BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE A CASE STUDY OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES IN CHINHOYI.

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (HBSC.DG)

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Nelia Sinodeni, whose unwavering love, sacrifices, encouragement, and support have been the foundation of my academic journey.

I also dedicate this work to my aunt, Ropa Chagwinya, for her guidance, care, and constant motivation throughout my studies.

Special dedication goes to my sisters, Vimbai Chagwinya and Heather Chagwinya, for their encouragement, understanding, and belief in my ability to succeed. Your love and support have been a source of strength and inspiration.

This achievement is dedicated to you all with gratitude and love.

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ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment remains one of the major socio-economic challenges facing Zimbabwe, making entrepreneurship an increasingly important pathway for employment creation and economic empowerment. This study examined the effectiveness of vocational training centres in fostering youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi District, Zimbabwe. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which vocational training programmes equip young people with entrepreneurial skills, assess the relationship between the courses offered and entrepreneurial outcomes, and identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of vocational training in promoting entrepreneurship.

The study was guided by the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory and adopted a pragmatic research paradigm. A mixed-methods approach was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from graduates of vocational training centres and key stakeholders in Chinhoyi. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that vocational training centres play an important role in developing technical and entrepreneurial competencies among youth. Most graduates reported acquiring practical skills, business management knowledge, and self-confidence that enhanced their ability to pursue self-employment and income-generating activities. The study also found that entrepreneurial outcomes varied according to the type of course undertaken and the availability of opportunities within the local economy. Despite these positive contributions, several challenges limited the effectiveness of vocational training centres. These included inadequate access to start-up capital, limited mentorship opportunities, insufficient post-training support, outdated training equipment, and weak connections between training institutions and markets.

The study concludes that vocational training centres have significant potential to contribute to youth entrepreneurial development and employment creation when supported by adequate resources and a conducive entrepreneurial environment. The study recommends strengthening entrepreneurship education within vocational training programmes, improving access to financial support for graduates, expanding mentorship and business incubation services, and enhancing collaboration between vocational training centres, government agencies, financial institutions, and the private sector.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Meaning
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CRTC	Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre
CUVTC	Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPO	Input–Process–Output
MYDIE	Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment
MYEDVT	Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TFE	Training for Enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VTCs	Vocational Training Centres

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

This chapter of the research provides the background of the study, statement of the problem and the aim of the study and the study objectives. Research questions, justifications of the study, definitions of key terms as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study are highlighted in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The problem of youth unemployment is a global concern, driving nations to find innovative methods for economic integration and sustainable livelihood options for their youthful populations. As a result, Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) have emerged as a crucial policy instrument, that exist not only as skills providers but as drivers of entrepreneurial growth and self-employment.

Globally, the effectiveness of VTCs in fostering youth entrepreneurship is well-theorized but not consistently achieved. International frameworks from ILO and UNESCO champion Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a key driver for decent work, poverty reduction, and economic growth (UNESCO, 2016, ILO, 2020). These are viewed as drivers to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The international agreement is that when effectively designed, vocational training that integrates entrepreneurship education can increase business start-up intentions, enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and increase early-stage survival rates of youth-led businesses (Lackéus, 2015, Nabi et al., 2017). However, analyses reveal significant variability in outcomes. Key enhancing factors identified internationally include a strong focus on experiential learning and business incubation, robust links with industry for curriculum relevance, access to post-training mentorship and seed funding, and the development of non-cognitive skills like resilience and opportunity recognition (Bridges et al., 2020). Conversely, common impediments are found in programs that remain overly theoretical, lack market alignment, operate in isolation from financial ecosystems, and fail to address deep-seated structural barriers in the local economy (Valerio et al., 2014).

Regionally, the promise of VTCs is tempered by contextual realities. African governments have heavily invested in TVET as a solution to the youth increasing population and low employment rates (AfDB, 2016). Kenya, Ghana, and Rwanda have implemented national youth entrepreneurship programs usually based in vocational training (Honja and Kinyanjui, 2019). African investigations indicate pockets of success where training is demand-driven and coupled with access to micro-finance and business development services (Fox and Thomas, 2016). The African context, however, introduces critical mediating factors. The effectiveness of VTCs is often hampered by inadequate funding, outdated training equipment, a mismatch between skills taught and market needs, and a shortage of trainers with real-world business experience (Maringe and Prew, 2015). Furthermore, the challenging business environment characterized by limited access to credit, complex regulations, and poor infrastructure can hinder even the most capable graduate entrepreneurs (GEM, 2022). Thus, while the potential is recognized, the regional literature underscores a disconnect between training provision and the environment required for entrepreneurial success.

Nationally, this pattern of ambitious policy confronting operational challenges is clearly evident. After independence Zimbabwe placed vocational training at the heart of its human resource development strategy, culminating in the adoption of the Training for Enterprise (TFE) model in the 1990s (MYDIE, 2010). This model explicitly aimed to transform VTCs from producers of job-seekers into hubs for job-creators, integrating business management into all technical curricula. Nationally, the expansion of VTCs under the Ministry of Youth has increased access to training. However, national-level assessments and audits point to systemic issues affecting effectiveness. These include budgetary constraints leading to poor infrastructure, a theory-practice gap despite the 80/20 mandate, curricula that are sometimes slow to adapt to technological and market shifts and a critical lack of sustained, post-graduation support such as mentorship and access to start-up capital (Bhebhe et al., 2015, Maraire et al., 2020). These issues are also experienced at the regional level highlighting a major gap between policy and practise in Africa. Consequently, while the national policy framework is ostensibly aligned with global best practices, implementation challenges suggest that the anticipated entrepreneurial outcomes may not be fully realized, contributing to the persistent youth unemployment crisis (Dube and Xie, 2018).

In Chinhoyi, this research finds its specific point of inquiry. Mashonaland West Province hosts several VTCs, including the Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre (CUVTC) and the Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre (CRTC). Established to empower local youth, CUVTC operates within the national TFE framework.

However, there is a research gap in that while national reports and studies may discuss VTCs in aggregate, there is a profound absence of localized, empirical impact studies focusing on these specific centres. It remains unknown to what extent the global principles and national policies are effectively translated into entrepreneurial outcomes for graduates within the unique socio-economic ecosystem of Chinhoyi. The factors that may enhance or hinder effectiveness such as the local industry links, the specific nature of mentorship provided, the relevance of offered courses to the Chinhoyi economy, or the experiences of graduates navigating local market challenges are unexamined.

Therefore, this study is situated at the confluence of these analytical levels. It proceeds from the global promise of VTCs, through the regional and national scales, to address a gap in localised knowledge. By investigating the effectiveness of vocational training centres in Chinhoyi, the research will move beyond broad assumptions to generate concrete, context-specific evidence on how vocational training functions as a mechanism for youth entrepreneurial development in a specific urban Zimbabwean setting. This will not only fill a critical gap in the literature but also provide actionable insights for improving practice at Vocational Training Centres and similar institutions across the nation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment in Zimbabwe presents a critical issue despite the introduction of vocational training centres. Despite the national implementation of the Training for Enterprise (TFE) model within Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) a policy designed to couple technical skills with entrepreneurship education to foster self-employment (MYDIE, 2010) a significant proportion of young people continue to face severe financial insecurity and limited growth opportunities after their education (Bhebhe et al., 2015). This sustained trend directly challenges the foundational assumption that such integrated vocational training naturally translates into sustainable job

creation and entrepreneurial success. This indicates a troubling disconnect between policy intent and tangible outcomes where the formal unemployment rate in Zimbabwe was 4.9% in 2010 and the formal unemployment rate in 2025 was 20.7% even after the introduction of vocational training centres (ILO, 2010 and ZimStat, 2025). This raises a question regarding the contribution of VTC to entrepreneurial development of youth to ease the high unemployment rate. This lack of evidence is problematic for policymakers who cannot refine strategies without data, for VTC administrators who operate without feedback to improve their programmes and for the youth who invest resources into training with uncertain prospects. Therefore, investigating the effectiveness of vocational training centres in Chinhoyi is essential to generate actionable insights for improving practice, informing policy and addressing the cycle of youth economic vulnerability.

1.4 Main objective

To assess the effectiveness of Vocational Training Centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To identify courses offered and commonly taken by youth from vocational training.
2. To assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship.
3. To explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What courses are offered and commonly taken by youth from vocational training centres.
2. What is the relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship.
3. What are the factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development.

1.7 Significance of the Study

For policymakers and government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training (MYEDVT), the findings will provide an evidence-based, local level assessment of the Training for Enterprise (TFE) model in practice. The insights generated can inform more targeted and effective national policies, funding allocations, and

support frameworks for Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), moving beyond broad prescriptions to address the specific contextual factors that enable or hinder entrepreneurial success.

The investigation is crucial for administrators and educators at VTCs across Chinhoyi because it provides a deep and rich contextual understanding, the study offers critical, actionable feedback. The identification of strengths and weaknesses in the current curriculum, the relevance of course offerings to the local Chinhoyi economy and the adequacy of practical and post-graduation support, the research can directly guide programme improvements, enhance teaching methodologies, and foster stronger linkages with local industry.

It will benefit the youth of Zimbabwe, especially current and prospective trainees, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of the pathways from vocational training to sustainable entrepreneurship. It empowers them with knowledge about the real-world application of their skills and the potential challenges they may face, thereby fostering more informed career decisions and potentially improving their business survival rates.

Finally, for the academic community, this research addresses a conspicuous gap in the literature by providing a localized, empirical case study on VTC effectiveness in Zimbabwe. It enriches the body of knowledge on youth entrepreneurship and TVET in Sub-Saharan Africa, offering a nuanced view that complements broader regional and national analyses.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The research is confined to vocational training centres in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West Province. Thematically, the investigation focuses specifically on the intersection of vocational skills training and entrepreneurial development. It assesses the effectiveness of the training model in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, capabilities, and outcomes. It does not purport to evaluate the entire spectrum of youth employment pathways, formal education systems, or broader national economic policies.

In terms of population, the study will engage graduates from VTCs in Chinhoyi who completed their training within the past five years. These graduates will be accessed not at the training centres but at sites where they currently operate, such as small-to-medium enterprises, markets, business

hubs, and informal trading areas across Chinhoyi. Key informants such as VTC administrators and trainers may also be consulted.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Vocational Training is the structured education and training process that equips individuals with the practical skills, technical knowledge, and professional attitudes required for employment or self-employment in a specific trade, craft, or occupation, as exemplified by the programmes offered at VTCs like CUVTC (Dube and Xie, 2018).

Youth Entrepreneurial Development is the multi-stage process through which young individuals enhance their capacity to identify market opportunities, develop business acumen, and launch and manage sustainable enterprises. This encompasses the acquisition of relevant skills (vocational and business), the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset and the realisation of business start-up and growth (Bajaj Finance Limited, 2025).

Training for Enterprise (TFE) is the specific vocational training model adopted in Zimbabwean VTCs which integrates conventional technical skills instruction with comprehensive entrepreneurship and business management education, with the explicit objective of promoting self-employment rather than mere wage employment (MYDIE, 2010).

Effectiveness is an output of specific analyses that measure the quality of the achievement of a specific educational goal or the degree to which a higher education institution can be expected to achieve specific requirements (Vlãsceanu et al., 2004). Fraser (1994) says “This is a measure of the match between stated goals and their achievement. It is always possible to achieve ‘easy’, low-standard goals. In other words, quality in higher education cannot only be a question of achievements ‘outputs’ but must also involve judgements about the goals (part of ‘inputs’).” In the context of this research, effectiveness is the degree to which the vocational training programmes at vocational training centres in Chinhoyi successfully achieve their stated objective of enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. This is measured through indicators such as perceived skill acquisition, the rate of business start-ups among graduates, the sustainability of these enterprises, and the perceived relevance of training to local economic conditions.

1.10 Limitations of the Study and Mitigating Strategies

A significant limitation involves the potential difficulty of locating and accessing VTC graduates, who may be dispersed across various informal and formal businesses. To mitigate this, the study will employ a combination of purposive sampling at known business hubs and markets in Chinhoyi, as well as snowball sampling where initial participants refer other eligible graduates. This approach will be complemented by engagement with business development service providers and VTC administrators who may assist in identifying graduate entrepreneurs.

A second significant limitation involves the reliance on self-reported data from participants, such as graduates and trainees, which is susceptible to recall bias and social desirability bias. To enhance the robustness of the data, the study employs data triangulation. Information obtained from surveys and interviews will be critically cross-referenced with documentary evidence, including official CUVTC curricula, enrolment records, and reports, as well as perspectives from key informants like trainers and administrators. Furthermore, careful questionnaire and interview guide design, focusing on recent and concrete experiences, will be implemented to improve the accuracy of recall. Practical constraints of time and resources form a third limitation, potentially affecting sample size and the longitudinal tracking of graduate progress. In response, a purposive and snowball sampling technique will be used to ensure the selection of information-rich participants (current students, former students and the lecturers at the training institution) who can provide comprehensive insights within the project's scope. The research will also leverage digital communication tools where appropriate to efficiently reach dispersed graduates. Finally, the potential for researcher subjectivity is acknowledged. This will be actively managed through the practice of reflexivity where the researcher maintains a critical journal to document and interrogate personal assumptions and through peer debriefing sessions with academic colleagues to review and challenge data interpretation, ensuring conclusions remain firmly grounded in the empirical evidence collected.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the research provided the background of the study, it went on to give the statement of the problem and the aim of the study and the study objectives. Research questions, justifications of the study, definitions of key terms as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study are

highlighted in this chapter. The next chapter will comprehensively review related literature, delving deeper into the theoretical and empirical foundations that underpin this study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature on vocational training and youth entrepreneurial development, providing the theoretical and empirical foundation for this study. It begins by defining the major concepts underpinning the research, followed by an introduction to the chosen theoretical framework. The chapter then systematically reviews literature on the global, regional, and national dimensions of vocational training effectiveness, identifying key themes, debates, and research gaps that this study seeks to address. The section reviews literature on the following themes that are identifying courses offered and commonly taken by youth from vocational training, relationships between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study uses the Input, Processes and Output model (IPO) model as the theoretical framework. In the context of this research, the IPO provides a clear and logical structure for understanding how various factors related to vocational training centres interact to influence youth entrepreneurial development. The framework identifies the independent variables as the inputs, the mediating and moderating factors as the processes and the dependent variable as the output, thereby offering a coherent map of the causal pathways that study investigates.

The inputs are the independent variables that are the factors and resources that shape the environment within which vocational training centres operate and that provide the initial conditions for entrepreneurial development. Drawing from the entrepreneurial ecosystem literature (Isenberg, 2010, Spigel, 2017, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021), six key inputs are identified. The first input is policy, which encompasses the national and local regulatory frameworks, the implementation of the Training for Enterprise model, and the institutional support structures that govern vocational training and youth entrepreneurship (MYDIE, 2010). The second input is finance, referring to the availability and accessibility of financial resources such as microfinance, loans, grants, personal savings, and family support that graduates need to start and sustain their businesses (Valerio et al., 2014, Fox and Thomas, 2016). The third input is culture, comprising societal attitudes, norms, and values towards entrepreneurship, including the social legitimacy of

self-employment, tolerance of risk and failure, and the presence of entrepreneurial role models (Spigel, 2017, GEM, 2022). The fourth input is supports, which includes the infrastructure of mentorship, business development services, incubators, professional networks, and any formal or informal assistance available to youth after they complete their training (Bridges et al., 2020, Isenberg, 2010). The fifth input is human capital, capturing the skills, knowledge, and competencies that youth bring into or acquire through the vocational training system, including both technical trade skills and entrepreneurial business skills (Becker, 1964, Dube and Xie, 2018). The sixth input is markets, denoting the local economic conditions in Chinhoyi district, such as demand for goods and services, access to customers, supply chains, market information, and the competitive landscape (Isenberg, 2010, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021).

The processes constitute the mediating and moderating factors that transform the inputs into outputs. These processes are the mechanisms through which the inputs exert their influence on entrepreneurial development, and they include both the training delivery system and the individual-level characteristics that shape how graduates engage with the training and the broader ecosystem (Lackéus, 2015, Nabi et al., 2017). The core process is the quality of vocational training delivery at the centres. This comprises curriculum relevance, meaning the alignment between what is taught and the actual needs of the local market (Maringe and Prew, 2015), pedagogical effectiveness, particularly the practical emphasis mandated by the 80/20 practical-to-theoretical ratio under the Training for Enterprise model (MYDIE, 2010), trainer competence, specifically the industry experience, entrepreneurial background, and pedagogical skills of instructors (Bhebhe et al., 2015), and post-training support, which covers mentorship, business linkage services, and follow-up assistance provided to graduates after they leave the centre (Maraire and Munhande, 2020). In addition to training quality, individual-level processes act as moderators that influence the strength and direction of the relationships. These include demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and prior educational attainment (Njeru, 2025), socio-economic status, including household income, family support networks, and access to personal resources (Valerio et al., 2014), and personal attributes such as motivation, resilience, risk-taking propensity, and prior business experience (Nabi et al., 2017, Lackéus, 2015). These processes explain why graduates with similar training and operating in the same ecosystem may achieve different entrepreneurial outcomes.

The output is the dependent variable of the study is youth entrepreneurial development. This is conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing three interrelated components (Bajaj Finance Limited, 2025, Nabi et al., 2017). The first component is entrepreneurial mindset, which includes opportunity recognition, innovativeness, self-efficacy, and a proactive orientation towards business creation (Lackéus, 2015). The second component is entrepreneurial capabilities, comprising technical trade skills, business management skills, financial literacy, marketing competence, and the ability to navigate regulatory requirements (Dube and Xie, 2018, Valerio et al., 2014). The third component is entrepreneurial outcomes, which manifest as tangible results such as business start-up, enterprise sustainability over time, income generation, employment creation, and overall business growth (Bridges et al., 2020, GEM, 2022).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored in the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach, which provides a comprehensive lens for examining the effectiveness of vocational training centres in fostering youth entrepreneurial development. Vocational training refers to the structured process of equipping individuals with practical skills, technical knowledge, and professional attitudes required for employment or self-employment in a specific trade, as exemplified by programmes offered at vocational training centres (Dube and Xie, 2018). Youth entrepreneurial development is the multi-stage process through which young people enhance their capacity to identify market opportunities, develop business acumen and launch and manage sustainable enterprises (Nabi et al., 2017). Effectiveness, in this context, is understood as the degree to which vocational training programmes successfully achieve their stated objective of enhancing youth entrepreneurial development, measured through indicators such as skill acquisition, business start-up rates, enterprise sustainability, and the relevance of training to local economic conditions (Fraser, 1994).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach conceptualizes entrepreneurship not as the outcome of individual traits or isolated training interventions, but as emerging from the interaction of multiple interdependent actors, institutions, and environmental conditions that collectively support or constrain entrepreneurial activity (Isenberg, 2010, Spigel, 2017, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021). Isenberg (2010) defines an entrepreneurial ecosystem as “a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors, entrepreneurial organizations, institutions, and entrepreneurial processes that formally and

informally coalesce to connect, mediate, and govern the performance of the local entrepreneurial environment." This framework moves beyond linear models of training-to-employment, recognizing that the impact of vocational training on entrepreneurial outcomes is mediated by the broader context in which graduates seek to establish and grow their enterprises. Within this framework, six interdependent domains are identified as critical to fostering entrepreneurial activity that is policy (government leadership, regulatory frameworks, institutional support), finance (availability of microfinance, loans, grants, and investment capital), culture (societal attitudes toward entrepreneurship, tolerance of risk and failure, social legitimacy of self-employment), supports (infrastructure of mentorship, business development services, incubators, and networks), human capital (the skills, knowledge, and competencies of the entrepreneurial population), and markets (local market conditions, demand, supply chains, and customer access).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach is the most relevant theoretical framework for this study for several reasons. First, it enables a holistic assessment of vocational training centre effectiveness that extends beyond narrow measures of training provision or individual business start-up rates. By examining how policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital, and markets interact, the framework allows the research to capture the multiple, interconnected factors that shape whether graduates successfully translate their skills into sustainable entrepreneurial ventures. This aligns directly with the study's objective to explore not only the relationship between courses taken and entrepreneurial outcomes but also the broader factors affecting effectiveness. Second, the approach is inherently context-sensitive, recognizing that entrepreneurial dynamics vary significantly across different geographic and institutional settings. This contextual sensitivity is essential for a study focused on Chinhoyi district, as it permits the identification of local factors such as specific industry linkages, availability of mentorship, and market conditions that may enhance or constrain the effectiveness of vocational training in this particular locale, rather than assuming that findings from other contexts apply directly. Third, the ecosystem framework bridges multiple analytical levels, integrating micro-level individual factors (human capital, entrepreneurial mindset), meso-level institutional factors (vocational training centre characteristics, training quality, support services), and macro-level environmental factors (policy frameworks, market conditions, cultural attitudes). This multi-level perspective is critical for addressing the research questions, which span individual entrepreneurial outcomes, training programme characteristics, and the broader enabling

environment. Fourth, the framework directly aligns with Zimbabwe's Training for Enterprise model, which explicitly aims to transform vocational training centres from producers of job-seekers into hubs for job-creators (MYDIE, 2010). Applying the ecosystem lens, the study can systematically assess how this policy ambition is realized in practice, examining the extent to which the six ecosystem domains support or impede the entrepreneurial trajectories of graduates. Finally, the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach yields actionable insights for policy and practice by identifying which components of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem are functioning effectively and which represent bottlenecks, the research can inform targeted interventions to strengthen the environment for vocational training graduates in Chinhoyi and similar contexts.

In operationalizing this framework for the present study, each of the six domains will be examined as they manifest in the Chinhoyi context. The policy domain will be explored through analysis of how the national Training for Enterprise model is implemented at the local level and the extent to which it creates conditions conducive to youth entrepreneurship. The finance domain will be investigated by assessing graduates' access to start-up capital, microfinance, and other financial resources, identifying barriers and enablers encountered in the transition from training to business ownership. The culture domain will be examined through exploration of societal attitudes toward youth entrepreneurship in Chinhoyi, including perceptions of self-employment as a viable career path and the social support available to young entrepreneurs. The supports domain will be studied by evaluating the availability and quality of post-training support mechanisms, including mentorship, business development services, and networks linking vocational training graduates to market opportunities. The human capital domain will be assessed by examining the relevance and adequacy of the skills, knowledge, and competencies developed through vocational training programmes, distinguishing between technical skills and entrepreneurial skills. The markets domain will be explored by analysing the alignment between course offerings and market opportunities in the Chinhoyi economy, as well as the accessibility of markets for graduate entrepreneurs. By systematically examining these six domains, the study will develop a comprehensive understanding of how vocational training functions as a mechanism for youth entrepreneurial development within the specific context of Chinhoyi, integrating quantitative data on outcomes with qualitative data on processes and contextual factors.

2.4 The Effectiveness of Vocational Training on Youth Entrepreneurial Development

The global literature on the effectiveness of vocational training in fostering youth entrepreneurship reveals a complex picture characterised by both promising evidence and significant variability in outcomes. International frameworks from the International Labour Organization and UNESCO have long championed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a key driver for decent work, poverty reduction and economic growth, positioning it as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2016, ILO, 2020). The international consensus is that when effectively designed, vocational training that integrates entrepreneurship education can increase business start-up intentions, enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy and improve early-stage survival rates of youth-led businesses (Lackéus, 2015, Nabi et al., 2017). However, the translation of training into entrepreneurial outcomes is far from automatic, and the global body of research shows that effectiveness is contingent on a range of design, implementation and contextual factors.

Concrete evidence from different continents illustrates this variability. In Nigeria, a study by Eze et al. (2023) titled "Graduate employability and skill gap relationships of vocational training and machinery/equipment in an effective new business start-up" employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling. The study found that vocational training, when combined with access to relevant machinery and equipment, significantly improved potential entrepreneurs' preparedness and motivation for self-employment. Importantly, the study revealed that training schemes alone had a greater impact on attitudes towards entrepreneurship than on actual business creation, and that packages combining finance with training and coaching were more likely to support sustainable enterprise creation than offering either element alone (OECD, 2023). Across the European Union and OECD countries, the "Missing Entrepreneurs 2023" report synthesised robust evaluations of more than 100 youth entrepreneurship support schemes. It found that while 46% of young people aged 15-30 would consider starting a business and 39% would prefer self-employment to employment, only about 5% in the EU and 9% in the OECD were actually working on a start-up between 2018 and 2022 (OECD, 2023). Fewer than 30 of the evaluated schemes met high-quality evaluation standards, and only 11 measured actual entrepreneurship or employment outcomes. The report concluded that training schemes have a greater effect on entrepreneurial attitudes than on business

creation, while loans and social security relief boost business creation but do not increase firm survival. In the Asia-Pacific region, a comprehensive study covering TVET institutions found that among youth aged 15-29, only 4.4% had taken a technical or vocational course an increase from 2.5% five years earlier (ASER, 2024). The study confirmed that curricula aligned with actual labour market needs and developed with industry stakeholders produce graduates with directly applicable skills, and that experiential learning approaches (business simulations, practical projects) are significantly more effective than purely theoretical instruction (Lackéus, 2015).

Taken together, these global studies establish that while vocational training holds considerable promise for youth entrepreneurship, its effectiveness is highly variable. Key enhancing factors include a strong focus on experiential learning, industry links for curriculum relevance, post-training mentorship and seed funding, and the development of non-cognitive skills such as resilience and opportunity recognition (Bridges et al., 2020). Conversely, common impediments are programmes that remain overly theoretical, lack market alignment, operate in isolation from financial ecosystems and fail to address deep-seated structural barriers (Valerio et al., 2014). Nevertheless, a significant research gap remains at the global level most studies focus on high-income OECD countries or broad cross-country comparisons, and there is a lack of context-specific evidence on how these global principles translate into practice in Sub-Saharan Africa and, more specifically, in Zimbabwe. The variation in outcomes across continents from Nigeria's improved preparedness to the EU's low actual start-up rates highlights the need for localised empirical research.

Across the African continent, the promise of vocational training centres is tempered by distinct contextual realities. African governments have heavily invested in TVET as a solution to rising youth populations and low employment rates, with the African Development Bank positioning TVET as central to its Jobs for Youth strategy (AfDB, 2016). Countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda have implemented national youth entrepreneurship programmes anchored in vocational training institutions (Honja and Kinyanjui, 2019). However, regional research consistently identifies critical mediating factors that undermine effectiveness, including inadequate funding, outdated equipment, a mismatch between skills taught and market needs, and a shortage of trainers with real-world business experience (Maringe and Prew, 2015). Moreover, the challenging

business environment limited access to credit, complex regulations and poor infrastructure can severely constrain even the most capable graduate entrepreneurs (GEM, 2022).

Specific studies from different African countries provide quantitative evidence of this variability. In Kenya, Wanjala (2025) conducted a mixed-methods study titled “The Impact of Vocational Training Centres on Youth Economic Participation A Case Study of Bungoma South Sub-County, Kenya” , involving 225 participants. The findings revealed that vocational training significantly enhanced youth economic participation, with 71% of graduates either securing formal employment (43%) or establishing successful businesses (28%). Post-training average monthly income more than doubled from KES 15,000 to KES 35,000. However, the study also identified a 30% gap in digital skills training and problems with curriculum relevance. Programme effectiveness varied by trade electrical programmes showed the highest success rates (88% completion, 76% employment) compared to other courses (Wanjala, 2025). In contrast, a study from Namibia by Nangula (2023), titled “Opinion Can a TVET qualification turn graduates into self-employment?” , found that two-thirds of TVET graduates since Namibia’s independence had never been entrepreneurs. Of the 10% who might have started a business, 90% of those small businesses did not survive beyond five years (Nangula, 2023). The study concluded that a certificate alone cannot turn TVET graduates into self-employment, and that rote learning must be replaced with training in self-confidence, market assessment, business management and risk-taking. In South Africa, Nevondwe and Ebewo (2022) examined “Effects of Entrepreneurship Education on Start-up Propensity Technical and Vocational College Lecturers’ Perspectives” at a time when the total youth unemployment rate was 40.3% and the youth graduate unemployment rate was 55.2%. They found a direct relationship between entrepreneurship education and the inclination and intention to start a business, and recommended investing in entrepreneurship education and private-public partnerships.

The regional literature therefore demonstrates that while TVET can be effective as in Kenya’s Bungoma South Sub-County the outcomes are highly context-specific. The stark differences between Kenya’s 71% economic participation and Namibia’s 90% five-year business failure rate show that findings from one African country cannot be directly generalised to another. This creates a clear research gap at the regional level there is insufficient understanding of how the specific

socio-economic, institutional and market conditions in Zimbabwe and particularly in a town like Chinhoyi shape the effectiveness of vocational training for youth entrepreneurship.

In Zimbabwe, the pattern of ambitious policy confronting operational challenges is clearly evident. After independence, the government placed vocational training at the heart of its human resource development strategy, culminating in the adoption of the Training for Enterprise (TFE) model in the 1990s (MYDIE, 2010). The TFE model explicitly aims to transform VTCs from producers of job-seekers into hubs for job-creators, integrating business management into all technical curricula and mandating an 80/20 practical-to-theoretical ratio. Nationally, the expansion of VTCs under the Ministry of Youth has increased access to training, with centres established across all provinces. However, national-level assessments and audits point to systemic issues severe budgetary constraints leading to dilapidated infrastructure, a theory-practice gap despite the 80/20 mandate, curricula that are slow to adapt to technological and market shifts, and a critical lack of sustained post-graduation support such as mentorship and access to start-up capital (Bhebhe et al., 2015, Maraire and Munhande, 2020). Research by Dube and Xie (2018) confirms that while the national policy framework is ostensibly aligned with global best practices, implementation challenges at the institutional level mean that anticipated entrepreneurial outcomes are often not realised.

Several context-specific studies conducted within Zimbabwe provide empirical evidence. In Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts, Chirisa (2024) conducted a study titled “Gendered Impact of Contextual Shocks Increasing Vulnerability of Female Youth and the Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Life Skills Interventions in Resilience Building” . Using a mixed-methods approach (questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews), the study found that contextual shocks such as COVID-19, inflation, drought, climate change, unemployment and political instability significantly increased the vulnerability of young women. Importantly, the results highlighted that life skills, entrepreneurship and vocational training were effective in reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, and the study recommended expansion of vocational training institutions as part of a resilience-building strategy (Chirisa, 2024). In Beitbridge District, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2026) implemented the Knows No Borders and Skills2Live programmes in partnership with Young Africa Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational

Training. The programmes delivered mobile skills training and life-skills education to vulnerable youth, with 77% of the 400 graduates being young women. Trainees acquired marketable skills in solar technology, motor mechanics, plumbing, catering and garment construction, combined with entrepreneurship training. Already, more than a quarter of the graduates have transitioned into livelihoods 71 started income-generating projects and 31 secured formal employment (IOM, 2026). This study demonstrates that when vocational training is coupled with practical entrepreneurship education and post-training support, positive entrepreneurial outcomes are achievable in Zimbabwe. In Masvingo, Mataruse (2026) conducted "An Economic Analysis of the Determinants of Entrepreneurship The Case of Masvingo Informal Businesses" and found that vocational training was one of the main determinants influencing the type of business entrepreneurs ventured into. The study recommended formal training for informal business operators to improve business sustainability.

Despite these valuable contributions, a significant research gap exists at the national level. No study has specifically examined the effectiveness of vocational training centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi district. Studies conducted in Mwenezi, Chiredzi, Beitbridge and Masvingo may not be directly applicable to Chinhoyi, given differences in local economic conditions, market access, industry linkages and institutional arrangements. Furthermore, none of the identified studies have focused on the Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre or the Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre, both of which operate within the unique socio-economic ecosystem of Chinhoyi town.

2.5 Relationship Between Courses Taken by Youth and Youth Entrepreneurship

The global literature on the relationship between courses taken in vocational training and subsequent youth entrepreneurship reveals a complex and highly variable picture. International frameworks from the International Labour Organization and UNESCO have long championed Technical and Vocational Education and Training as a driver for decent work, poverty reduction and economic expansion, positioning its centrality to achieving the SDGs (UNESCO, 2016, ILO, 2020). The international agreement is that when properly designed, vocational training that combines entrepreneurship education can stir business start-up intentions, improve entrepreneurial self-efficacy and improve early-stage survival rates of youth-led businesses (Lackéus, 2015, Nabi

et al., 2017). However, the translation of specific courses into entrepreneurial outcomes is far from a reality, and the global body of research shows that the relationship is depends on a range of design, implementation and contextual factors.

Evidence from different continents shows these variabilities. A study by Eze et al. (2023) in Nigeria titled "Graduate employability and skill gap relationships of vocational training and machinery/equipment in an effective new business start-up" employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling. The research found that vocational education, combined with access to ideal machinery and equipment, significantly improved potential entrepreneurs' preparedness and motivation for self-employment. The study revealed that training schemes had greater influence on attitudes towards entrepreneurship than on actual business creation and that packages combining finance with training and coaching were more likely to support sustainable enterprise creation than offering either element alone (OECD, 2023). Across the European Union and OECD countries, the "Missing Entrepreneurs 2023" report synthesised robust evaluations of more than 100 youth entrepreneurship support schemes. It found that while 46% of young people aged 15-30 would consider starting a business and 39% would prefer self-employment to employment, only about 5% in the EU and 9% in the OECD were actually working on a start-up between 2018 and 2022 (OECD, 2023). Fewer than 30 of the evaluated schemes met high-quality evaluation standards, and only 11 measured actual entrepreneurship or employment outcomes. The report concluded that training schemes have a greater effect on entrepreneurial attitudes than on business creation, while loans and social security relief boost business creation but do not increase firm survival. In the Asia-Pacific region, a comprehensive study covering TVET institutions found that among youth aged 15-29, only 4.4% had taken a technical or vocational course an increase from 2.5% five years earlier (ASER, 2024). The study confirmed that curricula aligned with actual labour market needs and developed with industry stakeholders produce graduates with directly applicable skills, and that experiential learning approaches (business simulations, practical projects) are significantly more effective than purely theoretical instruction (Lackéus, 2015). However, none of these global studies disaggregated entrepreneurial outcomes by specific course type (for example, welding versus information technology), leaving a gap in understanding which trades are more strongly associated with business creation.

Taken together, these global studies establish that while vocational training holds considerable promise for youth entrepreneurship, the relationship between what is studied and what entrepreneurial outcomes are achieved is highly variable. Key enhancing factors include a strong focus on experiential learning, industry links for curriculum relevance, post-training mentorship and seed funding, and the development of non-cognitive skills such as resilience and opportunity recognition (Bridges et al., 2020). Conversely, common impediments are programmes that remain overly theoretical, lack market alignment, operate in isolation from financial ecosystems and fail to address deep-seated structural barriers (Valerio et al., 2014). Nevertheless, a significant research gap remains at the global level most studies focus on high-income OECD countries or broad cross-country comparisons, and there is a lack of context-specific evidence on how the relationship between specific courses and entrepreneurship manifests in Sub-Saharan Africa and, more specifically, in Zimbabwe.

Across the African continent, the relationship between vocational training courses and youth entrepreneurship has been examined through several context-specific studies, revealing significant variability in outcomes. In Kenya, a mixed-methods study by Wanjala (2025) titled "The Impact of Vocational Training Centres on Youth Economic Participation A Case Study of Bungoma South Sub-County, Kenya" examined data from 225 participants. The findings revealed that vocational training significantly enhanced youth economic participation, with 71% of graduates either securing formal employment (43%) or establishing successful businesses (28%). Post-training average monthly income more than doubled from KES 15,000 to KES 35,000. Importantly, programme effectiveness varied across different vocational courses electrical programmes showed the highest success rates (88% completion rate, 76% employment rate) compared to other programmes (Wanjala, 2025). In a related Kenyan study, Njeru (2025) analysed the relationship between entrepreneurship training and self-employment behaviour among TVET students in Kiambu County, Kenya. Using a sample of 329 respondents from public technical training institutions, the study found a strong positive relationship between the content of entrepreneurship training ($p=0.000$), teaching methods ($p=0.004$), learning materials ($p=0.029$), and the entrepreneurial behaviour of TVET students as seen in their self-employment (Njeru, 2025).

In contrast, a study by Nangula (2023), from Namibia, "Opinion Can a TVET qualification turn

graduates into self-employment?" , found that two-thirds of TVET graduates since Namibia's independence had never been entrepreneurs. Of the 10% who might have started a business, 90% of those small businesses did not survive beyond five years. The study concluded that a certificate alone cannot turn TVET graduates into self-employment, and that the skill sets of an employee and an entrepreneur are fundamentally different (Nangula, 2023). In Rwanda, Mbahongeriki and Muhayimana (2025) conducted a study titled "Effect of technical and vocational education and training on youth self-employment in Rwanda A case study of Rusizi District, Rwanda" , collecting data from 72 self-employed youths. The study found that 95.5% of graduates used skills in painting and decoration, 98.4% in masonry, and the study reported business start-up at 92.6% and entrepreneurship promotion at 98.4%, with TVET graduates contributing significantly to job creation in the district (Mbahongeriki and Muhayimana, 2025). In Tanzania, Ramadhani and Suyaan (2025) assessed the duration of job searches and challenges encountered by self-employed TVET graduates in transport and leather processing programmes. The study found that graduates from one institution (DIT Mwanza Campus) experienced notable improvements in employment outcomes, with 84.8% securing employment within six months during the 2022/2023 academic year, while graduates from another institution (NIT) faced extended job search periods, with 39.4% taking over 12 months to secure employment. The study recommended the integration of comprehensive business education and entrepreneurship courses within TVET curricula (Ramadhani and Suyaan, 2025).

The regional literature therefore demonstrates that while TVET can be effective as in Kenya's Bungoma South Sub-County and Rwanda's Rusizi District the relationship between courses taken and entrepreneurial outcomes is highly context-specific. The stark differences between Kenya's 71% economic participation, Rwanda's 92.6% business start-up rate, and Namibia's 90% five-year business failure rate show that findings from one African country cannot be directly generalised to another. This creates a clear research gap at the regional level there is insufficient understanding of how the specific course offerings in Zimbabwe and particularly in a town like Chinhoyi relate to entrepreneurial outcomes such as business start-up, survival and profitability.

In Zimbabwe, the relationship between vocational training courses and youth entrepreneurship has been examined in a few specific studies, though none have focused on Chinhoyi. The International

Organization for Migration (IOM) (2026) implemented the Knows No Borders and Skills2Live programmes in Beitbridge District, delivering mobile skills training and life-skills education to vulnerable youth. Of the 400 graduates, 77% were young women. Trainees acquired marketable skills in trades such as solar technology, motor mechanics, plumbing, catering, and garment construction, combined with entrepreneurship training. Already, more than a quarter of the graduates have transitioned into livelihoods 71 started income-generating projects and 31 secured formal employment (IOM, 2026). This study demonstrates that when vocational training is coupled with practical entrepreneurship education and post-training support, positive entrepreneurial outcomes are achievable in Zimbabwe. However, the study did not disaggregate outcomes by specific course type, so it remains unknown whether graduates in solar technology were more successful than those in garment construction.

Additionally, Ndofirepi and Rambe (2016) investigated the influence of perceived entrepreneurial capabilities and opportunity recognition beliefs on the entrepreneurial orientation of TVET students at a particular polytechnic college in Zimbabwe. Using a quantitative survey among 169 polytechnic college students, the results partially confirmed that students' entrepreneurial orientations were directly linked to their perceived entrepreneurial capabilities and opportunity recognition beliefs. The study concluded that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education interventions depends on the capacity of training programmes to integrate and focus on perceived entrepreneurial capabilities and opportunity recognition beliefs of students (Ndofirepi and Rambe, 2016). However, this study measured intentions and orientations rather than actual business start-up or survival rates, and it did not examine differences across specific technical courses. In Masvingo, Mataruse (2026) conducted "An Economic Analysis of the Determinants of Entrepreneurship The Case of Masvingo Informal Businesses" and found that vocational training was one of the main determinants influencing the type of business entrepreneurs ventured into. The study recommended formal training for informal business operators to improve business sustainability (Mataruse, 2026). Again, this study did not quantify the relationship between specific courses taken and subsequent entrepreneurial success.

Despite these valuable contributions, a significant research gap exists at the national level. No study has specifically examined the relationship between courses taken and youth entrepreneurship

at the Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre or the Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre. Studies conducted in Beitbridge, Masvingo, and at a general polytechnic college may not be directly applicable to Chinhoyi, given differences in local economic conditions, course offerings, market access, and institutional arrangements. Furthermore, none of the identified studies have disaggregated entrepreneurial outcomes by specific course type to determine, for example, whether a graduate in carpentry is more or less likely to start a successful business than a graduate in information technology within the Chinhoyi context.

2.6 Factors Effectiveness of Vocational Training on Youth Entrepreneurial Development

The global literature on the factors affecting the effectiveness of vocational training in fostering youth entrepreneurship reveals a complex interplay of design, implementation and contextual variables. International frameworks from the International Labour Organization and UNESCO have long championed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a key driver for decent work, poverty reduction and economic growth (UNESCO, 2016, ILO, 2020). The global consensus is that when effectively designed, vocational training that integrates entrepreneurship education can increase business start-up intentions, enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy and improve early-stage survival rates of youth-led businesses (Lackéus, 2015, Nabi et al., 2017). However, the translation of training into entrepreneurial outcomes is mediated by a range of factors, and systematic reviews have identified significant heterogeneity in programme effectiveness.

A systematic literature review on youth employment interventions found that entrepreneurship promotion and skills training were effective in increasing earnings, while the effects of employment services and subsidised employment were negligible or statistically insignificant (Tripney and Hombrados, 2019). The review examined 113 impact evaluations and concluded that training programmes alone have a greater impact on attitudes towards entrepreneurship than on actual business creation, while combinations of finance with training and coaching are more likely to support sustainable enterprise creation than offering either element individually. Another systematic review, following PRISMA guidelines, analysed how creativity and innovation are integrated into VET and concluded that sustainable VET reform requires a context-specific balance of global best practices and local realities to drive inclusive economic growth and youth

employment (Garuda, 2024).

The OECD's Missing Entrepreneurs 2023 report, the seventh edition in a series of biennial reports examining how government policies can release untapped entrepreneurial potential, provided comparative data on the barriers faced by youth entrepreneurs across OECD and European Union countries (OECD, 2023). The report took a deep dive into the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship schemes and found that while 46% of young people aged 15-30 would consider starting a business and 39% would prefer self-employment, only about 5% in the EU and 9% in the OECD were actually working on a start-up between 2018 and 2022. The report identified that fewer than 30 of the more than 100 schemes evaluated met high-quality evaluation standards, and only 11 measured actual entrepreneurship or employment outcomes rather than changes in attitudes or self-perceived skills. Key enhancing factors identified included a strong focus on experiential learning, robust links with industry for curriculum relevance, access to post-training mentorship and seed funding, and the development of non-cognitive skills such as resilience and opportunity recognition (Bridges et al., 2020). Conversely, common impediments were found in programmes that remained overly theoretical, lacked market alignment, operated in isolation from financial ecosystems and failed to address deep-seated structural barriers in the local economy (Valerio et al., 2014).

A systematic literature review on government-sponsored youth entrepreneurship training programmes found that the effectiveness of such programmes largely depends on curriculum quality, experiential learning integration, mentorship support, and contextual adaptation to local entrepreneurial ecosystems (Adebayo, 2025). The review, guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, concluded that programmes that incorporate business simulations, practical project work, and linkages with local industry produce significantly better outcomes than those that rely primarily on classroom-based theoretical instruction. From a global perspective, therefore, the factors affecting VTC effectiveness span the individual, institutional and environmental levels of analysis, with the most critical factors being the quality and relevance of training delivery (curriculum alignment with market needs, pedagogical approaches emphasising experiential learning, trainer competence and industry experience), post-training support (mentorship, business development services, follow-up assistance), and the broader enabling environment (access to

finance, supportive regulatory frameworks, market conditions).

Nevertheless, a significant research gap remains at the global level. Most studies focus on high-income OECD countries or provide broad cross-country comparisons, and there is a scarcity of empirical research that applies the entrepreneurial ecosystem framework to low-income, semi-urban African settings. It remains unknown which of the six ecosystem domains are most constraining in specific local contexts, and whether the relative importance of factors (for example, finance versus mentorship) differs from that found in global studies.

Across the African continent, the factors affecting the effectiveness of vocational training centres in fostering youth entrepreneurship have been examined through several context-specific studies, revealing a consistent pattern of systemic constraints. Regional research has identified that while African governments have heavily invested in TVET as a solution to rising youth populations and low employment rates (AfDB, 2016), the effectiveness of VTCs is often hampered by inadequate funding, outdated training equipment, a persistent mismatch between skills taught and market needs, and a shortage of trainers with real-world business experience (Maringe and Prew, 2015). Furthermore, the broader African business environment characterised by limited access to credit, complex regulatory requirements, poor infrastructure, and weak market linkages can severely constrain even the most capable graduate entrepreneurs (GEM, 2022).

In Kenya, a study by Njeru (2025) analysed the relationship between entrepreneurship training and self-employment behaviour among TVET students in Kiambu County. Using a sample of 329 respondents from public technical training institutions, the study found that entrepreneurship training content, entrepreneurship pedagogies, trainer attributes, and learning resources can be used as predictors of the entrepreneurial behaviour of technical and vocational education students (Njeru, 2025). The study concluded that the effectiveness of TVET in fostering entrepreneurship depends not only on what is taught but also on how it is taught and by whom. In a related Kenyan study, Wanjala (2025) found that programme effectiveness varied across different vocational courses, with electrical programmes showing the highest success rates compared to other programmes, indicating that the nature of the course itself is a mediating factor.

In Ghana, a study conducted in the Kumasi Metropolis examined the integration of entrepreneurial skills in technical and vocational education as a strategic approach for improving youth employment (Agyapong, 2023). The study revealed that the integration of entrepreneurship education in TVET was fraught with many challenges, including inadequate funding, lack of entrepreneurial development centres, and insufficient tools and equipment for practical skills acquisition (Agyapong, 2023). Another Ghanaian study identified that challenges in adopting effective entrepreneurial skills development strategies encompassed inadequate training resources, tutors' training not tailored to emerging technological advancement, insufficient resources and infrastructure, lack of industrial collaboration, and the readiness of the job market to absorb graduates (Adu-Oppong and Asamoah, 2020). The study found that graduates often have limited entrepreneurial skills and rarely undertake entrepreneur initiatives as they persistently search for non-existing jobs in the formal sector.

In South Africa, a mixed-methods study by Mbanjwa (2025) examined barriers to entrepreneurial development in TVET colleges from student perspectives. Key barriers identified included inadequate entrepreneurial training (reported by 72% of students), limited access to startup funding (68%), lack of mentorship and incubation programmes (61%), and insufficient exposure to real-world business environments (Mbanjwa, 2025). Another South African study focusing on TVET entrepreneurship graduates found that the challenges they face when attempting to establish their businesses include limited resources, a lack of mentorship, lack of transparency, lack of financial literacy, and a traditional theoretical teaching approach (Mahlangu, 2023). These findings were reinforced by a report on ecosystem mapping of innovation and entrepreneurship at South African TVETs, which revealed that 52% of TVETs reported that fewer than 10% of their students participate in entrepreneurship competitions, indicating extremely low levels of entrepreneurial engagement (Motse Collective Impact, 2024). TVET institutions in South Africa have been recognised as vital to equipping youth with practical skills, yet they face challenges such as outdated curricula, limited industry alignment, and insufficient emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation (Nkosi, 2024).

In Namibia, a study by Nangula (2023) found that two-thirds of TVET graduates since the country's independence had never been entrepreneurs, and that to be successful entrepreneurs,

TVET graduates need self-confidence, creativity, knowledge of market assessment, business management and leadership skills, and a risk-taking mindset. The study also identified that TVET graduates indicate that finance, inadequate business start-up training, government regulations, crime, infrastructure and technology are challenges to starting their own businesses (Namibian, 2024). The Capricorn Foundation's entrepreneurship hub in Namibia specifically addresses a critical gap in the Namibian labour market the transition from being a skilled technician to a self-employed business owner, providing practical guidance aimed at bridging the gap between technical training and business readiness (Capricorn Foundation, 2026). The programme seeks to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets, strengthen self-leadership, and contribute to reducing youth unemployment. Similarly, at the Zambezi VTC in Namibia, calls have been made for the Namibia Training Authority to introduce start-up financial programmes or grants for graduates of technical and vocational education institutions (NBC News, 2025).

The regional literature therefore demonstrates that the factors affecting VTC effectiveness across Africa are remarkably consistent inadequate funding, outdated equipment, lack of trainer business experience, weak industry linkages, insufficient post-training support (mentorship and incubation), and limited access to start-up capital. However, the severity and interplay of these factors vary across countries and even within countries across different districts. This variation underscores that findings from one African country cannot be directly generalised to another, and there is insufficient understanding of how these factors manifest in the specific Zimbabwean context, and more particularly in Chinhoyi district.

In Zimbabwe, the factors affecting the effectiveness of vocational training centres in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development have been examined through several studies, though none have focused specifically on Chinhoyi. National-level assessments and audits point to systemic issues affecting effectiveness, including severe budgetary constraints leading to dilapidated infrastructure and inadequate teaching materials, a theory-practice gap that persists despite the mandated 80/20 practical-to-theoretical ratio, curricula that are slow to adapt to technological shifts and changing market demands, and a critical lack of sustained post-graduation support such as mentorship, business linkage services, and access to start-up capital (Bhebhe et al., 2015, Maraire and Munhande, 2020). Research by Dube and Xie (2018) confirms that while the national policy

framework is ostensibly aligned with global best practices, the implementation challenges at the institutional level mean that the anticipated entrepreneurial outcomes are often not realised, contributing to the persistent youth unemployment crisis.

A study by Chirisa (2024) in Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts explored the gendered impact of contextual shocks on female youth and the role of TVET and life skills interventions in resilience building. Using a mixed-methods approach collecting data through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews, the study found that contextual shocks such as COVID-19, inflation, drought, natural disasters, climate change, unemployment, political instability, and cultural beliefs significantly contribute to the vulnerability of young women. The results highlighted the importance of life skills, entrepreneurship, and vocational training in reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, but also identified that access to these interventions is uneven and that quality varies considerably across institutions (Chirisa, 2024). The study recommended effective strategies for building resilience, including women's empowerment programmes, financial support, increased participation in development planning, policy implementation, stakeholder involvement, and expansion of vocational training institutions.

A chapter by Musingafi and Mhute (2024) on youth entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe provided a critical glimpse into the factors associated with youth entrepreneurship, alongside its challenges, importance, and ways to harness entrepreneurial capabilities among Zimbabwean youth. The chapter discussed systemic barriers to success and the role of key stakeholders, including government, in fostering an entrepreneurial culture. It noted that Zimbabwe's path to economic revitalisation hinges on fostering a dynamic entrepreneurial culture by embedding entrepreneurship into education, expanding access to finance, reforming regulatory frameworks, and cultivating networks of mentorship and support (Musingafi and Mhute, 2024).

A study examining the benefits, challenges, and opportunities for high school TVET programmes in Zimbabwe under current economic conditions found that 50% of respondents identified job creation and unemployment reduction as benefits due to the development of entrepreneurial skills (Muzenda, 2025). Additional benefits included exposure to career opportunities and potential to earn higher income. However, the study also identified significant implementation challenges.

Another study on digital transformation and sustainable funding models in Zimbabwe's TVET sector found that the sector faces unprecedented challenges in the digital age, requiring innovative approaches to both technological integration and sustainable financing (Chikwanha and Mhlanga, 2025). The study examined the interplay between digital transformation and funding models, analysing current challenges and identifying emerging opportunities. A further study on attaining quality TVET in Zimbabwean tertiary institutions revealed the following challenges lack of TVET training facilities, poor teaching methods, poor funding, deplorable facilities, and routine assessment of students' competencies (Moyo and Gwarinda, 2025).

In Beitbridge District, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2026) implemented the Knows No Borders and Skills2Live programmes, delivering mobile skills training and life-skills education to vulnerable youth. The programmes demonstrated that when vocational training is coupled with practical entrepreneurship education and post-training support (including start-up toolkits for enterprise groups), positive entrepreneurial outcomes can be achieved. Of the 400 graduates, 77% were young women, and more than a quarter have transitioned into livelihoods 71 started income-generating projects and 31 secured formal employment (IOM, 2026). This study provides evidence that the factors affecting effectiveness can be addressed through targeted interventions, but such interventions are not yet systematically implemented across Zimbabwe's VTCs.

Recently, in Mashonaland West Province (which includes Chinhoyi), a graduation ceremony for vocational training graduates was held where graduates underwent intensive instruction in disciplines designed for immediate self-employment, including professional driving, catering, baking, detergent production, Information and Communication Technology, solar installation, electrical wiring, welding and metal fabrication (The Herald, 2026). The graduates were urged to form syndicates and small-to-medium enterprises to pool resources and compete for larger contracts within the province. However, this report does not constitute an empirical study and provides no systematic analysis of the factors affecting effectiveness in Chinhoyi.

Despite these valuable contributions, a significant research gap exists at the national level regarding the factors affecting VTC effectiveness. No study has systematically examined the six

entrepreneurial ecosystem domains (policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital, markets) as they manifest in the specific context of Chinhoyi's vocational training centres. Studies conducted in other districts (Mwenezi, Chiredzi, Beitbridge, Masvingo) and at the national level provide general insights but cannot substitute for localised empirical evidence. Furthermore, there is a profound absence of research that directly examines the perspectives of VTC graduates in Chinhoyi regarding the specific barriers they face and the enabling factors that could enhance their entrepreneurial success.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the effectiveness of vocational training in fostering youth entrepreneurial development. It began by outlining the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach as the theoretical framework guiding this study, defining its six core domains of policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital, and markets, and explaining its relevance for examining how training translates into entrepreneurial outcomes. The chapter then presented the conceptual framework based on the Input-Process-Output model, which structures the study's investigation of how independent variables (the six ecosystem domains) interact through mediating processes (training quality and individual characteristics) to produce the dependent variable (youth entrepreneurial development). The empirical literature was systematically reviewed across global, regional (African), and national (Zimbabwean) levels, examining the effectiveness of vocational training, the factors affecting effectiveness, and the patterns of youth experiences with vocational training and entrepreneurship. The review confirmed that while vocational training holds significant promise for fostering youth entrepreneurship, its effectiveness is contingent upon a complex interplay of training quality, institutional capacity, post-training support, and the broader enabling environment. The chapter identified a critical research gap, the absence of localized, empirical research examining the effectiveness of vocational training centres in the specific context of Chinhoyi. The next chapter will detail the research methodology employed to address this gap and generate the evidence necessary to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the methodology used to investigate the effectiveness of the vocational training centres in Chinhoyi in fostering youth entrepreneurial development. It details the research paradigm, research design, study area, population and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis methods and ethical considerations.

3.2 Description of the Study Area

The research was conducted in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe. Chinhoyi is an administrative and commercial hub hosting several vocational training centres, including Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre and Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre, among others. The study area was chosen because it provided a sufficient concentration of vocational training graduates who could be accessed for data collection. In the area there are business hubs, markets, and small-to-medium enterprise (SME) sites across Chinhoyi, including the Chinhoyi Central Business District, Chikangwe Market, and the Chinhoyi SME Park were participants were recruited.

3.3 Research Paradigm

This study used the pragmatic approach which prioritises the research problem and utilises the most appropriate methods to address it, rather than being constrained by a purely objective or subjective worldview (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The research questions require both an assessment of measurable outcomes such course relevance, business start-up rates and an exploration of subjective experiences and contextual factors for example perceptions of effectiveness, challenges faced. This paradigm was selected because it combines quantitative and qualitative data focusing on practical solutions and "what works" in the context of Vocational Training Centres.

3.4 Research Approach

The study adopted a mixed methods research approach, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative data within a single inquiry (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). This approach was selected because the research problem required not only the measurement of outcomes such as business start-up rates and skill acquisition but also an in-depth understanding of the contextual

factors influencing those outcomes. Through combining numerical data from surveys with narrative data from interviews and focus groups, the mixed methods approach allowed for a more complete and nuanced assessment of the effectiveness of vocational training on youth entrepreneurship.

3.5 Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed methods design was used. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analysed separately, and then merged during the interpretation phase to compare, contrast, and integrate findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). This design was appropriate because it enabled the study to simultaneously gather statistical evidence on patterns and relationships, for example between course type and business start-up and rich qualitative insights into the reasons and processes behind those patterns. The convergence of the two datasets strengthened the validity of the conclusions.

3.6 Study population, sample, and sampling techniques

The target population comprised all youth who had completed a vocational training programme at any registered vocational training centre in Chinhoyi within the past five years. The sample was the subset of these graduates who were currently engaged in business activities either formal or informal or could be located within the identified business hubs and markets of Chinhoyi. Due to the absence of a centralised database of all graduates, the exact size of the target population was not known. However, based on enrolment records obtained from the training centres, an estimated 400 graduates had been produced in the past five years.

3.6.1 Sample Size Determination

For the quantitative component, the sample size was determined using the Yamane formula(Yamane, 1967).

$$n = N \div (1 + N(e)2)$$

where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the margin of error (set at 0.05). Using a population of 400 graduates, a sample of 194 graduates was set for the survey.

For the qualitative component, a purposive sample of 24 participants was selected, 12 for in-depth

interviews (including VTC administrators, trainers, and business development officers) and 12 for two focus group discussions (FGDs), each comprising 6 graduates. The sample size for qualitative data was guided by the principle of data saturation, where data collection continued until no new themes emerged (Guest et al., 2012).

3.6.2 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive sampling for the quantitative survey to ensure representativeness. The accessible population was first stratified by the VTC attended and by the trade/course completed. Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected from lists obtained through snowball sampling and by systematically approaching vendors and business operators at the identified market sites.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select key informants and focus group participants. Selection criteria included choosing administrators/trainers with a minimum of three years of experience at a VTC. For graduate participants completion of training within the past five years and active engagement (or previous engagement) in a business related to their training. Snowball sampling was also used to identify additional graduates where initial participants referred other graduates from their networks, which was particularly useful for reaching graduates who were not easily found at market sites.

3.7 Research methods and data collection

This study employed data triangulation, utilizing multiple sources of data to ensure a comprehensive and robust understanding of the research problem as well as to mitigate the limitations inherent in any single method and allows for the convergence of evidence from different angles, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings. Data was derived from primary sources.

3.7.1 Primary data collection methods

Primary data was collected directly from participants through three principal instruments, each tailored to elicit specific types of information aligned with the mixed-methods design.

The primary quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to graduates. These surveys predominantly featured closed-ended questions, to collect standardized

data on key variables. The questionnaire was designed to capture demographic profiles, details of courses undertaken, self-assessed acquisition of technical and entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurial intentions, and tangible business outcomes such as start-up activities and enterprise sustainability. This instrument provides the necessary numerical data to identify patterns, measure frequencies, and statistically analyse relationships across the study population.

To gain deeper, qualitative insights into institutional dynamics and personal experiences, two interactive methods will be used. Semi-structured questionnaires was conducted with key informants, including VTCs administrators and trainers. This format allows for guided yet flexible conversations to explore their perspectives on curriculum relevance, implementation challenges, partnerships with industry, and their overall perception of the centre's effectiveness in fostering entrepreneurship. The semi-structured nature ensures that all critical topics are covered while permitting the emergence of unanticipated, context-rich information.

Furthermore, two focus group discussions (FGDs), each comprising 6 graduates. The sample size for qualitative data was guided by the principle of data saturation, where data collection continued until no new themes emerged. The selected data collection and analysis methods are directly and purposefully aligned with the study's specific objectives to ensure a coherent research design. The first objective, which seeks to identify the courses offered and commonly taken, was addressed through the data gathered by a closed questionnaire, which revealed participant choices on which courses to pursue. The second objective, aimed at assessing the relationship between courses taken and youth entrepreneurship, will be met primarily through statistical analysis, correlation or regression of the quantitative data generated by the structured questionnaires. The third objective, which explores the factors affecting the VTC's effectiveness, will be predominantly achieved through the qualitative data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, supplemented by the thematic analysis of open-ended responses from the survey questionnaires. This deliberate mapping ensures that each component of the research methodology contributes directly to answering the overarching research questions.

3.8 Data analysis methods

Quantitative data will be cleaned, coded, and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) summarised the data.

Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs will be analysed using Thematic Analysis. This involves familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming them, and producing the final report. This process will identify key patterns and themes related to factors influencing effectiveness.

During the interpretation phase, the quantitative results and qualitative themes will be merged. Findings will be compared and contrasted to develop a coherent, multi-faceted answer to each research question, ensuring convergence and explanation. The findings will also be compared and contrasted from the existing literature.

3.9 Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability, will be enhanced through a two-pronged approach. Firstly data collection instruments were put through a pilot test with a small, similar group of individuals not included in the final sample. This pilot allowed the identification of ambiguous questions, assessment of the time required for completion. Second, clear, standardized administration procedures was documented and followed, ensuring that data collection conditions are as uniform as possible, thereby minimizing error introduced by the process itself. Reliability and validity was achieved through data triangulation , prolonged engagement in the field, and member checking, preliminary findings were shared with a subset of participants to verify accuracy.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Bindura University of Science Education Research Ethics Committee. Permission was also secured from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training and from the local authorities in Chinhoyi. Informed consent was sought from all participants. Before data collection, the purpose of the study, procedures, and the right to withdraw were explained in plain language. Written consent was obtained from each participant. For participants with low literacy, the consent form was read aloud and a thumbprint was accepted in lieu of a signature. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by using pseudonyms and codes such as Graduate_01, Trainer_A in all transcripts and reports. Data were stored in password-protected files and locked cabinets accessible only to the researcher. No individual

participant or training centre is identifiable in any publication arising from this research. Participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered that could unduly influence participation. Where discussions touched on sensitive topics such as business failure, the researcher exercised sensitivity and provided referral information for local counselling services if needed.

3.11 Summary

This chapter of the study presents the methodology used to investigate the effectiveness of the vocational training centre in Chinhoyi in fostering youth entrepreneurial development. It details the research paradigm, research design, study area, population and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis methods and ethical considerations. The next chapter will comprehensively present and analyse the finding.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses, interprets and discusses the findings of the study on the

effectiveness of vocational training centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design, collecting quantitative data from 194 VTC graduates through structured questionnaires and qualitative data from 24 interviews with VTC administrators, trainers, and 2 focus group discussions with graduates. The presentation follows the logical sequence of the research objectives first, identifying courses offered and commonly taken by youth, second, assessing the relationship between courses taken and youth entrepreneurship, and third, exploring factors affecting the effectiveness of VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. Quantitative data are presented using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative data are organised thematically, with direct quotations used to illustrate key findings. Where appropriate, findings are integrated and discussed in relation to the entrepreneurial ecosystem theoretical framework and existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Understanding the demographic characteristics of respondents is essential for contextualising the findings, as factors such as age, gender, educational background, and training institution attended may influence entrepreneurial outcomes (Njeru, 2025). This section presents the demographic profile of the 194 VTC graduates who participated in the quantitative survey.

Table 4.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency (n=194)	Percentage (%)
18-24 years	67	34.5
25-30 years	89	45.9
31-35 years	29	14.9
36+ years	9	4.6
Total	**194**	**100**

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of respondents (45.9%) were aged 25-30 years, followed by those aged 18-24 years (34.5%). Together, these two groups constitute 80.4% of the sample, indicating that the study captured perspectives from young people who completed vocational training within the recent past. Only 4.6% of respondents were aged 36 years and above. This age distribution is appropriate for a study on youth entrepreneurial development, as it aligns with

Zimbabwe's National Youth Policy definition of youth as persons aged 15-35 years (MYDIE, 2010). The concentration in the 25-30 age bracket is also logical given that respondents were required to have completed training within the past five years, meaning many would have started training in their late teens or early twenties.

Table 4.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n=194)	Percentage (%)
Male	112	57.7
Female	82	42.3
Total	**194**	**100**

Table 4.2 indicates a gender imbalance, with males comprising 57.7% of respondents compared to 42.3% females. This finding is consistent with national patterns in Zimbabwe where vocational training enrolment, particularly in technical trades such as welding, carpentry, and motor mechanics, has historically been male-dominated (Dube and Xie, 2018). However, the presence of 82 female respondents suggests increasing female participation in vocational training.

Table 4.3 Highest Educational Level Before VTC

Education Level	Frequency (n=194)	Percentage (%)
Primary	8	4.1
'O' Level	143	73.7
'A' Level	36	18.6
Other (specify)	7	3.6
Total	**194**	**100**

The data in Table 4.3 reveal that the vast majority of respondents (73.7%) entered VTCs with 'O' Level qualifications as their highest educational attainment. A further 18.6% held 'A' Level certificates, while only 4.1% had only primary education and 3.6% had other qualifications such as tertiary diplomas or certificates. This finding suggests that VTCs in Chinhoyi primarily serve youth who have completed secondary education but may not have progressed to university or other tertiary institutions. This aligns with the national policy objective of providing alternative

pathways for youth who are not absorbed into the formal university system (MYDIE, 2010). One VTC administrator confirmed

"Most of our students come to us after failing to get into university or college. They have their O Levels, some have A Levels, but they cannot afford or did not qualify for higher education. VTC is their second chance."

Table 4.4 VTC Attended by Respondents

VTC Attended	Frequency (n=194)	Percentage (%)
Chinhoyi Urban VTC	118	60.8
Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre	64	33.0
Other	12	6.2
Total	**194**	**100**

Table 4.4 shows that over half of the respondents (60.8%) had attended Chinhoyi Urban Vocational Training Centre, while 33.0% had attended Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre. The remaining 6.2% had trained at other smaller or private vocational training providers in the district. The predominance of Chinhoyi Urban VTC respondents is expected given its larger capacity and central location within the town, making it more accessible to youth from various backgrounds.

4.3 Courses Offered and Commonly Taken by Youth at Vocational Training Centres in Chinhoyi

The first research objective sought to identify the courses offered and commonly taken by youth from vocational training centres in Chinhoyi. This section presents findings from both the quantitative survey of 194 graduates and qualitative interviews with VTC administrators and trainers.

4.3.1 Distribution of Courses Completed by Respondents

The research gathered data on the courses that were completed by respondents n=194. The data was presented in table 4.5. This was done to identify courses offered and commonly taken by youth from vocational training.

Table 4.5 Courses Completed by Respondents

Course/Trade	Frequency (n=194)	Percentage (%)
Garment Making/Design	38	19.6
Hairdressing and Beauty	31	16.0
Welding and Fabrication	29	14.9
Carpentry and Joinery	27	13.9
Information Technology	24	12.4
Catering and Hospitality	19	9.8
Motor Mechanics	14	7.2
Agriculture	8	4.1
Other (Building)	4	2.1
Total	**194**	**100**

The data in Table 4.5 indicate that garment making/design was the most common course completed by respondents (19.6%), followed by hairdressing and beauty (16.0%), welding and fabrication (14.9%), and carpentry and joinery (13.9%). These four courses together account for 64.4% of all respondents. Information Technology (12.4%) and catering and hospitality (9.8%) were moderately represented, while motor mechanics (7.2%), agriculture (4.1%), and other courses (2.1%) had lower representation.

The popularity of garment making and hairdressing courses reflects the gendered nature of vocational training enrolment in Chinhoyi, with these courses attracting predominantly female students. The popularity of welding and carpentry among male students suggests that these traditional trades remain attractive to youth seeking practical, marketable skills.

Interviews with VTC administrators confirmed the course offerings identified in the survey and provided additional context regarding course popularity. One administrator from Chinhoyi Urban VTC explained

"Our centre offers twelve different trades, but the most popular with youth are hairdressing, garment making, welding, and carpentry. IT is also becoming popular because young people think

it will get them office jobs. Agriculture is less popular because youth associate it with hard work on farms, even though there are opportunities."

Another trainer provided insight into why certain courses attract more students

"Students choose courses based on what they see working in Chinhoyi. They see hairdressing salons everywhere and garment makers at Chikangwe Market making money, so they choose those. They don't see many mechanics or agriculture businesses that look successful, so those courses have fewer students."

4.3.3 Course Duration and Entrepreneurship Content

The study went on to gather data on the duration of courses offered to respondents this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.6. n=194

Table 4.6 Course Duration

Duration Frequency	**(n=194)**	**Percentage (%)**
6 months	23	11.9
1 year	89	45.9
2 years	71	36.6
Other (18 months)	11	5.7
Total	**194**	**100**

Table 4.6 shows that the majority of respondents completed courses of either one year (45.9%) or two years (36.6%) duration. Only 11.9% completed six-month courses. This distribution reflects the standard duration of most vocational training programmes in Zimbabwe, with longer courses typically leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

4.3.4 Inclusion of Entrepreneurship Module in Course

The study went on to gather data on the inclusion of entrepreneurship modules of courses offered

to respondents this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.7. n=194

Table 4.7 Inclusion of Entrepreneurship Module in Course

Entrepreneurship Module	**Frequency (n=194)**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	67	34.5
No	98	50.5
Not sure	29	14.9
Total	**194**	**100**

A concerning finding presented in Table 4.7 is that only 34.5% of respondents confirmed that their course included a dedicated entrepreneurship or business module. Half of all respondents (50.5%) stated that their course did not include such a module, while 14.9% were unsure. This finding directly contradicts the national Training for Enterprise (TFE) model, which explicitly mandates the integration of entrepreneurship education into all technical curricula (MYDIE, 2010). One VTC trainer acknowledged this gap by stating that,

"The policy says we should teach business skills, but in practice, it is difficult. We have limited time, large classes, and trainers who themselves have never run a business. Entrepreneurship becomes one or two lessons squeezed in at the end of the term, if time allows."

The qualitative findings also matched the quantitative findings of the study which will be discussed in chapter 5

4.4 Relationship Between Courses Taken by Youth and Youth Entrepreneurship in Chinhoyi

The second research objective aimed to assess the relationship between courses taken by youth and their entrepreneurial outcomes in Chinhoyi. This section presents findings on business start-up rates, the relevance of training to businesses established, entrepreneurial mindset and capability development, and the relationship between course type and entrepreneurial success.

4.4.1 Business Start-up Rates Among VTC Graduates

The study went on to gather data on the **Business Start-up Rates Among VTC Graduates** this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.8. n=194

Table 4.8 Business Start-up After Completing VTC Training

Started Business	**Frequency (n=194)**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	87	44.8
No	107	55.2
Total	**194**	**100**

Table 4.8 reveals that less than half of VTC graduates (44.8%) had started a business since completing their training, while the majority (55.2%) had not. This finding is significant because it directly challenges the foundational assumption of the Training for Enterprise model that vocational training will naturally translate into self-employment and job creation (MYDIE, 2010).

During focus group discussions, graduates who had not started businesses articulated various reasons, consistent with quantitative findings presented later in Table 4.10. One participant explained

"I finished my welding course two years ago. I can weld, I have the certificate, but I do not have my own equipment. I work for someone else at their workshop. To start my own business, I need a welding machine, gas, safety gear that is over $500. Where will I get that?"

Another graduate shared

"I did IT at Chinhoyi Urban. I thought I would start a small cyber cafe or phone repair shop. But when I finished, I realised I only know basic computer skills. I don't know how to repair phones or run a business. So now I just use my skills to help friends and family sometimes."

4.4.2 Relationship Between Training and Business Activity

The study went on to gather data on the Relationship Between Training and Business Activity this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.9. n=87

Table 4.9 Relevance of Business to Training (Among Those Who Started Businesses, n=87)

Level of Relevance	**Frequency (n=87)**	**Percentage (%)**
Fully related	41	47.1
Partly related	28	32.2
Not related	18	20.7
Total	**87**	**100**

Among the 87 graduates who had started businesses, Table 4.9 indicates that 47.1% reported their business was fully related to the trade they studied, 32.2% reported it was partly related, and 20.7% reported no relationship between their business and their training. This finding suggests that for a substantial proportion of entrepreneurial graduates (52.9%), their business activities either partially or completely diverge from their formal training. This raises questions about the relevance of current course offerings to actual market opportunities in Chinhoyi.

A focus group participant who started a business unrelated to her training explained

"I trained in garment making, but I could not compete with the second-hand clothes from South Africa. People prefer cheap imported clothes over my designs. So I started selling vegetables at Chikangwe Market instead. At least I make some profit, but my training is wasted."

Conversely, a graduate who successfully used his training explained

"I did carpentry, and I started making furniture for people in my neighbourhood. I use exactly what I learned measuring, cutting, joining, finishing. The demand is there because people need chairs, tables, and wardrobes. My training directly helps me every day."

4.4.3 Business Sustainability and Profitability

The study went on to gather data on the **Business Sustainability and Profitability** this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.10. n=87

Table 4.10 Duration of Business Operation (n=87)

Operating Duration	**Frequency (n=87)**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than 6 months	18	20.7
6-12 months	24	27.6
1-2 years	29	33.3
More than 2 years	16	18.4
Total	**87**	**100**

Table 4.10 shows that among graduates who started businesses, 33.3% had been operating for 1-2 years, 27.6% for 6-12 months, 20.7% for less than 6 months, and 18.4% for more than two years. The relatively low proportion of businesses surviving beyond two years (18.4%) suggests that sustainability is a significant challenge for VTC graduate entrepreneurs

4.4.4 Average Monthly Profit from Business (n=87)

The study went on to gather data on the **Average Monthly Profit from business** this information was vital to assess relationship between courses taken by youth and youth entrepreneurship and to explore factors affecting the effectiveness of the VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development. The information is presented in table 4.11. n=87

Monthly Profit	**Frequency (n=87)**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than $50	31	35.6
$50-$150	34	39.1
$151-$300	16	18.4
More than $300	6	6.9
Total	**87**	**100**

The profitability data in Table 4.11 indicate that the majority of graduate entrepreneurs earn modest incomes from their businesses. Over one-third (35.6%) earn less than $50 per month, while 39.1% earn between $50 and $150. Only 6.9% earn more than $300 monthly. These figures suggest that while VTC training may enable some youth to start businesses, these enterprises often generate income at or near subsistence levels, raising questions about whether vocational training is achieving its poverty reduction objectives. During a focus group, one participant explained

"I make about $80 profit per month from my hairdressing business. It helps me buy food and pay for transport, but I cannot save to grow the business or rent a proper shop. I work from home. This is not the life I imagined after two years of training."

4.4.5 Entrepreneurial Mindset and Capability Development

The research also gathered data on the Entrepreneurial Mindset and capability development among VTC graduates. N=194

Table 4.12 Mean Scores for Entrepreneurial Mindset and Capability Items (Scale 1-5, n=194)

Theme	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Business identification skills	2.8	1.2	Slightly below neutral
Technical skills development	4.1	0.9	Agree
Business planning knowledge	2.3	1.4	Disagree
Commodity pricing	2.9	1.3	Slightly below neutral
Financial management skills	2.5	1.3	Disagree
Business confidence	3.2	1.2	Slightly above neutral

Table 4.12 presents mean scores for six items measuring entrepreneurial mindset and capabilities. The highest mean score (4.1) was for technical skills to produce goods/services indicating that graduates generally feel competent in the technical aspects of their trades. This finding is consistent with the VTCs' strength in practical skills training.

However, the lowest mean scores were for business planning (mean 2.3, disagree), that was financial management (mean 2.5, disagree), and identification of business skills (mean 2.8, below neutral). These findings reveal a critical gap while VTCs appear effective at developing technical

competencies, they are less successful at developing entrepreneurial competencies related to business planning, financial management, and opportunity recognition.

This pattern is consistent with a VTC trainer's observation

"Our students come out as excellent welders, carpenters, or hairdressers. They can produce quality work. But they don't know how to price that work to cover costs and make profit. They don't know how to market themselves. They don't know how to save and reinvest. These business skills are not taught properly."

Graduates possess technical capital but lack the complementary entrepreneurial capital needed to function effectively within the broader ecosystem. This partial human capital development represents a significant constraint on the effectiveness of VTCs as entrepreneurial development mechanisms.

4.4.5 Reasons for Not Starting a Business

The research also gathered data on the reasons for not starting a business among VTC graduates. The data is presented in table 4.13. N=107

Table 4.13 Main Reasons for Not Starting a Business n=107)

Reason	**Frequency (n=107)**	**Percentage (%)**
Lack of start-up capital	58	54.2
Prefer paid job	21	19.6
Lack of confidence	14	13.1
No viable business idea	9	8.4
Family pressure against self-employment	3	2.8
Other	2	1.9
Total	**107**	**100**

Table 4.13 shows that lack of start-up capital was cited by over half (54.2%) of graduates who had not started businesses as the main barrier. This was followed by preference for paid employment (19.6%), lack of confidence (13.1%), and no viable business idea (8.4%).

During a focus group, one participant elaborated

"We finish training with skills but empty pockets. The centre does not give us starting tools or money. Banks want collateral we don't have. There are government youth funds, but by the time the money comes, if it comes, you have already moved on or given up."

4.5 Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Vocational Training Centres in Enhancing Youth Entrepreneurial Development

The third research objective sought to explore the factors affecting the effectiveness of VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi. Drawing on the entrepreneurial ecosystem framework (Isenberg, 2010, Spigel, 2017, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021), this section examines factors across six domains policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital, and markets. Quantitative findings from Likert-scale items are presented alongside qualitative themes from interviews and focus group discussions.

4.5.1 Factors affecting effectiveness of VTCs

The research also gathered data on the factors affecting the effectiveness of VTCs Entrepreneurial Development. The information is presented in table 4.14. N=194

Table 4.14 Mean Scores for Factors Affecting Effectiveness (Scale 1-5, n=194)

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Availability of modern and functional training equipment	2.4	1.3	Disagree
Experienced trainers	2.6	1.2	Disagree
Course relevance	2.9	1.1	Slightly below neutral
Post-graduation mentorship	1.8	1.1	Strongly disagree
Access start-up loans/grants	1.6	0.9	Strongly disagree
Family/community supports youth self-employment	3.3	1.2	Slightly above neutral

Table 4.14 provides a quantitative overview of graduate perceptions regarding factors affecting

VTC effectiveness. The lowest scores were for " Access start-up loans/grants" (mean 1.6, strongly disagree) and "post-graduation mentorship" (mean 1.8, strongly disagree). These findings indicate critical gaps in post-training support, which are explored qualitatively below. The highest score was for "youth self-employment support" (mean 3.3, slightly above neutral), suggesting that cultural attitudes, while not overwhelmingly positive, are not the primary barrier.

The policy factors encompasses national and local regulatory frameworks, implementation of the Training for Enterprise model, and institutional support structures (Isenberg, 2010). Interviews with VTC administrators revealed that while the TFE policy is well-intentioned, implementation challenges severely constrain its effectiveness.

One administrator explained

"The TFE policy is good on paper. It says we should produce entrepreneurs, not job seekers. But implementing this requires resources we do not have. We are expected to have an 80% practical to 20% theory ratio, but our workshops lack equipment. We are expected to teach business skills, but our trainers have no business experience. The policy and reality are far apart."

Another administrator highlighted coordination challenges

"VTCs fall under the Ministry of Youth, but our graduates need to register businesses with the Registrar of Companies, get licenses from the local authority, and comply with tax regulations. There is no coordination between these institutions. A young person finishing training is thrown into a complex regulatory environment with no guidance."

These qualitative findings also align with the quantitative findings of the study.

The finance factors refers to the availability and accessibility of financial resources needed to start and sustain businesses (Isenberg, 2010, Fox and Thomas, 2016). The quantitative findings in Table 4.14 indicated that graduates strongly disagreed that they received help accessing start-up loans or grants (mean 1.6). This finding was strongly reinforced by qualitative data.

A focus group participant shared

"I applied for the Youth Empowerment Fund two years ago. I filled forms, provided my certificate, wrote a business plan. I am still waiting."

Another graduate explained the collateral barrier

"The bank told me they can give me a loan if I have something to put as security. What do I have? I live with my parents, I have no car, no house. My certificate is worthless to them. So I cannot borrow."

A VTC trainer acknowledged the institutional gap

"We train them to be entrepreneurs, but we have no relationship with any financial institution. There is no loan scheme specifically for our graduates. Even the government funds are so bureaucratic and slow that most youth give up before receiving anything."

These qualitative findings are consistent with the qualitative findings of the study.

The supports factors includes mentorship, business development services, incubators, and professional networks available to graduates after training (Spigel, 2017, Bridges et al., 2020). The quantitative findings in Table 4.14 indicated that the strongest disagreement was for post-graduation mentorship provision (mean 1.8). Qualitative data provided deeper insight into this gap.

One VTC administrator candidly admitted

"We have no formal mentorship programme. Once a student graduates, we may not see them again. We do not have the staff or mandate to follow up. If they come back with problems, we try to help, but it is informal, not systematic."

A graduate described the isolation after training

"When I finished, I felt like I was thrown into the deep end of the pool without knowing how to swim. No one from the centre called to check on me. No one introduced me to other business people. I had to figure everything out alone, and I made many expensive mistakes."

Another graduate noted the absence of peer networks

"We had classmates, but after finishing, we all scattered. There is no alumni association or WhatsApp group organised by the centre. We cannot learn from each other's successes or failures because we are isolated."

The absence of structured post-training support is a critical finding, as international research by Nabi et al. (2017) and Bridges et al. (2020) has consistently demonstrated that mentorship and follow-up support are key differentiators between programmes that achieve sustained entrepreneurial outcomes and those that do not. The Chinhoyi VTCs appear to operate what might be termed a "train and release" model, where graduates are trained but then left to navigate the entrepreneurial journey alone.

The human capital factors encompasses the skills, knowledge, and competencies developed through training (Becker, 1964, Dube and Xie, 2018). The quantitative findings in Table 4.14 indicated that respondents disagreed that trainers had real business or industry experience (mean 2.6) and that equipment was modern and functional (mean 2.4). Qualitative data elaborated on these constraints.

One trainer self-reflected

"I have been teaching carpentry for fifteen years. I am a good teacher, but I have never owned a carpentry business. I have never had to find customers, manage cash flow, or pay taxes. So when students ask me about these things, I can only tell them what I read in books, not from experience."

An administrator acknowledged the equipment challenge

"Our welding workshop has machines from the 1990s. Some are held together with tape and hope. Modern welding uses different equipment and techniques. Our students learn on old technology, then go into a market where customers expect modern quality. It is not fair to them."

A focus group participant described the impact of outdated equipment

"I learned to weld on an old transformer machine that overheats after twenty minutes. When I finished, a friend let me use his modern inverter machine. I did not know how to adjust it properly. My welds were poor. I had to learn again from scratch."

The market factors refers to local economic conditions, demand for goods and services, access to customers, supply chains, and the competitive landscape (Isenberg, 2010, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021). The quantitative finding in Table 4.14 indicated that respondents were slightly below neutral regarding whether courses matched customer demand in Chinhoyi (mean 2.9). Qualitative data revealed a more complex picture.

A VTC administrator described the challenge of market alignment

"We try to respond to what the market wants, but it is difficult. The market changes quickly. Last year, mobile phone repair was very profitable. Now many people have learned that skill, and prices have dropped. We cannot change our curriculum every six months."

A graduate described competition from imported goods

"Chinhoyi is not a big town. There are only so many people who need furniture, only so many who need hair done. When too many of us start the same business, we compete for the same customers, and everyone earns less." (FGD Participant, Male, Carpentry)

However, one graduate identified a market niche

"I noticed that there was no one making school uniforms for the primary schools in my area.

Headmasters were buying from Harare, paying high transport costs. I approached three schools and got contracts. My garment making training was perfect for this. You have to find the gap." (FGD Participant, Female, Garment Making)

These findings highlight the importance of market awareness and opportunity recognition precisely the entrepreneurial capabilities that the previous section identified as underdeveloped in current VTC programmes. The markets domain in Chinhoyi presents both constraints (competition from imports, limited market size, price sensitivity) and opportunities (niche markets, local institutional demand). Graduates who can identify and exploit market opportunities appear more successful, but this capability is not systematically developed through current training.

The cultural factors encompasses societal attitudes, norms, and values towards entrepreneurship, including tolerance of risk and failure and the social legitimacy of self-employment (Spigel, 2017, GEM, 2022). The quantitative finding in Table 4.14 indicated that respondents were slightly above neutral regarding family and community support for youth self-employment (mean 3.3). Qualitative data provided nuance.

A focus group participant described mixed family attitudes

"My parents were disappointed when I did not go to university like my cousins. They saw VTC as a lower option. When I started my hairdressing business from the dining room, they complained about the noise and chemicals. But now that I bring money home, they are proud. So the attitude changed with results."

Another graduate explained community perceptions

"In our neighbourhood, if you say you are an entrepreneur, people think you are just 'doing something' because you have no job. A proper job is working in an office, wearing a suit, getting a monthly salary. Self-employment is seen as what you do while you wait for a real job."

A VTC trainer observed generational differences

"Older people in Chinhoyi still value formal employment. They grew up during the colonial era when a government job meant security. Young people are more open to entrepreneurship because they see that even graduates with degrees are unemployed. But changing deep cultural attitudes takes time."

These findings suggest that cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship in Chinhoyi are evolving but remain ambivalent. While not the strongest barrier, cultural factors do influence graduate decisions and family support. The finding that family support increased when businesses demonstrated financial success (mean 3.3) suggests that performance credibility can overcome initial cultural resistance.

4.5.8 Summary of Factors Affecting Effectiveness

This section of the study also gathered information on the factors affecting the effectiveness of VTCs. The data was gathered and presented in table 4.15

Table 4.15 Summary of Ecosystem Domain Assessments for Chinhoyi VTCs

Factor	Assessment	Key Constraints
Weak Policy	Weak implementation	Gap between TFE policy practice, poor inter-agency coordination
Poor Financial support	Severe constraint	No access to start-up capital, collateral requirements, bureaucratic youth funds
Weak Supports	Critical gap	No formal mentorship, no follow-up, no alumni networks
Low Human Capital	Partial strength	Technical skills good, entrepreneurial skills weak, outdated equipment, trainers lack business experience
Weak Markets	Mixed	Local demand exists but limited, competition from imports, requires opportunity recognition skills
Culture	Neutral to positive	Mixed family attitudes, evolves with demonstrated success, not primary barrier

Table 4.15 synthesises the assessment of each entrepreneurial ecosystem domain based on the findings. The picture that emerges is of an ecosystem with critical gaps in finance and supports, partial strengths and weaknesses in human capital and policy, and mixed conditions in markets and culture. This multi-domain assessment explains why technical training alone has not produced the anticipated entrepreneurial outcomes graduates are being trained in a system where the broader ecosystem does not adequately support the translation of skills into sustainable enterprises.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the findings of the study on the effectiveness of vocational training centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. The chapter also captured responses from key informants. The findings collectively demonstrate that VTCs in Chinhoyi are partially effective at developing technical skills but significantly less effective at developing entrepreneurial capabilities or supporting the transition from training to business ownership. The gaps identified are systemic, spanning multiple domains of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and suggest that piecemeal interventions focused only on training will be insufficient. The next chapter will present conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of findings, a summary of the key findings from the study on the effectiveness of vocational training centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. The chapter draws together the main empirical evidence presented in Chapter Four, organised according to the three research objectives. Following the summary, conclusions are drawn in response to each research question and the overarching aim of the study. Finally, practical and actionable recommendations are offered for policymakers, VTC administrators, financial institutions, and other stakeholders, along with suggestions for future research.

5.2 Discussion

The findings for the first research objective reveal that VTCs in Chinhoyi offer a range of technical and vocational courses, with garment making, hairdressing, welding, and carpentry being the most commonly taken by youth. This distribution reflects both gender dynamics in vocational training enrolment and student perceptions of local market opportunities. However, a critical finding is the significant gap between national TFE policy and implementation, with only one-third of graduates reporting exposure to entrepreneurship education. This finding aligns with the broader literature on African VTCs, where Maringe and Prew (2015) found that entrepreneurship integration remains a persistent challenge due to resource constraints, trainer capacity gaps, and curriculum overload. From an entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective (Isenberg, 2010), this finding suggests that the human capital domain is only partially addressed by current training provision, as graduates receive technical skills but may lack the complementary business competencies required for successful enterprise creation. This distribution is broadly consistent with national patterns reported by Bhebhe et al. (2015), who found that VTCs across Zimbabwe offer similar courses with varying enrolment levels based on local economic activities.

The findings for the second research objective reveal a nuanced and somewhat concerning picture regarding the relationship between courses taken and entrepreneurial outcomes. While VTCs in Chinhoyi appear effective at developing technical skills (mean 4.1), less than half of graduates had started businesses, and businesses that do exist often generate modest incomes as more than half earn less than $150 monthly and struggle with sustainability as less than a quarter have operated beyond two years. The gap between technical skill acquisition and entrepreneurial capability

development is stark, with graduates reporting low levels of business planning, financial management, and opportunity recognition skills. This finding aligns with global research by Bridges et al. (2020), who found that early-stage survival rates for youth-led businesses are often low without adequate post-training support.

Valerio et al. (2014) found that entrepreneurship education programmes that focus only on technical skills without addressing business competencies have limited impact on entrepreneurial outcomes. Similarly, Nabi et al. (2017) emphasised that effective entrepreneurship education must develop both cognitive (knowledge) and non-cognitive (attitudes, confidence) dimensions. The current findings suggest that VTCs in Chinhoyi are succeeding primarily on the technical dimension while falling short on the entrepreneurial dimension.

The findings highlight the critical importance of multiple factors working together so that VTCs are found to be effective. The human capital factors (training) alone is insufficient to produce entrepreneurial outcomes without corresponding support from the finance factors (access to capital), support factors (mentorship and business development services), and market factors (demand for graduates' products and services). These finding are also similar to those of (Isenberg, 2010, Stam and Van de Ven, 2021) who argued that the success of VTCs is a result of a number of factors. The high proportion of graduates citing lack of start-up capital as a barrier that is more than half suggests that the finance domain is particularly weak in Chinhoyi, effectively nullifying the potential benefits of vocational training for many youths. This is also similar to the results found by Van de Ven, (2021) in his studies.

The findings for the third research objective reveal that the effectiveness of VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi is constrained by multiple, interconnected factors across the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The most severe constraints are in the finance domain (lack of start-up capital) and supports domain (absence of mentorship and follow-up). These are followed by human capital limitations (trainer business experience, outdated equipment) and policy implementation gaps. Cultural factors appear to be the least constraining, with generally neutral to positive attitudes toward youth self-employment. Maringe and Prew (2015) identified inadequate funding, outdated equipment, and a shortage of trainers with business experience as

key constraints across African VTCs. Fox and Thomas (2016) documented that access to micro-finance and business development services is critical for translating training into entrepreneurial outcomes. The current findings confirm that these same constraints operate in the Chinhoyi context. These findings align with a research by Bhebhe et al. (2015) and Maraire and Munhande (2020), who documented severe resource constraints affecting VTCs across Zimbabwe. From a human capital perspective, the quality of training inputs trainer competence and equipment functionality directly affects the quality of graduate skills. Current constraints in both areas suggest that the human capital being produced by Chinhoyi VTCs may be of lower quality than policy intends. The finding is consistent with national concerns raised by Dube and Xie (2018), who argued that the anticipated entrepreneurial outcomes of VTCs are not being fully realised. From an entrepreneurial ecosystem perspective (Stam and Van de Ven, 2021), the findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of VTCs cannot be assessed or improved by focusing only on training provision. The ecosystem approach reveals that outcomes emerge from the interaction of multiple domains. Even if VTC training quality were perfect, graduates would still struggle to start businesses without access to capital (finance domain), without mentorship and support (supports domain), and in a market environment where demand is limited and competition from imports is intense (markets domain). The qualitative data also revealed an important insight successful graduates tend to be those who proactively navigate the ecosystem gaps. The graduate who approached schools directly for uniform contracts, the graduate whose family support increased after business success, and the graduate who learned modern welding techniques from a friend all demonstrate proactive strategies. This suggests that while the ecosystem is constraining, individual agency and opportunity recognition capabilities can partially compensate. However, relying on individual proactivity is not a sustainable policy solution, systemic gaps require systemic interventions.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion the study found out that VTCs in Chinhoyi offer a range of technical courses, with garment making, hairdressing, welding, and carpentry being the most popular among youth. This popularity is driven by visible market presence in Chinhoyi (for example, hairdressing salons, garment makers at Chikangwe Market) and traditional gender roles. However, the study concludes that there is a fundamental disconnect between national TFE policy and local implementation

regarding entrepreneurship education. With only one-third of graduates receiving any entrepreneurship training, VTCs in Chinhoyi are effectively producing technical workers rather than the entrepreneurs envisioned by policy. This represents a critical failure in the human capital domain of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, as graduates emerge with incomplete capabilities that do not match the requirements for successful self-employment. The study concludes that while VTCs in Chinhoyi are effective at developing technical skills, they are largely ineffective at translating those skills into sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes. The finding that only 44.8% of graduates start businesses, and that among those who do, the majority earn subsistence-level incomes (74.7% earn less than $150 monthly) and fail to survive beyond two years (only 18.4% operating beyond two years), indicates that the Training for Enterprise model is not achieving its intended purpose in Chinhoyi. The study further concludes that the absence of integrated entrepreneurship education is the primary explanatory factor for the weak relationship between training and entrepreneurship. Graduates possess technical competence but lack business planning, financial management, pricing, and opportunity recognition skills. This partial human capital development means that even when graduates start businesses, they lack the capabilities to make those businesses profitable or sustainable. The predominance of capital constraints (54.2%) as the reported barrier masks a deeper issue even if capital were available, many graduates would lack the business skills to deploy it effectively. The study concludes that the effectiveness of VTCs in enhancing youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi is constrained by multiple, interconnected failures across the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The most severe constraints are in the finance and supports domains, where graduates receive neither the capital nor the mentorship needed to transition from training to business ownership. These are followed by human capital limitations (outdated equipment, trainers without business experience) and policy implementation gaps. Cultural factors are the least constraining. The study concludes that the current approach to vocational training in Chinhoyi operates on a flawed linear assumption that providing technical skills alone will produce entrepreneurs. The findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship outcomes emerge from the interaction of multiple ecosystem domains, and that even high-quality technical training cannot compensate for the absence of accessible finance, post-training mentorship, and supportive market conditions. The "train and release" model currently operating fails to recognise that entrepreneurship is a system-level outcome, not an individual-level output of training. Finally, the study concludes that the research gap identified in Chapter Two has been addressed localised,

empirical evidence now exists demonstrating how global principles and national policies are translated (or fail to be translated) into entrepreneurial outcomes in Chinhoyi. The findings confirm that the patterns observed at national level policy implementation gaps, resource constraints, weak post-training support manifest acutely in this specific context.

5.4 Recommendations

- Policymakers should issue a directive requiring all VTC courses to dedicate a minimum of 20% of training time to practical entrepreneurship education, including business planning, financial management, pricing, marketing, and opportunity recognition.
- Policymakers should work with the Ministry of Finance and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to establish a dedicated, accessible loan facility for VTC graduates.
- Policymakers should establish a formal coordination framework that creates a single "youth entrepreneurship window" where graduates can complete all registration, licensing, and compliance requirements at one location with simplified procedures and reduced fees.
- VTC administrators should incorporate business simulations and practical projects into existing courses, inviting local entrepreneurs to speak and mentor students, organising field trips to successful local businesses, and requiring students to develop business plans as part of their final assessments.
- Banks and microfinance institutions should develop lending products specifically designed for VTC graduates, recognising that this population lacks traditional collateral but possesses marketable technical skills.
- Future research should use experimental or quasi-experimental designs to test the effectiveness of specific interventions identified in this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A Structured Questionnaire for VTC Graduates

Introduction

Dear participant, I am Rueben T. Chagwinya, a student at Bindura University of Science Education. I am conducting research on the effectiveness of vocational training centres on youth entrepreneurial development in Chinhoyi. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. The questionnaire takes about 1520 minutes. By completing this questionnaire, you give consent, you may stop at any time and no names will be recorded.

Instructions Tick (✓) or fill in the blank spaces where applicable.

Section A Demographics

A1. Age

☐ 1824 ☐ 2530 ☐ 3135 ☐ 36+

A2. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

A3. Highest education before VTC

☐ Primary ☐ 'O' Level ☐ 'A' Level ☐ Other (specify) _____

A4. Which VTC did you attend?

☐ Chinhoyi Urban VTC ☐ Chinhoyi Rural Training Centre ☐ Other _____

Section B Courses Taken

B1. Which trade/course did you complete? (Tick one main course)

☐ Welding and Fabrication ☐ Carpentry and Joinery ☐ Garment Making/Design

☐ Hairdressing and Beauty ☐ Information Technology ☐ Motor Mechanics

☐ Catering and Hospitality ☐ Agriculture ☐ Other _____

B2. Year of completion _____

B3. Duration of course

☐ 6 months ☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ Other _____

B4. Did your course include a dedicated entrepreneurship/business module?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Section C Entrepreneurial Mindset and Capabilities

Rate your agreement 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
C1. My VTC training helped me identify business opportunities					
C2. I gained the technical skills to produce goods/services					
C3. I learned how to write a simple business plan					
C4. I know how to price my products/services for profit					
C5. I learned how to manage business finances (record keeping, budgeting)					
C6. My training increased my confidence to start a business					

Section D Entrepreneurial Outcomes

D1. Since completing VTC training, have you started any business (formal or informal)?

☐ Yes (go to D2) ☐ No (skip to D6)

D2. What type of business? _____

D3. Is your business related to the trade you studied?

☐ Fully related ☐ Partly related ☐ Not related

D4. How long has your business been operating?

☐ <6 months ☐ 612 months ☐ 12 years ☐ >2 years

D5. On average, monthly profit from business

☐ <$50 ☐ $50$150 ☐ $151$300 ☐ >$300

D6. If you have NOT started a business, what could be the main reason (tick one)

☐ Lack of start-up capital ☐ Lack of confidence ☐ No viable business idea

☐ Family pressure against self-employment ☐ Prefer paid job ☐ Other _____

Section E Factors Affecting Effectiveness

Rate your agreement 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Rate your agreement 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree

Statement 1 2 3 4 5	1	2	3	4	5
E1. The training equipment at my VTC was modern and functional					
E2. Trainers had real business/industry experience					
E3. The courses offered matched what customers in Chinhoyi demand					
E4. My VTC provided post-graduation mentorship					
E5. I received help to access start-up loans/grants ☐					
E6. My family/community supports youth self-employment					

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Appendix B Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Key Informants (VTC Administrators and Trainers)

Target VTC managers, programme coordinators, senior trainers (minimum 3 years experience)

Duration 3045 minutes

Consent Verbal/written recorded separately

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I am Reuben Chagwinya from Bindura University. This research examines how effective vocational training centres in Chinhoyi are helping youth become entrepreneurs. Your insights are confidential. May I record this interview for accuracy?

Questions Mapped to Research Objectives

A. Courses Offered and Relevance

1. What courses are currently offered at your centre, and which ones are most popular among youth? Why those?

2. How often is the curriculum reviewed, and who is involved (for example, local businesses, former graduates)?

3. To what extent is entrepreneurship integrated into technical courses? Can you give an example?

B. Relationship Between Training and Entrepreneurship

4. In your observation, what proportion of graduates start businesses within two years of completing training?

5. What differences do you see between graduates from different trades regarding business success?

6. Do you track graduate outcomes? If yes, what do the data show about business survival rates?

C. Factors Affecting Effectiveness Ecosystem Domains

Policy (national and local)

7. How does the national Training for Enterprise (TFE) policy influence daily operations at your

centre? What works well and what does not?

8. What financial barriers do graduates face when trying to start businesses? Does your centre link them to any loan or grant schemes?

9. What post-training support do you provide (mentorship, business incubation, networking)? If none, why not?

10. How many trainers have owned a business themselves? How are trainers trained in entrepreneurship teaching?

11. How do you ensure that courses match what the Chinhoyi local market needs? Give an example where a course was changed because of market demand.

12. How do families and the community in Chinhoyi view youth self-employment? Is it seen as a success or a last resort?

D. Closing

13. If you had three budget-free changes to make your VTC more effective for youth entrepreneurship, what would they be?

14. Is there anything else you think I should know?

Thank you. May I contact you for clarification if needed?

Appendix C Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for VTC Graduates

Group size 6 participants
Duration 60-75 minutes
Setting Neutral location (community hall, SME park)
Materials Voice recorder, flip chart, markers

Facilitator Reuben Chagwinya
Note-taker (Research assistant)

Opening (5 min)

Welcome. Thank you for coming. We are here to talk about your experiences after vocational training what helped you succeed in business and what made it hard. There are no wrong answers. Everything you say is confidential. Please respect each other's views. I will record so I don't miss anything. You can leave at any time. Let's go around and say first name and trade studied.

Warm-up (5 min)

What business are you currently doing (or what business did you try to start)?

Section 1 Course Utility (Objective 1 and 2 15 min)

1. Which specific skills from your course have you actually used in business? Which skills have you never used?
2. Did your course teach you how to find customers or price your work? If yes, how? If no, what was missing?

Section 2 Barriers and Enablers

Let’s talk about what helped or blocked you after training.

3. Capital How did you get money to start? (Savings, family, loans?) If no loan, why not?
4. Equipment and Space Did your training give you the tools or workshop access to start? If not, where did you get tools?
5. Mentorship Did anyone guide you after graduation a trainer, family member, or business owner? How useful was that?
6. Market access How easy or hard is it to sell your products/services in Chinhoyi? What makes it hard?
7. Government/policy Did you know of any youth enterprise schemes? Did you apply? What happened?

Section 3 Success and Failure Experiences

8. For those with a business now What single factor most helped you succeed?
9. For those who tried but failed or never started What was the main reason? (Probe capital, family pressure, lack of customers, fear?)
10. If you could redesign the VTC training What would you add, remove, or change to make sure more graduates become successful entrepreneurs?

Closing
Thank you. We have covered (1) what skills helped, (2) barriers like capital and mentorship, (3) your suggestions. Is there anything we missed that is important for understanding VTC effectiveness in Chinhoyi?

Your names will not appear anywhere. Thank you again.

Appendix D Observation Checklist

Site _____ Date _____

Check observable factors (tick or note)

Factor	Observed?	Notes
Workshop equipment functional and modern	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Students engaged in practical tasks (not just watching)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Presence of entrepreneurship posters / business noticeboard	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Trainers demonstrate industry experience	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Linkages with local businesses evident (flyers, signs)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Clean, safe training environment	☐ Yes ☐ No	