guidance on how to

promote sustainable youth entrepreneurship programmes in Zimbabwe. Contrarily, it adds to theoretical discussions on youth, peace-building and economic development. This study highlights impact of the young entrepreneurs in bringing the economic development. This, in turn, may usher a better prospect for the region because the economic empowerment of the youth can lead to social stability.

Moreover, the study highlighted the necessity for cooperation between various actors such as public and private actors as well as Non-Governmental Organisations to create a comprehensive atmosphere that encourages young people to pursue entrepreneurship. This can allow for the exchange of resources, knowledge and best practices to foster the growth of youth entrepreneurs. Hence, the research highlighted on the significance of youth entrepreneurship as a tool for economic and peacebuilding and it would be raising stimulating thoughts among those who are engaged in youth affairs. Seeking guidelines on how youth entrepreneurship as a tool for economic empowerment and conflict prevention in the region may be realized soon.

### 1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on urban youth-led enterprises in Mbare, Harare over the past five years. It did not cover initiatives or entrepreneurship outside the age range of 18-35. The research was limited to the composition, role, connection, challenges and opportunities on how youth entrepreneurship focusing on economic empowerment, skill development and access to markets extends beyond economic independence and conflict prevention in Harare, Zimbabwe. A closer look on the impacts and ability of youth entrepreneurship initiatives to enhance economic stability was also at the centre of the research. However, drawbacks such

as few articles and research work on the subject matter adversely affected the quality and depth of the content.

### 1.9 Limitations of the Study

However, this research was subjected to several limitations that affected its outcome. For instance, access to information regarding youth entrepreneurship might not have been consistent across Zimbabwe. This could limit a comprehensive analysis of this research. In addition, different definitions of youth entrepreneurship in different areas were limits to this research. It was also subject to self-reporting biases that influenced the accuracy of information obtained. It was possible that some participants might have reported their experiences based on societal expectations. The cultural and socio-economic diversity of different towns and cities in Zimbabwe could influence this research. Despite the limitations that were encountered in this research, it was worthwhile studying this research since it addresses a critical issue affecting Zimbabwe youth unemployment. It was research that aimed to provide insights into how effective strategies could be developed to empower young people economically and create jobs. It also provided insights into how economic empowerment could be used to combat conflicts and establish peace. It was research that filled a gap in literature regarding how entrepreneurship could be used to influence governance and establish peace.

### 1.10 Definition of Keywords

**Sustainability** according to Raman (2024) encompasses practices that support long-term economic development while ensuring the prevention of environmental resources and ecological balance.

According to Filsinger (2025), **Social Capital** is the collective value of social networks, relationships and community norms that allow cooperation and assistance in entrepreneurial activities.

**Resilience** is the ability of people and communities to recover from adversities adapting effectively in the face of socio-economic challenges as articulated by (Farchi, 2025).

**Innovation** is defined by Osterwalder (2026) as the introduction and application of new ideas, products and processes, leading to performance improvement in business and the economy.

As defined by World Bank (2025), **microfinance** refers to financial services tailored for low-income individuals or those lacking access to traditional banking aimed at enabling small-scale entrepreneurship and fostering economic development.

According to Guevara (2025), **peacebuilding** was the process of building a sustainable peace, based on the root cause of conflict, through reconciliation and social justice.

### 1.11 Dissertation Outline

**Chapter One: Introduction and Background of the Study**

Thus the first chapter introduced the research study by providing the study's background, the problem statement, research goals, inquiries, study importance, boundaries and constrains. This section described the study as a research overview.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Chapter two included a thorough review on the current literature on the topic of youth entrepreneurship, empowerment, skills development and markets access. This chapter concentrated on theoretical models relating entrepreneurship to economic development and conflict resolution. The chapter highlighted major literature gaps particularly as far as Mbare, Harare, Zimbabwe is concerned and called for empirical research. This enabled the region's peculiar challenges and opportunities to be captured through pertinent issues such as the role of educational initiatives, training schemes and policy frameworks that nurture an entrepreneurial disposition.

**Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

The research design and method utilized to study youth entrepreneurship in Mbare, Harare, Zimbabwe. It introduced both qualitative and quantitative methods by presenting sampling methods, data collection methods and analytical procedures employed. This chapter was designed to deal with the general development towards analyzing youth entrepreneurship to economic self-solution and stability for young individuals.

**Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

Chapter four included the presentation and analysis of results on the effects of youth empowerment on economic stability and conflict prevention. This chapter undertook a systematic review on the co-dependence of economic autonomy and peacebuilding, illustrating how social entrepreneurship could lead social transformation in Zimbabwe.

## Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

The last chapter focused on the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestion(s) for further research to strengthen the knowledge of youth entrepreneurship in enhancing economic independence and youth empowerment in Mbare, Harare, Zimbabwe.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

In the chapter, the analysis concentrated on ideas and discourses which constitute the 'regime' of youth entrepreneurship in the Mbare, Matapi context and engender kinds of young entrepreneurs. The chapter sets out a critical review of the available literature concerning youth entrepreneurship as a 'vehicle' for combating youth unemployment and promoting economic and social inclusion through the growth and development of youthful business people. The review informed key debates, theoretical frameworks as well as empirical findings of which the study was based. It also highlighted particular voids in literature, mainly the absence of studies grounded in communities.

### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation in the sense of examining the contribution of youth entrepreneurship in areas such as Mbare, Matapi to harness the challenges of youth unemployment and underemployment. This theory was coined by an Austrian-American economist Joseph Alois Schumpeter in (1934). Schumpeter's theory of Innovation revolutionised economic thought by proposing that development is driven by innovative entrepreneurs who introduce new products, processes or business models. His theory diverges from traditional models that emphasise capital accumulation or labour force growth as the main factors of development. Schumpeter's theory rests on several key tenets or principles that collectively describe the dynamics of economic development. These include innovation as the engine of growth whereby introduction of new products, development of production methods, opening of new markets

are all central to innovation by Schumpeter and it must be noted that innovations create new opportunities for profit, stimulate competition and propel economic growth.

Another principle was that entrepreneurs are agents of change in Schumpeter's model (1934). This is because they identify opportunities for innovation, risk their capital and resources to implement new ideas and they disrupt existing markets equilibria. Schumpeter believed that entrepreneurs are motivated by profit and the desire to gain a competitive advantage, making them essential catalysts of development. This, therefore, if implemented to Mbare youth who were into entrepreneurship, they would yield good productive results of their innovative ideas. Schumpeter's theory of Innovation also lay on creative destruction which was a process whereby old industries, technologies and products were destroyed and new industries and innovations emerge in their place. It must be put into consideration that, this ongoing cycle of destruction and creation leads to economic evolution and technological progress. This theory was also grounded in the idea of cycles of innovation by Schumpeter which emphasised that, economies are inherently unstable and constantly changing and development involves periods of rapid innovation followed by stabilisation. This process in its dynamic nature, underscores the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation in fostering growth.

The research could systematically analyse how youth use innovation to bypass structural challenges such as lack of formal jobs, finance or infrastructure. This could be achieved by applying Schumpeter's theory. It also helped reveal the significance of new market opportunities enabled by digital technologies. The theory provided a lens to understand how and why Zimbabwean youth innovate in financially constrained environments. Some took these opportunities as a hustle for personal enrichment, personal growth and to feed families. By focusing on the role of innovation in economic

empowerment, the theory highlights how these entrepreneurial activities contribute to broader socio-economic transformation in Zimbabwe. This was crucial for understanding both the resilience and the dynamism of youth entrepreneurship programmes in Zimbabwe specifically those from Mbare, Matapi. Therefore, Schumpeter's theory highlighted the importance of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit in driving the long-term economic growth as suggested by (Romer, 1990).

**2.3 The State of Youth Entrepreneurship Globally.**

With the global youth bulge, a focus on young entrepreneurs within the wider entrepreneurship policy agenda is not only timely but imperative. Youth, especially disadvantaged youth, face challenges that are distinct from those of adults and can limit their ability to have a meaningful impact on the economy. These obstacles generally push them to the margins, depriving them of meaningful access to national and global economies. However, entrepreneurship is a powerful way out of this predicament as it creates economic opportunities for youth and allows them to be masters of their own future by chasing and realising their own innovative ideas and solutions.

Youth unemployment continues to be a major issue in the developing world with significant social and economic consequences. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2023) the 13% of young people are unemployed in 2023 and 20% of them are categorized as not in employment, training or education. Even though it has decreased recently, it is still enormously greater than the overall unemployment rate with projections indicating that young individuals are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed. The ILO estimates that bringing the current youth unemployment back in line with adult unemployment would increase world Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 4.4 to

7.0 percent, an estimated equivalent of about US$3.7 trillion. With roughly 1.1 billion young people from the Global South set to join the labour market in the next (UN DESA, 2022) decade, this problem is only intensifying.

There was evidence that entrepreneurship had the potential to be transformed, but it remained a largely untapped source of work for young people. The GEM (2023/2024) Global Report showed that 40% of young people want to start a business, in contrast to 8% that were business owners. Self-employment aspirations were solely high in the developing world were AfDB (2022) reported that 45% of youth want to start a business compared to 17% in the developed world. In response to this challenge, governments, international agencies and local actors are increasingly turning to support youth entrepreneurship to generate employment opportunities and stimulate economic growth. It is in this spirit that diverse spread of initiatives, focused on preparing young people with the know-how and/or support to enable youth to establish or grow their businesses, are being rolled out. Among the best ways to foster youth entrepreneurship is with educational programs that build capacity. For instance, Tony Elumelu Foundation (2023 Impact Report) had empowered over 1.5 million youthful Africans via TEFConnect (its digital hub). This platform offered a wealth of resources such as business training, networking and mentoring.

The increasing youth population in Africa is having positive impacts on youth entrepreneurship; Africa is emerging as a continental leader in this prospect. For example, one need to look no further than Rwanda and its Kigali Innovation City full of youth developments after the genocide. Kenya also has its Ajira Digital Initiative which is facilitating youth entrepreneurship. Therefore, Zimbabwe's youth entrepreneurship is, able to soar to heights like other countries provided by Tukuta et al, (2015) and Chimucheka (2018). But places like Mbare, youth entrepreneurship remains in need of innovators to turn

ideas into practice and to continue driving the country from statistics in economic growth by way of youth entrepreneurship. Consequently, youth entrepreneurship world status is indeed helping young people to keep themselves away from indulging in harmful acts such as drugs and substance abuse, crime and violent acts.

## 2.4 The Nexus between Youth Entrepreneurship, Economic Growth and Empowerment

According to GEM Global Report (2023) studies indicated that the idea of a strong and positive correlation between economic growth and youth entrepreneurship, saw entrepreneurship as an important component of economic expansion. According to Schumpeter, an entrepreneur is someone who can create shockwaves by using the economic cycle's innovation mechanism. Schumpeter developed his theory of economic development using a creative destruction process that produced through entrepreneurial endeavors. Additionally, economists who specialize in economic development have tried to incorporate entrepreneurship into a few growth models. According to Blundell (2021), for instance in his theory of endogenous economic growth which placed a strong emphasis on the accumulation of growth is fueled by knowledge and development of human capital. He presented according to his growth model, research and development is a field that generates new forms of capital goods and entrepreneurs as people who are able to create new products through activities that lead to changes in the market an increase in production, an increase in labour activity and economic growth. According to, Audretsch & Keilbach (2021) argued that entrepreneurship influences economic growth in three ways that is, the diffusion technology and know-how, increase creating more entrepreneurial firms, which creates more competition and increased diversity and choice of services offered in an economy as long as entrepreneurship increases the mix of enterprises.

Additionally, they state that entrepreneurship's role in economic development facilitates the faster commercialization of innovative technology, which boosts productivity and spurs economic growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) function for economic growth expansion, prosperity and innovation has been discussed by World Bank (2021) and OECD (2023), who maintained that SMEs and business operations along with big established corporations are propelling technological development and economic expansion. As economic growth facilitators entrepreneurs contribute to economic expansion since they establish an innovation network that encourages the creation of fresh concepts. An externality network is created by entrepreneurship that promotes the growth of new markets and every business venture has an effect on economic expansion that is more than suitable. A study claims that the crucial youth entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth by acting as a conduit for the dissemination of information that might not have been remarkable otherwise. According to Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau and the Kuwait Ministry of Finance (2015) the World Bank and the United Nations from 2001 to 2014 empirical results revealed that critical youth entrepreneurship promotes economic expansion by serving as a channel for the distribution of details that otherwise might not have been noteworthy. This proved that Kuwait's GDP growth was positively impacted by entrepreneurship. Even so, it was statistically insignificant and can be explained by a variety of logical factors such as a small number of viewpoints, the influence of different factors on GDP is to be effective over Kuwait's GDP which is impacted by long-term variables like oil prices and volume of oil exports to the economy.

Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged in development literature. Silwal et al. (2021) emphasise that inclusive economic systems or structures where youth have access to resources, markets, and training are foundational to peace and prosperity. In Zimbabwe, youth entrepreneurship offers a pathway to financial

independence, especially in urban areas where formal employment is now considered a connection-based pathway than self-employment. Plan International Zimbabwe (2023) highlighted that youth-led enterprises have improved access to education, healthcare, and housing. These ventures also foster innovation and leadership among marginalized groups. Olawoyin & Chiwetu (2024) highlight that entrepreneurship enables youth to become active economic agents, contributing to national recovery and social stability. Literature reviewed that, when young people are economically active, they participate in markets, pay taxes, and stimulate demand. This aligns with the views of Silwal et al. (2021), who argue that inclusive economies where youth are not side-lined are more stable and prosperous.

## 2.5 Challenges and Opportunities associated with promoting Youth Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe

Despite the vibrancy of entrepreneurship in some areas around Zimbabwe, several structural challenges persist. Chigumira et al. (2020) postulated that, access to finance remains limited as young entrepreneurs often rely on rotating savings clubs or family loans to start businesses. Corruption by local authorities is also negatively impacting the lives of young entrepreneurs. Access to resources particularly those supplied by the state was said to be impacted by this to encourage young people to start their own businesses. The main obstacle facing young people to start their own businesses in Zimbabwe' rural areas are lack of capital. The majority of young people in rural areas lacks the ability to save money and gets employment. Despite the fact that banks provide loans in Zimbabwe, young people living in rural areas have difficulty accessing bank financing because they typically do not have the collateral security needed to get a bank loan. Youth in Zimbabwe's rural areas lack access to financial resources, which is also due to lack of contacts, insufficient funds and ignorance in relation to the available funding sources.

Zimbabwe's unstable and unpredictable political and economic environment serves as a further deterrent to young people starting and expanding their businesses. Another barrier to youth development is allegedly inadequate and in consistent government assistance to youth entrepreneurship. According to Chimucheka (2018), the government does not actually support young people to pursue careers in entrepreneurship. It must be noted that the government encourages the young people to take part in additional government initiatives such as black empowerment and indigenization rather than fostering genuine youth entrepreneurship. Poor location was a major obstacle for businesses operating in rural areas because it had an impact on their companies' performance and sales. Inadequate demand for goods and services that the majority of young people offer on the market in addition to high production, youth entrepreneurship is also hampered by expenses.

Additional obstacles that young entrepreneurs must overcome in order to have successful youth entrepreneurship in the marginalized areas of Zimbabwe include lack of information technology. Exorbitant transportation expenses, an unappealing business environment, lack of relevant experience, lack of and inaccessibility to skilled labour, expensive registration fees, high costs to acquire official operating licenses, bad roads, erratic electricity, lack of networking opportunities and communication services were also mentioned as the obstacles to young people staring their own businesses.

However, the difficulties faced by entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe were comparable to those faced by entrepreneurs in South Africa, which was regarded as Africa's economic engine. This therefore means these challenges were not only limited to Zimbabwe. A study conducted in South Africa by Fatoki & Garwe (2010) revealed that the problem of access and availability of finance to entrepreneurs in South Africa was ranked second after lack of entrepreneurial and management competencies in most aspiring and existing entrepreneurs

(in the SMME sector) in South Africa. This was also supported by Herrington & Wood (2003), Herrington et al. (2009) and Cassar (2004) who also conducted their studies in South Africa. Mutezo (2005) also found similar challenges as hampering entrepreneurial activity in South Africa. These results were also in line with the findings of Zim Trade (2011) which identified lack of collateral security resulting to inaccessibility to loans, lack of skills and difficulties in business registration as some of the challenges faced by both women and youths in business in Zimbabwe. The results were also supported by a study conducted in Ghana by Inkoun (2003) that found out that small business performance is closely linked to entrepreneurial skills of the owner or manager. Availability and accessibility to finance and skills development were also found to be crucial for entrepreneurial success by (Mudavanhu et al. 2011).

Therefore, entrepreneurship was of benefit not only in creating wealth for individuals but also for the nation. Entrepreneurship reduces idle time and promotes constructive engagement which enhances youth participation in productive economic activities to survive in this 21st century. Zvaita (2024) argued that fully supported youth entrepreneurship helps reduce gang violence and political clashes by offering alternative livelihoods to keep them occupied with income generating initiatives that promote peace. Chiwetu (2024) argued that youth entrepreneurship especially in informal sectors can be a vehicle for economic inclusion and peacebuilding. Zimbabwe can eliminate poverty through entrepreneurship, decrease unemployment rates and enhance the country's inclination. Youth equipment in Matapi Mbare possessing entrepreneurship skills can become more independent. The growth of entrepreneurship particularly in the form of small and medium-sized businesses can help address the nation's high unemployment rate. This may be feasible because small, medium and micro businesses typically have low start up costs and low risk and can assist in utilising unrealised creativity and knowledge as stated by Maseko & Manyoni (2011).

## 2.6 Strategies for Leveraging Youth Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Sustainable Economic Independence

Youth entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific (2019) suggests that addressing the gaps that constrain entrepreneurial success will require coordinated action through training programs tailored towards digital literacy to enhance sustainable economies. Entrepreneurship can therefore enable young entrepreneurs in Mbare and other urban hubs in Zimbabwe to adapt and optimize the use of digital technologies for scaling their businesses. Flexible financing models such as microcredit or diaspora-backed investment funds can address the capital challenges these youth face and reducing bureaucratic hurdles in business registration and offering targeted tax incentives would encourage more young entrepreneurs to formalize their operations. According to Yoshino et.,al (2015) Indonesia has an especially effective financial education program developed and current administrations have made financial education a key component of the Central Bank of Indonesia's National Strategy for Financial inclusion and in 2010, Indonesia and Ministry of Finance launched the My Saving initiative.

In addition, the post-genocide resurgence in Rwanda made youth entrepreneurship a priority in national development based on an account of its 'Kigali Innovation City', through the application of business incubation and cooperative models to foster inclusive growth (Keast 2020). In the same way, Kenya's Ajira Digital Initiative to be discussed in the following section, builds the digital skills of Kenyan youth that assist them to scale youth-led innovation initiatives Wambugu & Muthoni, (2023). As such, linking youth enterprises in Zimbabwe to incubation hubs such as Impact Hub Harare could potentially enhance the ability of youth to progress beyond the subsistence-level trade. Tukuta et al (2015) posited that, the realities are that the developments on the ground are showing that Zimbabwe's

youth have long been enmeshed in entrepreneurial undertakings that are ever-changing with the economic realities through imagination and innovation. For example, the mingling of traditional trading cultures and digital technologies has created new ways for young people to achieve economic empowerment, and Mbare particularly in Matapi can also fit into this technological advancement. Even as persistent challenges such as lack of finance and policy instability remain, emerging opportunities in the form of mobile banking services and digital platforms, such as extension of market reach and better access to finance, signal youth entrepreneurship as a promising, researchable and transformative route to economic self-reliance in Zimbabwe.

## 2.7 Research Gap

Although many studies on youth entrepreneurship and its economic outcomes exist, there remains a gap in understanding the interaction between specific socio-economic factors and the varied responses of governments, particularly in Zimbabwe. Though existing literature addresses the expressions of youth entrepreneurship such as start-ups, informal businesses and innovation hubs, there is limited exploration on how these entrepreneurial activities connect with unique local conditions such as historical legacies in shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems. In addition, the impact of international influences, as seen in global economic trends, foreign investment and development aid on domestic entrepreneurial initiatives has not been adequately examined. A lot of studies tend to focus on the immediate challenges facing youth entrepreneurs such as access to financing loans or regulatory barriers without delving into the sustained socio-political and economic dynamics that shape the long-term sustainability of youth entrepreneurship. In our Zimbabwean context there are very rife economic hardships and structural limitations are persistent.

## 2.8 Chapter Summary

This section of study reviewed literature and theoretical framework informing the study. Literature review showed the state of youth entrepreneurship globally and its impact on the lives of youth giving insight on Asian, Western and African countries. The above literature also highlights challenges and benefits associated with promoting youth entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe as well as strategies posed to leverage youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for sustainable economic independence. This study is dated to Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation which highlights that innovation is central to the aspect of youth entrepreneurship fostering economic growth and development. The theory also notes that, entrepreneurs are key players to innovation hence all the above reviewed literature is to help facilitate youth entrepreneurship to young entrepreneurs in Mbare, Matapi.

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provided a detailed outline of the research methodology and design that were used to collect data. The chapter presented the sampling techniques, sample size and the targeted population under study. The research also covered research philosophy and ethical considerations, data presentation and analysis methods which were briefly explained as follows.

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a conceptual lens that directs how research should be undertaken, based on ideas about reality and the nature of knowledge. Creswell (2014) postulates that, it reflects beliefs about the ways in which information concerning a phenomenon ought to be collected, analysed and applied. This research adopted an interpretivism paradigm which holds that the world people live in is composed of multiple realities, each valid (Harris & Radomski, 2024). Reality cannot be understood from a single objective truth, therefore, interpretivism favour research methods that generate rich, qualitative data and capture the complexity of social phenomena (Lyu, 2024). Interpretivism stance seeks to gain an understanding of social actions, often by examining the meanings that the social actors attach to their experiences. Therefore, through the interpretivist philosophy, the research seek to understand the social reality of the actors concerned namely, understanding the lived experiences, perceptions and strategies of young entrepreneurs within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### 3.3 Research Methodology

The research process involved the formulation and modification of the problem, hypothesising solutions, gathering, organising and analysing data, making inferences and drawing conclusions and then carefully tested these conclusions to see whether they were in accordance with the formulating hypothesis (Yadav, 2023). Hence, research methodology is the process where you describe the methods of identification, collection, analysis and interpretation of information applied to your research problem. Types of research methodologies include qualitative, quantitative and mixed research method. Qualitative research methodology was at the core of this research, as the methodology best suited to explore the intricate and complex perceptions, attitudes and experiences of unemployed youth in Mbare, Harare (Chirisa, 2023). It gathered and analysed words and textual information through group discussions as well as interviews that were transcribed and reviewed by utilising a thematic coding technique.

### 3.4 Research Design

Research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data on how the researcher answered the research questions as according to (Saunders et al., 2019). The research used a case study research design, which ensured a real-world detailed subject and in-depth exploration of youth unemployment challenge. A case study is good for describing, comparing, evaluating and understanding different aspects of a research problem, (Creswell, 2014). As youth unemployment is a multifaceted problem involving economic, social and policy dimensions that interact in complex ways, using a case study design makes it possible to examine how these factors intersect to create barriers to employment opportunities for young people. This approach

provided an understanding of the experiences of unemployed youth, highlighting perspectives that may be overlooked in most quantitative studies (Nyadza, 2019). Therefore, Mbare Matapi was used as a case study in analysing the barriers that hinder young entrepreneurs in entrepreneurial ecosystems in Zimbabwe and beyond.

## 3.5 Population and Sample

Population refers to the complete set of subjects that meet specific criteria, encompassing all individuals that are relevant to the researcher and to whom the findings can be applicable (Sileyew, 2020). The targeted population for this study concentrated on stakeholders who were either directly or indirectly impacted by youth unemployment programmes. This group consisted of unemployed young individuals actively seeking job opportunities, youth involved in informal employment, government officials engaged in youth empowerment initiatives, non-governmental organizations that supported youth programs and community leaders who offered perspectives on how unemployment affects the wider community. This varied population ensured that the research captured a range of perspectives on the difficulties and potential solutions to youth unemployment in the Mbare suburb.

### 3.5.1. Sample size

A sample size refers to a subset of the population selected for study. The sample represents a smaller, manageable group that the researcher used to make inferences and drew conclusions about the entire population (Taherdoost, 2018 & Bhardwaj, 2019). In this research, the sample size was determined by thirty (30) participants, drawn from a broader pool of unemployed youth and key stakeholders in facets of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare. The sample was stratified to include twenty unemployed young people (aged 18–35)

representing different socio-economic backgrounds under focus group discussions and ten key informants comprising of policymakers, NGO staff and community leaders as interviewees. This distribution was designed to ensure that the voices of unemployed youth were central to the study. Therefore, using a sample allows a researcher to focus on a small group while making reasonable assumptions about the larger population (Andrade, 2020).

### 3.5.2. Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique widely used in qualitative research (Adeoye, 2023). This method involves the deliberate selection of participants of the universe for constituting a sample on the premise that the researcher's knowledge about the population can be leveraged to select elements that representatively characterise this population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).The researcher applied purposive sampling because it allows to deliberately select participants who can provide the most relevant and meaningful information about youth unemployment in Mbare suburb. Purposive sampling has been selected because of its efficiency and effectiveness in studying a specific cultural domain with the knowledge experts (Palinkas et al., 2015). The research was central on young people who are currently unemployed or engaged in informal work as a way of survival. Furthermore, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to focus on specific characteristics of a population that were of interest, which yielded detailed insights into the phenomenon studied (Patton, 2015).

## 3.6 Data Collection Methods

Based on qualitative methods, particularly interviews and focus group discussions were employed to generate primary data. Secondary data sources included textbooks and other printed materials. They enabled the researcher to gain richer understanding of the findings,

as well as occasionally provide explanations for anomalies identified during fieldwork or interviews. Semi-structured interviews used had the chance to sit down with unemployed youth and other key stakeholders to hear their personal stories, struggles and thoughts on potential solutions. A group discussion conducted among peers gave young people the unique opportunity to collectively recount their experiences, to juxtapose their conditions and to dialogue in such a way which allowed them to identify patterns and shared problems (Kabir, 2016 & Taherdoost, 2021).

### 3.6.1. Interviews

According to Pandey & Pandey (2015) interviews are a basic way of interaction where questions are asked and data is collected from the responses, either through phone calls or physical interview. To have a full understanding of challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship system, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. Using information from participants, the researcher collected data on individual experiences, perspectives and feelings. Bantugan (2025) highlights how interviews help in capturing data and experiences of participants to fulfil the study's objectives. Thus interviews give a chance for the participants to fully express their views and experiences in explaining hurdles that youth entrepreneurs face.

### 3.6.2. Focus Group Discussions

To collect information from participants, the researcher made use of focus group discussions. The dialogues provided opportunities for participants to share their stories and highlight their concerns in a relatively casual and acceptable setting as according to (Fubah et al., 2025). This technique carried out communal views and it suited social behaviour studies and does provide affluent data (Kansheba, 2025). Various groups were of essence to

conduct in this study, as positive group dynamics promote participation and interaction to the extent that participants are agreed to highlight the barriers that hinder their participation in entrepreneurial ecosystems. This created a platform for the researcher to develop a deep understanding on how youth are involved in entrepreneurship and what it entails for them, through a series of focus group discussions. The methodology also provided a more in-depth analysis of challenges being faced by youth in entrepreneurship (Marobhe, 2025).

## 3.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Weideman (2019) validity is the level to which actual evidence and theoretical considerations are odds with or relevance of interpretations derived from test score with actions. Focusing on how accurately the findings reflect reality as described by Finlay (2023), the researcher maintained internal validity. Validity is (1) if research really measures what it intends/is claimed/meant to measure (2) the result of the research truly reflects the real-life situation of unemployed youth in Mbare suburbs. To enhance validity, the researcher compared data from different sources such as interviews and focus groups and employed member checking to identify emerging patterns of responses (Noble & Smith, 2025). Following data analysis, the researcher also engaged in member checking by presenting interpretations to a selection of participants as a means of ascertaining that their perspectives and experiences had been faithfully represented. This assisted in producing a truly valid youth-response reality, the youth faced.

### 3.7.1. Reliability

To ensure reliability, the researcher emphasised consistency each time if the same study was repeated in the way data is collected, interpreted and analysed. This meant that the procedures used, such as interview guides and coding methods, were applied in a

systematic and uniform manner across all participants (McMillan, 2020). By maintaining this consistency, the study produced findings that were trusted and if applied in a similar context, could yield comparable results. Reliability therefore was ensured by qualitative methodologies, which was characterised by using multiple methods of sampling, research instruments and statistical analysis of the research process and by creating a transparent trail of how data was analysed (Vivek, 2023).

## 3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data presentation is the process of data formatting into logical, sequential and meaningful order in such a way that makes it easy for the audience to understand and interpret the data (Idris et al., 2021). Presenting data is 'to organise the results of source confusing into a form that others can understand what you have learned and help them draw their own conclusions (Abrahams, 2023). The key results were provided through verbatim quotations from participants to illustrate themes, highlight important points, personal experiences and to give voice to participants. The themes revealed the main issues surrounding youth unemployment in Mbare suburbs. Categories subdivided these themes to a more discrete level, enabling an in-depth analysis of the concern (Okafor, 2023). To ensure coherence of the presentation, the researcher employed the use of reflective memos written during the coding of data to record emerging insights, connections and interpretations that furthered the analysis.

### 3.8.1. Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as changing the collected row data into meaningful facts and ideas to be understood either qualitatively or quantitatively (Kothari, 2004). Thus, the study was guided by thematic analysis, which is well suited for qualitative research. According to

Braun & Clarke (2022), thematic analysis is a process of analysing collected qualitative data and it is applicable to a set of texts. They further allude that the researcher introspects data to point out typical themes and patterns of meaning that comes up with them. The researcher used thematic data analysis because it describes data and interprets the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes. Thematic analysis is appropriate and the researcher used it to understand experiences, thoughts and behaviors across a data set.

### 3.9 Pilot Testing

Before the main study, there was need to carry out a pilot test with a small group of participants to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the data collection tools. This step helped in identifying any weaknesses in the interview guide or focus group questions and make necessary adjustments. Pilot testing allowed the researcher to evaluate whether the methods were practical and capable of capturing the required data. By so doing, it strengthened both the reliability and validity of the research instruments before applying them in the full study.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refer to as a set of principles and a code of conduct that guide research practices. Saunders et al (2015) postulate that ethics of research include informed consent, confidentiality, protection of privacy, protection against harm and protection against identity. According to Swanson & Betensky (2015) ethics assist researchers to deal with ethical dilemmas that arise in research. The purpose of the research was explained thoroughly by prospective participants before conducting the research. Ethical considerations are therefore benchmarks that guide research to promote uniformity and to

protect and not exploit participants (Mirza et al., 2023). In cognizance of research ethics, the researcher was guided by the following:

**Informed Consent**

This ethic states that it is the right of participants to first understand the study's purpose, risks, benefits and data handling before agreeing to participate (Festinger et al., 2023). Informed consent protects participants' autonomy, builds trust and ensures ethical transparency in research. Therefore, ethics empowers individuals to make voluntary, well-informed decisions about their participation thereby minimising risks of exploitation.

**Voluntary Participation**

According to Saunders (2015), voluntary participation is involvement without coercion in which subjects are free to participate or not. All participants were requested and required to participate in the research on their own volition. Participants were properly informed about the study before choosing to participate to ensure informed permission. The participants were free to leave the study at any moment if they so desired to.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher maintained confidentiality and anonymity by not sharing the personal details of participants. According to Kang &Hwang (2023), confidentiality is the protection of confidential information about the participants that were revealed during the professional interaction. The researcher upheld the principle of confidentiality by keeping participants' information for academic purposes only and abides by the agreement made with the participant on how the researcher accesses, uses and presents their information. More so, the

researcher maintained anonymity, which is a condition in which identities of participants are not known to the research (Reed, 2025). Thus, the research did not collect individual information but rather pseudo names were used.

## 3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology and design that were employed to obtain data on the barriers being faced by youth in entrepreneurial ecosystems in Mbare suburbs specifically Matapi. To collect data, purposive sampling for selecting participants and a qualitative research approach were employed. Through interviews as well as focus groups the researcher was able to collect primary data while secondary data was acquired through consulting journal articles, newspapers and online books. Research ethics were also taken into consideration in a bid to ensure their safety during research.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter comprise of data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings. The researcher collected the data in the entrepreneurial landscape of Mbare particularly in the Matapi area through onsite interviews and focus group discussions. This research aims to shed some light on challenges that the unemployed youth encounter everyday as they navigate through the pathways towards entrepreneurship. The chapter focuses on interpreting data provided by participants in addressing objectives of the study and how they relate to the broader context of youth unemployment.

### 4.2 Biographical Data of Participants

#### 4.2.1. Gender Distribution

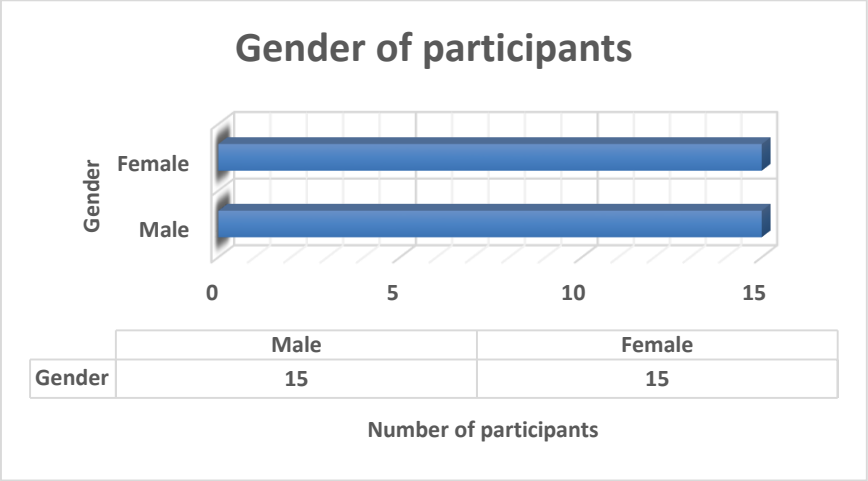



*Figure 1: gender distribution*

The gender distribution that was yielded from the results indicated that males and females were equally represented at 50% each within the pool of participants.

### 4.2.2. Age Distribution

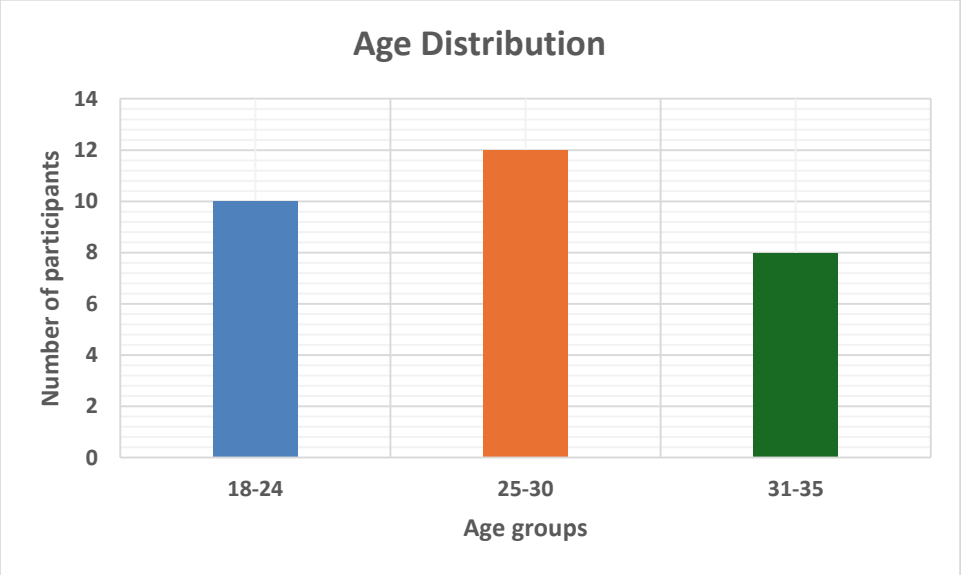



*Figure 2: age distribution*

The 25-30 age group had the highest number of participants with 60% followed by 18-24 age category showing that young people are keen on entrepreneurship with 25%. However, the 31-35 age group comprised of the least percentage of participants constituting 15%, which mirrored the varying priorities and obstacles faced by older youth.

### 4.2.3. Marital Status

*Table 1: Marital status*

| STATUS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| SINGLE | 14 | 47% |
| MARRIED | 13 | 43% |
| DIVORCED | 3 | 10% |
| WIDOWED | 0 | 0% |
| TOTAL | 30 | 100% |

From the research results, there were 14 single participants representing 47% followed by the 43% constituting 13 participants of the married category and 10% of divorced participants and there were no widowed participants.

### 4.2.4. Level of Educational Attainment

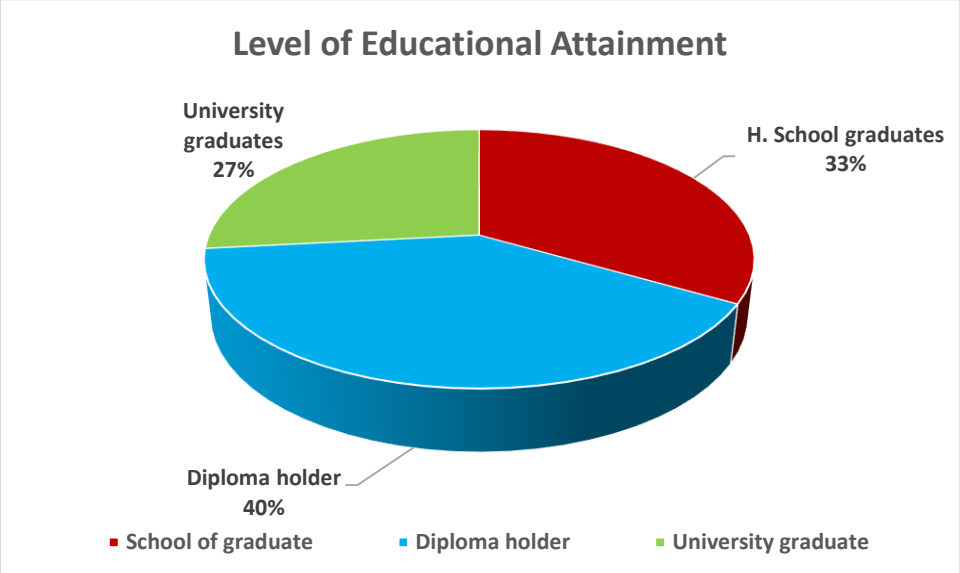



*Figure 3: level of educational attainment*

Findings from research vividly illustrates that all the participants were literate, most of them had diploma with 40%. The next largest group are the high school students, making up 33%. While there were less university graduates, 27%, they do take the opportunity to bring a different perspective and skill set that may affect their ventures as entrepreneurs.

### 4.3. Understanding the State of Youth Entrepreneurship in Mbare

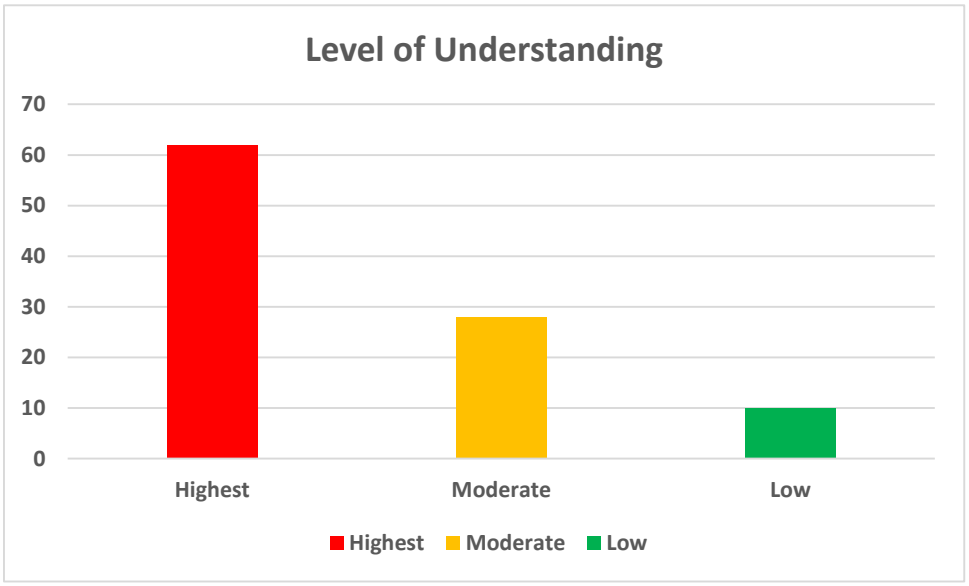



*Figure 4: level of understanding*

From the survey made during field research, 62% of the participants demonstrated strong knowledge about the opportunities and challenges being faced by youth entrepreneurs in Mbare. 28% of the participants moderately understood as they were aware of some initiatives but also failing to be familiar to long-term sustainability. Also 10% showed that the participants had a low mutual understanding as they often disconnect from entrepreneurial training programs.

One of the participants stated that;

> "Lack of access to jobs contributes more to the current state we are in as youth. As jobs are scarce and the few that exist attract too many applicants' making competition overwhelming, this is why most of us youth are resorting to entrepreneurial activities of which they are on a go-slow rate due to limited financial resources."

Another participant indicated that;

> "Skill mismatches prevent us from operating our own successful businesses, as we do not have the necessary business management knowledge. This is because schools place too much emphasis on theory, and not enough on hands-on skills so that we can run our own businesses."

The study sought to learn from the participants their response understanding patterning youth entrepreneurship state in Mbare. The participants showed up that they were aware of the challenges and opportunities that emerge from which they highlighted that youth face challenges due to lack of networking opportunities, limited access to finance as well as limited infrastructure. These were the continued reiterated challenges youth entrepreneurs face among other challenges. Thus, our participants' concerns regarding the lack of business-related networking opportunities and insufficient business training facilities and structures are also reflected in broader research, emphasising the necessity for mentorship and skill development programs tailored for these young entrepreneurs as alluded by (Torkkeli & Homburg, 2025)

### 4.4. Understanding the Link between Youth Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment to Youth

From the findings obtained, 53% of the 30 participants perceived the highest level of strong link understanding between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. 30% of them viewed the relationship as moderate and 10% of them saw the connection as weak likely due to some observed challenges in translating entrepreneurial initiatives into tangible empowerment outcomes. However, 7% of the participants demonstrated no clear understanding in a link between the two aspects.

A participant among those with a strong link perspective on youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment said that;

> "Entrepreneurship can significantly improve young people's income levels, self-reliance, and job creation opportunities."

Another youth advocating for the strong link also highlighted that;

> "Youth entrepreneurship drives employment among youth and also empowers youth through innovation and skill utilization."

From what has been said by some participants regarding the strong – link perception shows that they support and believe that youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment work hand in glove in changing their standards of living if activities within them are supported well. Most participants reiterated that, with both narratives, young people's income levels increase. This was indicated by youth across sectors of entrepreneurship such as vending, tailoring, carpentry, farming and poultry, among other

ventures. The reason(s) was that they saw and concluded from the previous youth-led initiatives that were implemented by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment and Vocational Training which were successful and changed some youth's lives. Participants further stated that, the relationship between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment is strong as it contributes to youth self-reliance. This means that, they benefit more from both aspects as they will be able to continue investing in their entrepreneurial activities thereby reducing poverty rates in the community and nation at large.

Adding on, several participants strongly supported the link between the two initiatives (youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment) that support young people in starting and growing businesses because they empower youth through innovation and skill utilization. This, therefore, highlight that, through YE and EE immense support, Matapi youth in Mbare can enhance economic growth and development. This sought to measure and comprehend certain participants' understanding of the relation between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment and the extent to which they apply this in their everyday basic living. This is consistent with findings by the ILO (2023) that strongly confirm entrepreneurship as a key route for youth economic inclusion when supported by conducive environments.

Moving on, an average perception on the link between YE and EE was found considering views of participants. One of the participants highlighted that;

> "Entrepreneurship somehow contributes to youth empowerment but depends on policy and support systems such as the Zimbabwe Youth Council and Ministry of Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training."

By this, Herrington & Kew (2019) asserted through GEM that the linkage between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment is moderate in an environment with access to finance and mentorship. These participants supported the notion as they saw that for them to enhance their entrepreneurial businesses, they need to acquire business entrepreneurial skills through business mentorship seminars such as Sharpe Business Academy as well as to get an opportunity of access to finance. Hence, this showed that a medium number of participants who aided on the moderate link between YE and EE had few reasons to justify the linkage verdict between the two initiatives.

Participants who felt a weak connection noted that, structural and financial limitations undermine entrepreneurship's empowerment potential, were supported with some literature from the World Bank (2021) focusing on youth entrepreneurship review in developing economies. This is because within their suburb most of the youth are unemployed and they are engaging in most of informal jobs that can also lead to violation of laws within the country. Henceforth, few of the participants indicated that there is a far-fetched link between YE and EE because of the continuous degrading of the entrepreneurial landscape of Mbare Matapi, leading to most of the youth engaging in drug and substance abuse as well as deviance behaviour. Therefore, the UNDP (2023) under the youth skills and economic independence, supports participants unsure of the relationship, indicating that, lack of information and participation in entrepreneurship initiatives reduces understanding of its empowerment potential.

### 4.5. The Experiences of Youth in Entrepreneurship as a Result of Unemployment

The issue of unemployment in Zimbabwe has left many youth not employed to any formal job resulting in them resorting to entrepreneurship. Within various sectors of

entrepreneurship most of the youth managed to share their experiences in their business expos. In as much as youth venture into entrepreneurial initiatives one of the participants said that;

> "In entrepreneurship some days our products or produce yield more profits and in some there will be less and this is due to regulatory barriers and lack of market access which hinder my carpentry business as a young entrepreneur trying to earn a living from it."

This highlighted that, in entrepreneurial landscape of Matapi, youth are struggling to reach their desired goals in the market due to taxation and the involvement of council authorities who chase them away because of unregistered places to operate their businesses. Such experiences drive some youth to quit in entrepreneurship as they will be seeing no progress of what they are doing.

Another participant added that;

> "Due to lack of access to jobs in our country, as youth we are just forcibly entering into entrepreneurial initiatives for income generation to cater for small expenses like food and rent."

This highlighted the frustration youth have with bureaucracy and market saturation for executing their entrepreneurial activities as they proclaim that starting a business involves so much red tape and it discourages many young people from even trying. Participants indicated that market saturation leads to too much competition among youth and they are now pleading for more formal infrastructure development to be made for them to continue running their entrepreneurial activities.

For participants engaging in poultry farming indicated that, they experienced feed price hicks, dying of some chicks and market access limitations. This showed losses that were encountered by young entrepreneurs during their business journey. Other participants stated that;

> "I want to use digital platforms to promote my business but I lack the appropriate tools. 'There are so many online resources but I can't get to them without a dependable internet connection."

As a result, young entrepreneurs are prevented from taking advantage of digital tools essential for the business models of today because of lack of access to technology. Therefore, increasing technology access may enable youth to innovate and engage with wider markets. In addition, findings also highlighted inflation and insufficient buyers as experiences in entrepreneurial landscape. Increase in price of commodities in the nation also hinder the buying and selling among youth within their entrepreneurial sectors and this leads to low profits due to economic hardships.

Findings also indicated that, young entrepreneurs face harassment in their business administrations of entrepreneurship. Some of the participants indicated the issue of gender-based challenges across all sectors of entrepreneurship as they emphasised about cultural and access-related barriers (Chigunta, 2018). One of the community leaders during interviews said that indeed youth entrepreneurs are facing various experiences of which are caused by economic hardships hence, policymakers and NGO staff must contribute towards young people's entrepreneurial initiatives to enhance their standards of living as youth in Mbare Matapi.

## 4.6. Understanding the Challenges Being Faced by Mbare Matapi Youth in Entrepreneurship

*Table 2: Challenges being faced by youth in Entrepreneurship.*

| CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED | NO_ of Participants | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of access to capital | 7 | 23% |
| Lack of market access | 5 | 17% |
| Skill mismatches | 4 | 13% |
| Insufficient business training | 4 | 13% |
| Stigma around entrepreneurship | 3 | 10% |
| Limited access to technology | 3 | 10% |
| Lack of networking opportunities | 2 | 7% |
| Reliance on informal activities | 2 | 7% |
| TOTAL | 30 | 100% |

Young Mbare Matapi entrepreneurs have far-reaching consequences they face. The absence of job opportunities makes young people to find other ways to start a business. This aligns with International Labour Organization (2021) reports that indicate high youth unemployment as a driver for young people to enter entrepreneurial ecosystems. As a result of this, many young people struggle to achieve their business goals which is becoming more difficult to turn their entrepreneurial aspirations into viable businesses. Thus, from the entrepreneurial landscape of Mbare, participants managed to air out several challenges they encountered in running their entrepreneurial activities. The most common challenge mentioned was lack of access to capital reflecting persistent financial barriers faced by young entrepreneurs. One of the participants commented that;

> "Even small start- up capital is had to secure because without collateral banks do not take us young entrepreneurs seriously, we are just stuck in a cycle where we need money to prove ourselves but cannot get it."

Lack of market access was another barrier mentioned during field research which is affecting young entrepreneurs' businesses. The participant said that;

> "Even when I produce goods, I struggle to find buyers beyond my neighbourhood, access to large markets or distribution channels we don't have and this is resulting in business losses."

This sought to explain that, in entrepreneurial ecosystems youth encounter uncertainty which hinders their progress in businesses. By this, it results in youth failing to reach their dream goals as youth people in business.

One of the other challenges mentioned was regulatory barriers that hinder the progress of youth entrepreneurship. Regulatory barriers such as red tape and licensing are draining young people's progress and motivation. This was evidenced by licensing which felt intimidating and inaccessible due to too much corruption in the country. Having asked the participants the challenges they faced in entrepreneurship most of them highlighted challenges which are supported by book literature. For instance, the issue of limited access to financial resources with participants emphasising the difficulty of securing funding to initiate or sustain their business ideas. This concern mirrors studies that reveal young entrepreneurs often struggle to access financial support (OECD, 2022).

Some participants indicated that, they faced stigma around entrepreneurial ecosystems. One participant stated that;

> "People think entrepreneurship is a fall-back option, not a real career hence we're harshly judged when our businesses struggle."

Stigma, therefore, makes it harder for most of women youth entrepreneurs to attract support or investment. Another one added on highlighting the challenge on accessing technology. As technology is essential in modern businesses, most of the entrepreneurs are struggling to access reliable internet and digital platforms that could expand their reach in business. Participants' concerns regarding limited access to technology present evident challenges corroborating existing studies that discuss how digital divide hinder young people's entrepreneurial efforts (UNCTAD, 2021). Therefore, these insights from participants reinforce established trends and underscore multidimensional barriers that need to be addressed to create a supportive entrepreneurial environment for youths in Matapi, Mbare.

The participants commented that skill mismatches complicate their entrepreneurial business. Young people may believe that their credentials do not adequately prepare them for the jobs that are expected of them. According to research acquiring those market-relevant skills, for example, practical ventures can improve these people's employability and influence the larger community (World Bank 2021). We can prepare young people for success in business and the world if the country can connect education to industry.

The participants' contributions to the challenges they faced highlight an important shortcoming particularly when they discussed the issue of limited financial resources. According to the OECD (2022) funding must be made available to young entrepreneurs. Programs that offer microloans or grant packages have the potential to inspire and encourage

young people to take risks to develop their business ideas and support the growth and innovation of the local economy.

### 4.7. Adaptive Strategies for Leveraging Youth Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Sustainable Economic independence

Several interventions can be considered to create a more supportive environment for young entrepreneurs. Developing training packages that align more carefully with market needs would notably enhance young people's readiness to start new business ventures. Participants stated that tailor-made training packages that match market needs would make young people more employable. This may encompass workshops on commercial enterprise management, marketing and financial literacy (World Bank, 2021).

Access to financing would create local funding initiatives such as grants or microfinance that address and help solve financial barriers young entrepreneurs face. Studies indicate that access to financial tools and resources stimulates entrepreneurship (OECD, 2022). This was supported by most of the participants who indicated that, youth-specific grants would make a massive difference to young people to continue with their entrepreneurial businesses in Mbare.

In addition, establishing networking opportunities by organising events that bring together young entrepreneurs with mentors and peers can promote collaboration and the exchange of best practices. As already pointed by Torkkeli & Homburg, (2021), networking is important for removing the isolation of being a young entrepreneur.

Moving on, the councilor of ward 3 Mbare Matapi Simbarashe Chanachimwe asserted that;

> "Simplifying company registration and licensing processes of new businesses must be reviewed by policy makers."

This approach could help reduce the burden of starting a business and incentivise young people to explore entrepreneurial opportunities (World Bank, 2022).

While these are challenges that can be addressed, it worries more when people think supporting entrepreneurs is just something nice to do for someone else. As this study progresses, it will be crucial to adopt practices that represent the needs and desires of youth within Mbare, Matapi community. This will help empower the youth to break through the barriers preventing them from realizing their potential and in turn, uplifting their local economy and society.

### 4.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented, examined and discussed the study's findings which were primarily obtained and communicated through interviews and focus group discussions. Key findings based on research objectives included, understanding the state of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare, the link between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment among other findings as pivoted in the above analysis and discussions during field research. The chapter also looked at the strategies to curb the challenges associated with entrepreneurship in Matapi. Hence, entrepreneurship is a key tool for survival for most of the youth in Mbare.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

### 5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the research findings, outlines recommendations to the research topic and draws some conclusions to the study. This chapter also provides a summary of areas covered from chapter one to four as well as areas of further research.

### 5.2 Summary

The study was structured into five chapters:

Chapter one introduced the research by providing the background of the study, purpose, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance, delimitations and limitations of youth entrepreneurship to Zimbabwe's socio-economic transformation. It highlighted how youth unemployment and limited access to economic opportunities propelled young people in Mbare Matapi to engage in entrepreneurship as a means of survival.

Chapter two reviewed the theories and models of youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. It investigated world, continental, regional and country youth entrepreneurship policy related challenges, policy frameworks and empowerment patterns. Based on research objectives of the study, this chapter discussed entrepreneurship leading to innovation, employment generation and self-reliance of youth.

Chapter three outlined the methodology selected for the study which was qualitative case study design to explore the effects of youth unemployment in entrepreneurship. Data collection was conducted through individual interviews and focus group discussions with thirty participants, including policymakers and NGO staff. The chapter also contains instruments used in the research, ethical issues and procedures to ensure the anonymity of the groups, data validity, and reliability of this study followed to have trustworthy findings. A pilot study was also employed in the study.

Chapter four presents research findings from interviews and focus group discussions. Results indicated that 62% of the participants were mostly literate patterning the knowledge about the opportunities and challenges being faced in entrepreneurial landscape of Mbare. Youth entrepreneurship in Mbare Matapi plays a significant role in improving household income, reducing crime and fostering self-reliance. However, the efficacy of these ventures is heavily constrained by inadequate training, lack of start-up capital, regulatory restrictions and limited market access. Strategies to improve the mentioned challenges were also suggested to be implemented to curb the issue of unemployment to Zimbabwean youth.

The recommendations, findings, opportunities for more investigation and summary were the concentration of Chapter 5. The analysis finalized that youth entrepreneurship is a major contributing factor to survival of Matapi youth in Mbare. The study suggested that the government should apply Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation and confine the authority of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to help youth in Mbare to continue with their entrepreneurial businesses.

## 5.3 Conclusions

The research objectives arrived at the following conclusions, which are based on the research objectives of the study:

1. **To explore the state of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare.**

The study concluded that, youth enterprise in Mbare Matapi is largely an informal survivalist with most micro in size businesses operating in areas such as vending, tailoring, repairing and performing arts. Most young entrepreneurs go into business because there are few formal jobs available and they are struggling economically, not because they have been plugged into formal entrepreneurial support systems. Despite this, youth remain resilient, creative and innovative in running their enterprises. Therefore, youth entrepreneurship is a common form of youth livelihood strategy and route to economic inclusion among African youth.

2. **To assess the nexus between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment among youth.**

The conclusion from this objective state that, there is a positive relationship between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. It is reported that entrepreneurship has made many of the participants more self-reliant, raised household income and contributed to better social status. Youth take-ups of business report enhanced confidence, increased participation in the community and in some cases leadership roles. Henceforth, youth entrepreneurship is a key driver of local economic transformation through fostering disintermediation, enriching innovation and reinforcing self-employment orientation.

Therefore, in the case of Mbare, entrepreneurship serves as both economic cushion and empowerment mechanism for disenfranchised young people.

3. **To examine the challenges and opportunities being faced in Zimbabwean youth entrepreneurship particularly in Mbare Matapi.**

The study conclusively identified several challenges that are limited access to capital and financing, regulatory restrictions and harassment by municipal authorities, inadequate entrepreneurship training, poor infrastructure and limited market linkages, stigma around entrepreneurship, lack of access to technology among others. These issues hindered the entrepreneurial landscape initiatives of youth in businesses hence leading to poor survival of youth without proper jobs. However, opportunities exist in the rising digital economy, informal markets and growing community-based business networks. It can be concluded that, youth in Mbare are adaptive and opportunistic, using personal networks and mobile technologies to sustain their new business ventures thus, addressing systemic barriers particularly funding and training can unlock Africa's youth entrepreneurial potential.

4. **To propose strategies for leveraging youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for sustainable economic independence.**

The researcher reached a conclusion that, the improvement of youth entrepreneurship programmes in Zimbabwe would rely on the government policies and structures, the private sector and development organizations as well as other relevant stakeholders. Some of the main strategies were to increase youth access to microcredit and start-up grants, to improve entrepreneurial education and mentorship schemes at tertiary and vocational levels, to promote digital literacy and innovation hubs in urban areas such as Mbare and to support public–private partnerships aimed at formalising and scaling youth-led enterprises.

Therefore, it is crystal clear to conclude that, development of a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem backed by policy support, inclusive financing and training infrastructure can turn youth entrepreneurship from a survival means to a sustainable source of growth and self-reliance.

## 5.4 Recommendations

As the result from the research findings, it is now important to consider the following recommendations for sustainable youth entrepreneurship in Mbare Matapi.

1. **Government and Policy Makers**

It is with the government that they should enhance support and policy frameworks by developing national youth entrepreneurship policy that provides access to credit, mentorship and skills development. It should also promote financial inclusion through establishing youth-focused community banks and revolving funds to finance small-scale enterprises. Building infrastructure and formalising informal enterprises by creating affordable working spaces and simplifying business registration could also promote the needs for young people to harness youth entrepreneurship challenges. Introducing entrepreneurship education focusing on mainstreaming entrepreneurship into schools and tertiary curricula to develop innovative mind sets early by the government must be exercised for achieving better entrepreneurial ecosystems in Mbare Matapi suburb.

2. **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Development Partners**

These organisations should provide capacity-building programs based on digital entrepreneurship, financial literacy and business management to enhance entrepreneurial skills among Matapi youth. NGOs must promote incubation and mentorship programs paving way for experienced entrepreneurs to link with aspiring youth in Matapi to boost their

standards of living as well as protect them from engaging in drug and substance abuse due to economic constraints. Therefore, it is also important for NGOs to foster partnerships between community-based youth organizations and private sector actors to promote market linkages and scaling.

### 3. Youth Entrepreneurs

Young entrepreneurs also need to develop disciplined financial practices and funnel profits back into growing their businesses. They need to organise themselves into cooperatives to accumulate resources and gain access to markets and credit as a group. This assists them in keeping their entrepreneurial pursuits in addressing barriers to entrepreneurship in Matapi. Utilising technology and online platforms to increase customer reach and/ or innovation may also help its reach in market access, which may in turn strengthen their livelihoods as budding youth in entrepreneurship.

## 5.5 Areas for Further Research

The study explored the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship in Mbare Matapi and offered an understanding of what urban informal entrepreneurship takes and the challenges young entrepreneurs are confronted with and possible solutions. Future research should explore rural and peri-urban youth entrepreneurship models in other provinces of Zimbabwe, assess the influence of digital entrepreneurship and e-commerce post-COVID-19 on youth livelihoods, analyse the contribution of government microfinance schemes such as the Empower Bank to enhance youth empowerment outcomes and investigate gender issues on youth entrepreneurship and the ways in which male and female entrepreneurs are differently empowered.

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# Annexure

## Annexure 1

I B221758B, a part four year student majoring a Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Peace and Governance at Bindura University of Science Education and National Sports Academy. I am conducting a research in partial fulfillment of the university requirements. I am researching on the study entitled: **The Efficacy of Youth Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Mbare**. I will use informed consent and explain the benefits of the topic to participants and allow them to withdraw if they feel uncomfortable. Confidentiality will also be used to keep participant's information by not disclosing their names.

**NB. If you agree to be part of the research please sign in the consent form.**

I…… has consent to take part under the terms and conditions mentioned above to be a participant in the research.

Participant's signature …….. Date…../…../….

Researcher's signature…… Date…./…./…...

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Can you please explain your role and responsibilities as a youth entrepreneur in Mbare?

2. How long have you been engaged in entrepreneurial activities in Mbare?

3. Briefly explain the nexus between youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment among youth.

**SECTION B: CHALLENGES FACED**

4. In your experience, what are the key challenges that youth encounter when trying to establish and sustain entrepreneurial ventures in Mbare?

5. Have you personally faced any specific barriers in your entrepreneurial journey? If yes, could you please share some examples?

6. In your opinion, what do you think are the root causes of the challenges that youth entrepreneurs face in Zimbabwe?

7. How do you navigate challenges and setbacks in your entrepreneurial journey?

8. How would you describe the business environment and community culture in Mbare in terms of supporting youth entrepreneurship?

**SECTION C: STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS**

9. What kind of support systems (financial, social, or institutional) would be beneficial for youth aspiring to succeed in entrepreneurship?

10. Have you received any form of assistance (e.g., mentorship, training, funding) during your entrepreneurial journey? If yes, how has it influenced your growth?

11. In your opinion, how effective are the existing policies or initiatives in promoting youth entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe, particularly in Mbare?

12. What additional policy changes or advocacy efforts do you believe could help address the barriers faced by youth entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe?

Annexure 2

I B221758B, a student at Bindura University of Science Education and National Sports Academy, pursuing a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Peace and Governance. I am conducting an academic research on '**The Efficacy of Youth Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe'**, with a particular focus on Mbare as a case study. The aim of this study is to explore how youth-led enterprises contribute to economic development, social empowerment, and community transformation, while also identifying the challenges and opportunities that shape their success. Your insights and experiences as a key stakeholder are invaluable to this research, as they will help provide a deeper understanding of the policies, programs, and grassroots realities influencing youth entrepreneurship. The information you share will be treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. I sincerely appreciate your time and willingness to contribute to this study.

**GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

1. How does current government policy address youth entrepreneurship in urban communities like Mbare?

2. What specific initiatives or programs has the government introduced to support youth entrepreneurs?

3. How effective have these interventions been in reducing youth unemployment in Mbare?

4. What challenges does the government face in implementing youth entrepreneurship policies at the local level?

5. How does the government collaborate with NGOs, private sector, and community leaders to strengthen youth entrepreneurship?

6. In your view, what policy reforms or new strategies could make youth entrepreneurship more impactful in Mbare?

**NGOs & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

1. What role does your organization play in supporting youth entrepreneurship in Mbare?

2. Which programs or interventions have been most effective in empowering young entrepreneurs?

3. How do you measure the success or efficacy of youth entrepreneurship initiatives?

4. What challenges do NGOs face in sustaining youth-led enterprises in Mbare?

5. How do you ensure inclusivity (e.g., gender, marginalized youth) in entrepreneurship programs?

6. What lessons from Mbare could be scaled to other communities in Zimbabwe?

7. How can NGOs better collaborate with government and community leaders to maximize impact?

**COMMUNITY LEADERS**

1. From your perspective, how has youth entrepreneurship affected the Mbare community socially and economically?

2. What are the most common types of businesses young people are starting here?

3. What challenges do youth entrepreneurs face at the community level?

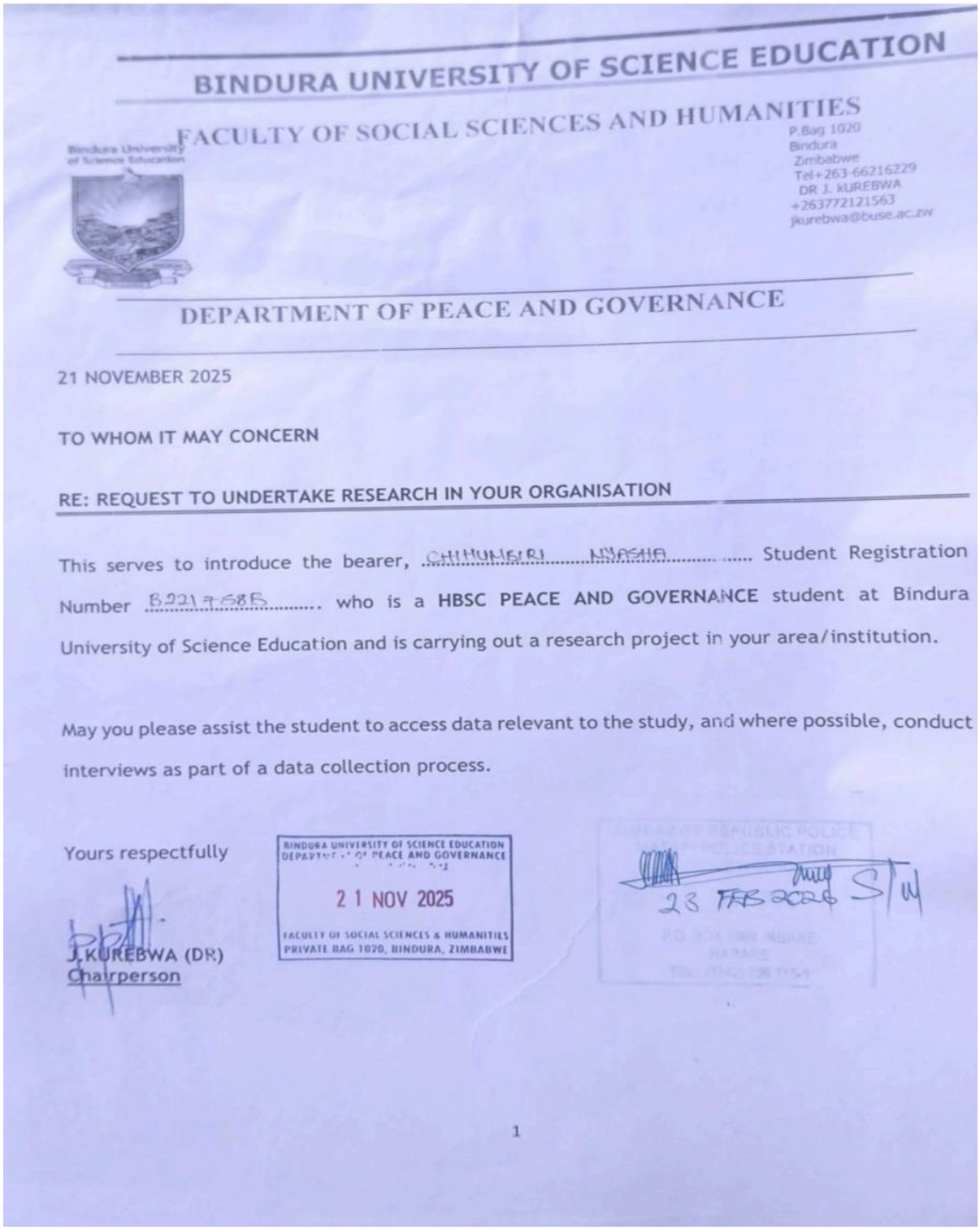
4. How do informal networks (family, peers, local associations) support or hinder youth entrepreneurship?

5. Have you observed changes in community attitudes toward youth-led businesses over time?

6. What role do community leaders play in encouraging or discouraging youth entrepreneurship?

7. What recommendations would you give to policymakers and NGOs to make youth entrepreneurship more effective in Mbare?

Annexure 3



BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

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DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE

21 NOVEMBER 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, CHIHUMBIRI NYASHA ..... Student Registration Number B221768B ..... who is a **HBSC PEACE AND GOVERNANCE** student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours respectfully

J.KUREBWA (DR)
Chairperson

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE
21 NOV 2025
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
PRIVATE BAG 1020, BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

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