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**The Realities of Entrepreneurship in Africa: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations**

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**Abstract**

In African countries such as Ghana, with a greater youthful population, youth entrepreneurship becomes an innovative approach to reducing unemployment, crime, and brain drain, and contributes to the overall gross domestic product (GDP) and socioeconomic development. It is therefore significant to understand the realities that influence entrepreneurship among the youth. This study, therefore, explored the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship in Ghana by focusing specifically on youth engaged in Agri-business. The study employed the qualitative approach and the phenomenological design. Data was gathered from 21 youth participants and 4 key informants. The key challenges of youth entrepreneurship observed in this study include limited access to finance & capital constraints, infrastructure and technological limitations, limited market access and price volatility, gaps in policy and institutional support, and skills and knowledge gaps. The study, however, observed emerging opportunities such as market demand and value chain opportunities, technological advancements and innovations, support programmes and mentorship, and personal motivations and entrepreneurial initiative. The study recommends that the government of Ghana and other stakeholders develop and execute strategies that will make credit facilities for young entrepreneurs more flexible and affordable, and improved road networks, irrigation channels, power, and storage would boost production, provide a ready market and stable prices for good produced by youth entrepreneurs, and provide training and workshops to bridge gaps in skills and knowledge.

**Keywords:** Agri-business, Challenges, Entrepreneurship, Opportunities, Youth,

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is a key contributor to economic growth as it encourages innovation and generates jobs and promotes productivity in industries (Urbano et al., 2020; Uleanya, 2020). Entrepreneurship in most developing economies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, has been put forward as a viable solution to the continuous problems of youth unemployment, poverty, and economic inequality (Baah-Boateng, 2016; Awad, 2019). As traditional labour markets struggle to absorb the growing number of young people entering the workforce, attention has shifted toward entrepreneurship as a viable pathway for economic participation and self-reliance.

In Ghana, this situation is especially pronounced. The country continues to experience a demographic shift characterised by a rapidly expanding youth population, many of whom face limited access to formal employment opportunities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). Although different policy interventions and employment programmes have been implemented, their effectiveness has not sufficiently countered the magnitude of the challenge. As a result, increasing emphasis has been placed on entrepreneurship as a means of unlocking the economic potential of young people.

In this broader framework, Agribusiness has emerged as a promising industry. Besides direct agricultural production, agribusiness is a wide term that encompasses all the value chain such as processing, distribution, and marketing. This diversity offers multiple access points to reach youth and an opportunity to innovate and create value (Cieslik et al., 2022). Governments and development partners have started a series of programmes to attract youth to agribusiness over the past few years, as the sector has the potential to contribute to food security, employment, and economic transformation (Agyapong, 2020; Pauw, 2022).

However, the participation of the youth in agribusiness remains below the desired threshold and those who participate do so with significant difficulties. Some of the limitations which have been identified in previous studies are inaccessibility to finance, infrastructural constraints and inappropriate institutional support (Boye et al., 2024; Ofosu-Appiah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has been inclined to consider macro-level trends or quantifiable indicators, with little done towards exploring the lived experiences of young entrepreneurs and how they negotiate these issues within a particular local context.

This study therefore aimed to fill this gap by examining the facts about youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness in Ghana, and specifically the challenges and the opportunities that young entrepreneurs can exploit. Through qualitative, phenomenological approach, the research offers insightful, experience-based knowledge of the ways young people access agribusiness and how structural factors, resource limitations, and personal abilities interplay to influence their entrepreneurial experiences.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To interpret youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness, a multi-dimensional perspective is necessary that not only focuses on individual potentiality but also the structural and institutional context in which entrepreneurial actions are undertaken. To do this, the study is based on three complementary theoretical perspectives, i.e., Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Human Capital Theory. These frameworks offered a logical foundation on how to interpret the challenges and opportunities that young agribusinesses have in Ghana.

The Institutional Theory provides a convenient starting point in studying the influence of formal and informal structures on the entrepreneurial behaviour. Policies, regulations, norms, and support systems are crucial within institutions that either enable or inhibit entrepreneurial activity (North, 1990; Scott, 2014). In the context of developing economies, weak institutional frameworks, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and uneven policy implementation often create barriers for young entrepreneurs attempting to access financial support, training programmes, or market opportunities (Urbano et al., 2020). In the current research, the challenges that participants highlighted regarding their access to government initiatives, application processes, and access to timely information indicate institutional gaps and ineffectiveness. These findings are consistent with the argument that entrepreneurship is not a singular phenomenon but is highly institutionalized and affects incentives and access to resources.

In line with this view, the Resource-Based View (RBV) sheds light on the role of accessibility to and control over resources in determining entrepreneurial performance and sustainability. The RBV suggests that competitive advantage of firms, and by extension, entrepreneurs, are based on resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). To young agribusiness entrepreneurs, they may comprise financial resources, access to technology, infrastructure and market connections. The findings of this research, especially those connected with the lack of access to credit, poor infrastructure, and insufficient technological potential, can be viewed in terms of the RBV as limitations to the resource pool required to develop an enterprise. In circumstances where these resources are either limited or unevenly distributed, young entrepreneurs must look to informal networks and personal savings, which restricts scalability and innovation. This supports the thesis that the scarcity of resources has been a hallmark of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in most African situations (Bates & Robb, 2016).

Human Capital Theory also contributes to the analysis as it addresses the contribution that knowledge, skills, and experience make to the entrepreneurial outcomes. Becker (1964) claimed that investments in education, training, and acquisition of skills increase the productivity and the ability of individuals to produce economic value. Human capital affects decision-making, opportunity recognition, and effective management of business activities in the context of entrepreneurship (Davidsson, 2016). The gaps in financial literacy, business management skills, and market knowledge identified in the study support the significance of human capital in the success of youth-led agribusiness ventures. Although a significant number of the participants were highly motivated and had a good understanding of the field of farming, the lack of formal

training on some of the areas like record-keeping, pricing strategies and market analysis limited their chances of maximising returns and diversifying their operations.

Combined, the three theoretical perspectives offer a comprehensive approach towards the explanation of youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness. The Institutional Theory is used to focus on the external environment in which entrepreneurs are involved, the Resource-Based View is used to explain the impact of availability of tangible and intangible resources on the performance of business, and the Human Capital Theory is used to focus on the contribution of individual capabilities and skills. The combination of these frameworks allows the study to go beyond a simple descriptive report of the problems and opportunities to provide a more detailed explanation of the interaction of structural, organisational and individual factors to drive entrepreneurial performance in the agribusiness sector in Ghana.

### **Literature Review**

Entrepreneurship is now being viewed as an essential source of economic growth, employment, and innovation, especially in developing economies like sub-Saharan Africa (Urbano et al., 2020; Uleanya, 2020). In this framework, policy and scholarly research have focused on youth entrepreneurship as a policy solution to increasing unemployment and economic insecurity among the youth (Baah-Boateng, 2016; Awad, 2019). Agribusiness has become a potential area of youth participation in Ghana and other African countries since it has the potential to create jobs along various agricultural value chains (Cieslik et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). Nonetheless, even with the increased attention, the realities that influence youth involvement in agribusiness are complicated and unequal.

The literature on structural constraints of youth entrepreneurs is significant and access to finance has been found to be one of the significant barriers. Research has demonstrated that young entrepreneurs usually find it hard to get credit because of high-interest rates, absence of collateral, and perceived risk by the financial institutions (Bates and Robb, 2016; Dzisi, 2014). The African setting exacerbates this issue due to the lack of developed financial markets and the scarcity of customized financial products for youth-based businesses (Agyapong, 2020). These not only restrain business start-up but also limit growth and innovation, which further strengthens the trends of small-scale, subsistence-driven entrepreneurship.

In addition to financial constraints, the market accessibility and price volatility have also been mentioned as crucial issues in agribusiness. Empirical literature indicates that smallholder and young entrepreneurs tend to be in fragmented and informal market structures, where price making is shaped by the actions of intermediaries and information asymmetry (Boye et al., 2024; Ofosu-Appiah et al., 2025). Lack of well-developed market connections and sound pricing systems leads to uncertainty that does not incentivize long-term investment and strategic planning. Moreover, infrastructure shortages (poor road systems, lack of storage, and unreliable electricity) have been identified to raise transaction costs and post-harvest losses, thus compromising profitability (World Bank, 2025; Ofosu-Appiah et al., 2025).

The institutional and policy environments have also been given a lot of attention with regard to their influence on entrepreneurial outcomes. A number of African countries have implemented government-led initiatives such as training programmes, subsidies, and funding schemes to encourage youth involvement in agriculture (Agyapong, 2020; Pauw, 2022). While these interventions demonstrate a commitment to supporting youth entrepreneurship, their effectiveness has been questioned due to issues of accessibility, bureaucratic complexity, and uneven implementation (Geza et al., 2022). Studies indicate that many young entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural areas, remain excluded from these opportunities due to limited awareness and logistical barriers (Boye et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of institutional efficiency and inclusiveness in determining the success of entrepreneurship policies. In addition to external constraints, the literature has emphasised the importance of human capital in shaping entrepreneurial success. Skills gaps in areas such as financial management, marketing, and business planning have been identified as key limitations among youth entrepreneurs (Chalidana et al., 2020; Adeyanju et al., 2023). Although most of the youths are well equipped with practical knowledge in agriculture, the absence of formal training in enterprise management usually limits their capacity to move out of subsistence farming to commercially viable agribusiness ventures. This is consistent with broader findings that education, training, and experience are important factors that improve entrepreneurial skills and enrich company performance (Davidsson, 2016).

In spite of these, there are also emerging opportunities in the agribusiness sector as noted in the literature. Urbanisation and population growth have led to a rise in the demand of agricultural products, which has provided new markets to young entrepreneurs (Zhang et al., 2024). Technological advancements, particularly in mobile communication and digital platforms, have further expanded access to market information, financial services, and innovative farming techniques (Irungu et al., 2015). In addition, mentorship programmes and entrepreneurial support initiatives have been shown to enhance confidence, knowledge, and networking opportunities among youth participants (Adeyanju et al., 2023). These trends indicate that although the limitations are still significant, the entrepreneurial environment is burgeoning to create new opportunities of youth involvement.

Despite the increasing body of research, there are still some gaps in the literature. First, a significant portion of the current research on youth entrepreneurship in Africa is largely quantitative or macro-level, with indicators like employment, income, or firm performance (Avudufu, 2022; Boye et al., 2024). Although these studies are important, they tend to ignore the lived experiences, perceptions, and adaptive strategies of youthful entrepreneurs who act within certain local settings. Second, structural-individual level factors are not well integrated in a single analytic system. The literature on the subject tend more to study financial, institutional, or human capital issues separately, than to investigate their interplay to drive entrepreneurial performance. Third, context-specific qualitative studies on youth involvement in agribusiness in Ghana, especially in a value chain approach, are a dearth.

This paper aims to fill these gaps by incorporating a qualitative, phenomenological research strategy to examine the lived experiences of young entrepreneurs in the Ghanaian agribusiness industry. The combination of the perspectives of the Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View and the Human Capital Theory allows the study to bring a more comprehensive picture of the interaction of structural conditions, resource limitations, and individual capabilities that culminate to shape entrepreneurial experiences and entrepreneurial outcomes.

## **Methods and Materials**

### *Research approach*

A qualitative research approach was employed to explore the realities of youth entrepreneurship in the agribusiness sector of Ghana. The choice of a qualitative research approach was based on the need to gain a deeper insight into the participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies within the context of their entrepreneurial activities (Klingsieck et al., 2013). The qualitative approach helped the researcher to gain insight into the underlying reasons, difficulties, and responses of the youth in agriculture (Hesse-Biber, 2010). It provided descriptive information about the social, economic, and cultural issues underlying youth entrepreneurship in agriculture.

### *Research Design*

The research design was phenomenological. Particularly, phenomenology fits well in the research that seeks to comprehend the way people interpret and derive meaning to their experiences (Sloan and Bowe, 2014). In this regard, the design helped the researchers to address the subjective realities of young agripreneurs, including how they perceive the issues of financial constraints, market accessibility, and policy barriers; and how they recognise and exploit the emerging opportunities. The study gives context-specific data by relying on the lived experiences of participants, thus offering data that previous quantitative studies did not take into account (Hesdorffer et al., 2012).

### *Population of the Study*

The target population was the youth entrepreneurs who were between the ages of 18-35 years of age and were actively involved in agribusiness activities in selected areas in Ghana. These operations involved crop production, livestock production, aquaculture, agro-processing and agricultural technology projects. Besides the youth entrepreneurs, the relevant institutions like the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP), and the selected non-governmental organisations that assist the youth in agribusiness were also included as key informants. The addition of practitioners and institutional actors allowed for understanding the entrepreneurial ecosystem more effectively.

### *Sampling technique and Sample size*

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling methodology to identify those who had the relevant experience and could offer information-based insight into youth agribusiness (Patton, 2002). The selection criteria were that they should be within the set youth age bracket, actively engaged in agribusiness, and have operated a business for at least one year.

The snowball sampling method was also applied to supplement purposive sampling whereby initial participants referred other qualified youth entrepreneurs in their networks. This method was especially effective in reaching out to the participants in various regions and agribusiness value chains such as the Volta, Ashanti, Eastern, and Northern Regions.

The study involved 22 youth entrepreneurs and 4 key informants. The size of the sample was informed by the concept of data saturation whereby further data collection would not provide new information or themes (Guest et al., 2006). This provided depth and variety of views in the study.

### **Data Collection process**

A combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) were used to collect data. The youth entrepreneurs were interviewed in semi-structured interviews to provide detailed information on their experiences, challenges, and strategies in agribusiness. Open ended questions were used which allowed for both flexibility and consistency across interviews.

To capture shared experiences and collective perspectives, three FGDs consisting of five participants each were carried out. The FGDs allowed participants to interact, reflect, and build on each other's responses, thereby enriching the data (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from MoFA, NEIP, and NGOs to provide institutional perspectives and validate emerging themes from the youth participants.

All interviews were conducted at locations convenient to participants and lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. With participants' consent, all sessions were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to capture contextual observations and non-verbal cues.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis followed the six-phase thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It started with familiarising the data whereby audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and read over several times to be immersed into the data.

This was followed by initial coding where meaningful sections of texts were identified and related to the research objectives. These codes were carefully structured and analysed to find patterns by which preliminary themes were developed. The themes were then checked, narrowed down, and succinctly defined to maintain coherence and consistency throughout the data.

All through the analysis, the researchers took care to make sure that the themes properly captured the accounts of the participants and also to enable interpretive insights. The process was iterative, allowing for refining the categories and enabling deeper engagement with the data.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

To ensure the rigour and credibility of the study, several strategies were employed in line with established qualitative research standards (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- **Credibility** was enhanced through triangulation of data sources (interviews, FGDs, and KIIs) and the use of verbatim quotations to reflect participants' voices.
- **Dependability** was ensured by maintaining a clear and transparent research process, including documentation of data collection and analysis procedures.
- **Confirmability** was achieved by minimising researcher bias through careful interpretation of data and reliance on participants' narratives.
- **Transferability** was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and processes, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to similar contexts.

These measures collectively strengthened the reliability and validity of the findings and ensured that the study met acceptable standards for qualitative research.

### **Findings and Analysis**

This study set out to explore the realities of youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness in Ghana, with particular attention to both the challenges encountered and the opportunities leveraged by young entrepreneurs. The analysis revealed a set of interconnected themes, reflecting both structural constraints and emerging possibilities within the sector.

#### **1. Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness**

##### *Limited Access to Finance and Capital Constraints*

Access to finance emerged as one of the most persistent and limiting challenges confronting youth entrepreneurs. Across interviews and group discussions, participants consistently highlighted difficulties in securing loans due to high interest rates, collateral requirements, and perceived risk by financial institutions.

Many participants indicated that, in practice, their businesses were sustained largely through personal savings, family contributions, and informal borrowing. This reliance on informal financing structures significantly constrained their ability to expand operations or invest in improved inputs and technologies. One participant reflected on this limitation, noting that attempts to scale production were often stalled by the inability to meet formal lending requirements.

From an analytical standpoint, this pattern suggests that financial exclusion is not merely an individual constraint but a structural barrier embedded within the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem. The lack of accessible credit reduces the capacity of young entrepreneurs to transition from subsistence-level operations to more commercially viable enterprises.

*Limited Market Access and Price Volatility*

Another major challenge identified was the instability of markets and the difficulty in accessing reliable buyers. Participants described a situation in which market conditions were largely unpredictable, with prices often dictated by intermediaries rather than producers.

This imbalance in bargaining power created uncertainty and, in many cases, discouraged reinvestment. Even when production levels were high, the absence of structured market systems and adequate storage facilities led to post-harvest losses or forced sales at unfavourable prices.

The findings suggest that market inefficiencies are closely linked to information asymmetry and infrastructural gaps. Without access to timely market information or organised distribution channels, young entrepreneurs operate in conditions that limit profitability and long-term planning.

*Infrastructure and Technological Constraints*

Participants also emphasised the role of infrastructural deficits in shaping their business outcomes. Poor road networks, unreliable electricity, inadequate water supply, and lack of storage facilities were repeatedly identified as factors that increased operational costs and reduced efficiency.

In addition, limited access to modern farming technologies—such as mechanised equipment, irrigation systems, and digital tools—restricted productivity and competitiveness. While some participants demonstrated awareness of technological solutions, the cost of acquisition remained a significant barrier.

These findings point to a broader structural issue, where infrastructural and technological limitations not only affect production but also reinforce existing inequalities between small-scale youth entrepreneurs and larger, better-resourced actors.

*Gaps in Policy and Institutional Support*

Although several government and institutional initiatives exist to support youth entrepreneurship, participants reported uneven access to these programmes. Bureaucratic procedures, limited awareness, and geographical disparities were cited as key obstacles.

In many cases, opportunities such as grants, training programmes, and support schemes were perceived as being more accessible to those in urban areas or those with prior connections. As a result, some participants relied on informal networks for information, which led to missed opportunities.

This suggests that the challenge is not necessarily the absence of policy interventions, but rather the effectiveness of their implementation and accessibility. Institutional support, while present, appears fragmented and insufficiently inclusive.

### *Skills and Knowledge Gaps*

A further constraint identified in the study relates to gaps in business and technical skills. While many participants possessed practical knowledge of farming, they often lacked competencies in areas such as financial management, record-keeping, marketing, and pricing strategies.

This limitation affected their ability to make informed business decisions and optimise returns. Some participants described learning through trial and error or informal mentorship, which, although helpful, was not always sufficient for sustained business growth.

From an analytical perspective, this highlights the importance of integrating entrepreneurial training with agricultural practice. Without adequate skills, even motivated and resourceful individuals may struggle to achieve long-term success.

## 2. Opportunities in Youth Agribusiness

### *Growing Market Demand and Value Chain Opportunities*

Despite the challenges identified, participants recognised significant opportunities within the agribusiness sector. One of the most prominent was the increasing demand for agricultural products, driven by population growth and changing consumption patterns.

Participants noted that this demand creates entry points across various stages of the value chain, including production, processing, packaging, and distribution. Some entrepreneurs had already begun to explore value addition strategies, such as processing raw produce into finished or semi-finished goods, thereby enhancing profitability.

These findings suggest that agribusiness offers more than traditional farming opportunities; it provides a dynamic and evolving space for innovation and diversification.

### *Technological Advancements and Innovation*

The growing use of mobile technology and digital platforms was identified as an important opportunity for youth entrepreneurs. Participants described how tools such as social media and mobile applications enabled them to connect directly with customers, access market information, and learn new farming techniques.

While advanced technologies remained largely inaccessible due to cost, the adoption of basic digital tools demonstrated the potential for technology to reduce barriers and enhance efficiency. This indicates that even incremental technological adoption can play a transformative role in improving market access and decision-making among young entrepreneurs.

### *Support Programmes and Mentorship*

Support programmes, training initiatives, and mentorship opportunities were also highlighted as valuable enablers. Participants who had access to such programmes reported improvements in their skills, confidence, and business practices.

Mentorship, in particular, emerged as a critical factor, providing practical guidance and helping young entrepreneurs navigate common challenges. However, similar to institutional support, access to these opportunities was uneven, with rural participants often disadvantaged.

This suggests that while support structures exist, their impact depends significantly on accessibility and reach.

### *Personal Motivation and Entrepreneurial Drive*

Beyond external factors, personal motivation and resilience emerged as powerful drivers of youth engagement in agribusiness. Many participants expressed a strong desire for financial independence, self-reliance, and the ability to create employment opportunities for others.

For some, agribusiness was also linked to personal identity, family tradition, or a broader sense of purpose, such as contributing to food security. This intrinsic motivation often enabled participants to persist despite significant challenges.

This finding underscores the importance of individual agency in entrepreneurship, highlighting how personal determination can interact with structural conditions to shape outcomes.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The research findings provide significant insights into the realities that influence youth involvement in agribusiness in Ghana. The problems outlined in the categories of finance, market access, infrastructure, institutional support, and skills do not seem to be separate issues, but instead seem to be structurally bound and limit people at an individual level. Concurrently, the research also shows that these limitations are accompanied by new opportunities that young entrepreneurs are busy exploring and, in other instances, exploiting the same to their benefit.

Among the most notable findings is the issue of access to limited finance, which still limits the development and sustainability of youth-led agribusiness projects. Although this obstacle has been extensively reported in past research (Dzisi, 2014; Bates & Robb, 2016; Agyapong, 2020), the findings indicate the manifestation of such financial barriers in practice, especially in terms of rigid collateral conditions and risk-averse lending habits. Theoretically, the current finding can be explained in the context of the Resource-Based View (RBV) that focuses on the importance of critical resources in the organisational performance (Barney, 1991). Failure to access financial capital inhibits the ability of young entrepreneurs to invest in inputs, technology, and scale their operations. This has left many of them stuck in small-scale, low-productivity businesses, thereby strengthening the structural nature and resource constraints in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Closely linked to financial limitations are challenges related to market access and price volatility. The respondents explained that they work in unstable market conditions where prices are frequently determined by intermediaries, and there is a lack of access to trustworthy buyers. The observations are in line with previous studies that have emphasized the contribution of market inefficiencies and information asymmetry to the development of agricultural outcomes (Boye et al., 2024; Ofosu-Appiah et al., 2025). In addition to affirming these trends, the current research demonstrates the impact of these conditions on decision-making, especially in deterring reinvestment and long-term planning. Institutionally, these issues are indicative of market structure and support system failures and imply that the success of entrepreneurship is largely contingent on the institutional environment in which people are situated (North, 1990; Scott, 2014).

There are further challenges of infrastructure and technological constraints. The findings show that inadequate road networks, inadequate storage facilities, and poor access to modern farming technologies remain to affect productivity and efficiency. Such limitations do not only add to the cost of operation but also post-harvest losses and lack of competitiveness. In terms of both Institutional Theory and the RBV, it is clear that infrastructural deficits are both a systemic failure and a constraint to the resource base of entrepreneurs. This twofold impact strengthens disparities between small-scale youth entrepreneurs and bigger, more resourceful participants in the industry.

In addition to structural barriers, the study highlights significant gaps in policy accessibility and institutional support. Although there are various programmes to encourage youth entrepreneurship, participants reported that those programmes are not accessible to the participants, especially because of bureaucracy, lack of awareness, and unequal distribution across geographical areas. This finding aligns with the current literature that casts doubt on the effectiveness of policy interventions in developing settings (Geza et al., 2022; Pauw, 2022). More importantly it highlights one of the major assumptions of the Institutional Theory, that the mere existence of formal structures is not enough, but the efficiency of those structures in practice is the issue. The institutional inefficiencies, in this instance, seem to restrict the scope and influence of otherwise good programmes.

Another layer of problems is the skills and knowledge gap that contributes to the issues identified. Although a number of the participants proved to be practically knowledgeable about farming, they also tended to be incompetent in financial management, marketing, and strategic planning. This observation is consistent with other existing studies that highlight the significance of entrepreneurial skills in the success of the business (Chalidana et al., 2020; Adeyanju et al., 2023). In the light of the Human Capital Theory, these deficiencies are a major drawback of the productive potential of the young entrepreneurs (Becker, 1964). The youth will continue to be limited in their capacity to convert agricultural activities to viable and sustainable businesses in the absence of proper investment in education and training.

Despite the challenges highlighted, the research also presents a scope of opportunities that are transforming youth participation in agribusiness. Growing demand of agricultural products, especially in urban centers, has generated new market opportunities, and value addition activities, including processing and packaging, have provided new opportunities of generating income. These trends indicate that agribusiness is becoming a more dynamic and diversified industry, with various points of entry into innovation.

The use of mobile phones and social media, which has brought about technological advancements, have also proved to be significant enablers. Respondents explained that they used digital platforms to get information about the market, communicate with the customers, and learn new things. The lack of access to advanced technologies is still a problem, but the use of simple digital tools proves that incremental innovation can help lower barriers and improve entrepreneurial performance. This is an indication of a progressive transition towards more knowledge-intensive and networked forms of agribusiness.

Mentorship programmes and support programmes also add to this changing landscape. Those who received training and mentorship showed better business practices and confidence, thereby highlighting the importance of structured systems of support. The disproportionate nature of such opportunities, however, implies that their effect will depend on their availability, which supports the previous findings regarding the institutional constraints.

Lastly, the importance of entrepreneurial drive and personal motivation is highlighted in the study. The desire to be independent, self-reliant, and contribute to society was expressed by many participants, and this allowed them to persevere even in the face of significant difficulties. This finding indicates that although structural and institutional factors are important, individual agency is also a key determinant of entrepreneurial performance. In this regard, youth entrepreneurship in agribusiness can be perceived as a dynamic interplay of the external limitations and internal resilience.

Overall, this research adds to the existing literature by establishing the intersection of structural, resource-based, and human capital factors in influencing the experiences of young agripreneurs. Combining these dimensions, the study offers more insight into youth entrepreneurship in Ghana beyond the descriptive accounts and brings a deeper, theory-based explanation of both obstacles and opportunities in the field.

## **Conclusion**

This study assessed the realities of entrepreneurship in Africa by focusing on youth in agribusiness. The aim was to understand both the challenges and opportunities that exist for young entrepreneurs in this area. From the findings, it is evident that there are tremendous opportunities for employment and wealth generation for youth in agricultural entrepreneurship. However, there are also unique challenges faced by the youth. The challenges observed by this study include limited access to funding, limited infrastructure, technological issues, inefficient policies, and inadequate skills. These challenges make it difficult for young agri-entrepreneurial

starters to improve their businesses, innovate, and even sustain profitability in this competitive agricultural sector.

Despite all these challenges, the study also found emerging opportunities that are a clear manifestation and implication of the attractiveness of agribusiness ventures to the youth. Some of the opportunities observed include rising market demands for agricultural and processing products, technological developments, mentorship programmes, and individual determination. The majority of the youth have shown incredible determination, creativity, and entrepreneurial drive by having a collective determination to play their part in ensuring food security and economic transformation. Generally, the findings indicate that despite all these challenges, determination and new emerging institutional interventions are slowly shifting the face of youthful entrepreneurial activities in agricultural endeavors.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it is recommended that a comprehensive strategy be developed to promote and enhance youth participation in agribusiness. It is evidenced that four dimensions, financial empowerment, institutional reform, technological innovation, and mentorship, need to be enhanced. The improvement in these dimensions will make youth agribusiness a significant endeavor for job generation, food security, and economic growth in Africa.

The study found the lack of access to funding as one of the major impediments to youth entrepreneurship. The government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, is expected to develop and execute strategies that will make credit facilities for young entrepreneurs more flexible and affordable. The study suggests that Banks, more particularly rural banks and other financial institutions, should cooperate with governments to make it easier for youth entrepreneurs, especially in agriculture, to get small loans with little or no collateral and low interest rates or even grants. This would result in more young people being able to get credit and loans for their entrepreneurial activities.

The findings have also shown the need for improvement in terms of rural infrastructure and technology. Improved road networks, irrigation channels, power, and storage would boost production. Again, access to affordable modern technology would allow young farmers to innovate new approaches to increase their efficiency.

The study further recommends enhancing training and mentorship programmes with an aim to bridge any gaps in skills and knowledge. This is achievable by involving all stakeholders, such as ministries, NGOs, and the private sector. They can engage the youth in continuous and business-related training to empower them with the relevant skills necessary for running agribusiness ventures. Additional programmes for mentorship can be used by new entrants to address issues associated with this sector.

Also, policy reforms need to be implemented for inclusivity and responsiveness on the part of institutional support. Unnecessary red tape in bureaucracy and deconcentration of government

programmes would allow the youth, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, to have easier access. Moreover, better coordination between MoFA, NEIP, and assemblies would enable more transparency and scrutiny of programmes.

Besides, technological innovation in the agricultural sector will facilitate efficiency. It will be beneficial if a partnership is created between the public and private sectors for innovation in areas such as market linkage and innovation hubs. The youth will then have the opportunity to use technology for improved decision-making and marketing.

Finally, it is important to promote a culture of entrepreneurship among the young generation. The success stories can be used to motivate others, and if entrepreneurship education is incorporated in the school curriculum, it will foster interest among the young generation. This will ensure that young people not only participate but also succeed in the agricultural business sector.

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