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BEHAVIOURAL DETERMINANTS AND TRANSITION PATHWAYS OF RURAL YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AGRICULTURE-LINKED CONTEXTS: A SYSTEMATIC AND BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
Rural youth entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as an important pathway for addressing youth employment challenges, strengthening agrarian livelihoods, and improving local economic resilience. However, existing research is widely scattered across behavioural, social, and institutional perspectives, with most studies focusing on entrepreneurial intention rather than actual transition into enterprise activity. This review brings together and interprets the evidence on behavioural determinants and transition pathways influencing rural youth's movement into entrepreneurship by combining a systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis. A total of 98 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 were retrieved from the Scopus database using PRISMA-based screening and analysed through the Bibliometrix-Biblioshiny framework in R. The results show a sharp rise in publications after 2020, expanding international participation, and a knowledge structure strongly centred on behavioural drivers, youth characteristics, and rural agrarian enterprise contexts. Thematic patterns indicate a clear shift from intention-based models toward behaviour execution, sustainability, and agribusiness-linked entrepreneurship. The synthesis highlights four interacting determinant groups: behavioural, social, institutional, and rural-context factors, with self-efficacy, motivation, attitude, and opportunity perception emerging as the most consistent influences. Four behavioural transition pathways and an integrated conceptual framework are proposed to guide future empirical and policy-oriented research in rural youth entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: Behavioural determinants; Bibliometric analysis; Entrepreneurial transition, Rural entrepreneurship; Systematic literature review; Youth entrepreneurship.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth employment continues to be one of the most persistent development challenges across the world, particularly in rural and agrarian regions where livelihood options are often limited and structurally unstable (Wani & Kumari, 2026). In many countries, unemployment and underemployment rates among young people remain consistently higher than those of adults, creating long-term social and economic pressures (Madan & Mor, 2024 2024; Morrar, Yerousis, & O'Carroll, 2025; Romanika, 2020). Rural areas are especially vulnerable because of seasonal employment patterns, resource constraints, and limited access to formal job markets. As a result, governments, development agencies, and researchers increasingly view entrepreneurship as a practical pathway for youth livelihood creation, local economic participation, and community resilience (Banerjee, Mukherjee, Ghoshal, Priya, & Ruidas, 2025; Kazan & Kocamış, 2025; Valencia-Arias et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurship has evolved from being viewed purely as business creation to being recognised as a behavioural and opportunity-driven process shaped by individual capability, motivation, and environmental context (Albatran & Atikbay, 2025; Batonwero, Degla, & Agalati, 2022; Wiroto & Taan, 2019). Early entrepreneurship research largely concentrated on entrepreneurial intention and entry propensity, with behavioural models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour widely applied to explain why individuals plan to start enterprises (Chenier, 2025; Gielnik, Blagoev, & Melyoki, 2025; G. L. Kang, Park, & Jang, 2025). While these models have contributed significantly to theoretical understanding, growing evidence suggests that intention alone does not adequately explain actual entrepreneurial transition, particularly among rural youth facing institutional and resource constraints (Suanpong, Yeing-aramkul, Yoochayantee, & Tripopsakul, 2025; Zheng, Zhao, Yasmin, & Sokolova, 2025).

Recent research increasingly emphasises entrepreneurial behaviour and transition processes rather than intention alone. Studies show that youth entrepreneurial outcomes are shaped by interacting behavioural, social, educational, and institutional factors, including self-efficacy, motivation, opportunity perception, skills exposure,

and support systems (Mothibi, Malebana, & Rankhumise, 2025 Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand et al., 2025, G.-L. Kang et al., 2025, Hadley, 2025). In rural and agriculture-linked settings, these drivers are further conditioned by local opportunity structures, value-chain participation, and ecosystem limitations, resulting in transition patterns that differ from urban entrepreneurship environments (Adeyonu, Balogun, & Obaniyi, 2019; Adnan, Firdaus, & Hardjosoekarto, 2024; Siregar, Mardhiyah, Nasution, & Maulidina, 2025).

Across regions, rural youth entrepreneurship is now being linked with agribusiness development, local innovation systems, livelihood diversification, and sustainability transitions(Huang, Rehman, Zeeshan, & Ullah, 2022; Kazadi et al., 2025; Magagula & Tsvakirai, 2020). Multiple policy programmes and training interventions have been introduced to promote youth enterprise participation, yet outcomes remain uneven across contexts (Afutu-Kotey, Gough, & Owusu, 2017; Alene, 2023; Chahal, Shoukat, Massoud, & Ayoubi, 2024; Makumbi, 2018). Existing empirical studies are widely distributed across behavioural, demographic, and institutional perspectives, but the knowledge base remains fragmented. Most prior reviews focus either on entrepreneurial intention or general youth entrepreneurship, with limited integration of behavioural determinants, rural context, and transition pathways within a single analytical structure (Muchira, 2018; Yu & Wang, 2019; Yuan, Wang, Hong, Zou, & Wen, 2022).

At the same time, the rapid growth of publications in this field indicates increasing academic and policy interest, but there is limited combined systematic and bibliometric synthesis that maps research trends, thematic structures, behavioural determinants, and transition mechanisms together. A structured evidence synthesis is therefore necessary to consolidate current knowledge and identify directional gaps in behavioural transition research among rural youth.

Against this background, the present study undertakes a combined systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to trace the evolution, structure, and behavioural foundations of rural youth entrepreneurial transition and to identify research gaps in this expanding field. Specifically, this review aims to:

1. Evaluate emerging research trends in rural youth entrepreneurial behaviour and transition studies.
2. Analyse global scientific production and country-level research patterns in this domain.
3. Map the intellectual and thematic structure of the field using bibliometric network analysis.
4. Identify the major behavioural, social, institutional, and rural-context determinants influencing entrepreneurial transition.
5. Synthesize dominant behavioural transition pathways reported across empirical studies.
6. Develop an integrated conceptual framework to guide future empirical and policy research on rural youth entrepreneurial transition.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the behavioural factors that shape rural youth's transition into entrepreneurship, this study employed a combined systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. Bringing these two approaches together made it possible not only to synthesize existing evidence in a structured manner but also to trace broader research patterns and trends within the field. This integrated design provided a balanced understanding of both the conceptual and empirical dimensions of rural youth entrepreneurship research.

Literature identification and retrieval

Relevant studies were sourced exclusively from the Scopus database, which was chosen for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed research across entrepreneurship, social sciences, and agricultural studies. A carefully designed search strategy was developed by combining keywords related to entrepreneurship, behavioural dimensions, youth, and rural contexts. Boolean operators were applied to refine and broaden the search, ensuring that relevant studies were captured without compromising precision. The complete search string used for data retrieval is presented in Table 1.

Eligibility framework

To ensure that only relevant and high-quality studies were included, a clear eligibility framework was defined prior to the screening process. Articles were considered eligible if they were published between 2015 and 2025, appeared as peer-reviewed journal articles, and were written in English. Only studies that had reached their final stage, were published in non-scholarly outlets, were still in press, or were subject to restricted access conditions. This framework ensured that the final dataset consisted of recent, credible, and accessible scholarly contributions directly aligned with the objectives of the review. The detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria are provided in Table 2.

Study filtering and selection procedure

The selection of studies followed the PRISMA 2020 framework to maintain transparency and methodological rigour throughout the review process. The initial search in Scopus yielded 1,016 records. After the removal of duplicate entries, 283 unique articles remained for screening. Titles and abstracts were then examined to assess their relevance to the study objectives, resulting in the exclusion of 179 articles.

Subsequently, 104 articles were subjected to full-text evaluation. During this stage, six studies were excluded due to insufficient relevance to rural youth or agricultural contexts, absence of behavioural or psychological determinants, or lack of a specific focus on youth populations. Ultimately, 98 articles met all eligibility criteria and were included in the systematic review and bibliometric analysis. The complete selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

Bibliometric mapping and analytical procedures

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using the R programming environment, employing the Bibliometrix package and its interactive interface, Biblioshiny. This approach enabled the examination of publication trends, thematic structures, keyword co-occurrence patterns, citation dynamics, and geographical distribution of research. The bibliometric findings were interpreted alongside qualitative insights from the systematic review to identify dominant themes, emerging research directions, and structural relationships within the literature on rural youth entrepreneurship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The PRISMA-based screening process resulted in a final dataset of 98 peer-reviewed Scopus-indexed articles (Fig. 1). After removing duplicates and screening titles, abstracts, and full texts against the eligibility criteria, only studies directly related to rural youth entrepreneurship and behavioural determinants were retained. These publications, covering the period from 2015 to 2025, form the analytical base for all subsequent bibliometric and thematic results discussed in this section.

Temporal Growth and Geographical Expansion of Research

Publication trends indicate a clear acceleration in rural youth entrepreneurship research after 2020 (Fig. 2). During the period from 2017 to 2019, research output across countries remained relatively low and dispersed, with most nations contributing only a small number of papers each year. From 2021 onward, a noticeable shift appears, with multiple countries showing steady and sustained increases in annual publications rather than irregular spikes. By 2024-2025, several leading contributors reach cumulative publication counts exceeding 15-25 articles, suggesting that the field is moving beyond an exploratory phase toward stronger consolidation and continuity of research activity.

The widening participation of countries over time also reflects that rural youth entrepreneurship is increasingly being examined as a globally relevant development and livelihood issue rather than a narrowly regional concern. This figure was generated using the Bibliometrix's Biblioshiny package in the R software environment

Geographical Distribution of Scientific Production

The global scientific production map (Figure 3) shows a clearly uneven but widely distributed research contribution pattern across regions. Among all countries, China emerges as the leading contributor, displaying the highest publication intensity in the dataset. This is followed by the United Kingdom, South Africa, and India, which form the next major production cluster. These countries correspond to the upper publication tiers observed in the dataset, each contributing roughly in the double-digit range of indexed articles, whereas most other countries fall within low to moderate output bands.

A secondary belt of moderate productivity is visible across parts of Europe, including countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, and the Nordic region, along with contributions from Australia and the United States. Several African countries notably South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia also show visible participation, indicating that the research domain is strongly connected to development and rural transformation contexts rather than being confined to high-income innovation systems alone.

In contrast, large areas of Latin America and parts of Central Asia show relatively low output intensity, suggesting that research engagement in rural youth entrepreneurial transition remains emerging in these regions. Overall, the spatial pattern indicates that publication activity is concentrated in a few leading hubs but supported by a broad international base of smaller contributors. The figure was generated using the R bibliometric environment through the Bibliometrix-Biblioshiny interface, based on the final dataset of 98 Scopus-indexed articles

Keyword Co-occurrence Network

The keyword co-occurrence network (Figure 4) shows the conceptual structure of the research field by mapping how frequently key terms appear together across the 98 reviewed studies. The network is strongly centred on "entrepreneurship", which appears as the dominant hub connecting multiple thematic clusters, indicating that most studies are anchored around a common entrepreneurial core but extend into different analytical directions.

Three major clusters are clearly visible. The first cluster is behavioural-psychological, linking terms such as behaviour, intention, psychology, attitude, and perception, largely associated with individual-level entrepreneurial drivers. The second cluster is youth and demographic oriented, where terms like student, gender, and young population are grouped, showing that youth profiling and behavioural attributes are frequently studied together. The third cluster reflects a rural–agrarian and applied enterprise block, connecting entrepreneur, agribusiness, rural development, sustainability, and self-employment, indicating growing contextual grounding of entrepreneurship research in rural and sector-linked settings.

The density of links between the behavioural and applied clusters suggests that the field is moving beyond intention-only models toward behaviour-in-context explanations. Overall, the network reveals a behaviour-anchored but context-expanding knowledge structure. The map was generated using R software through the Bibliometrix–Biblioshiny interface.

Thematic Structure Mapping

The thematic map (Fig. 5) provides a structured view of how major research themes in rural youth entrepreneurship are positioned based on their centrality (relevance) and density (development level). The distribution of themes across the four quadrants shows that the field has moved beyond purely theory-driven intention models and is now anchored around behaviour-linked and population-focused entrepreneurship research.

In the motor themes quadrant (upper right), the cluster built around entrepreneurship appears with high centrality and high density, indicating that it is both conceptually well-developed and strongly connected to other themes. Closely associated terms such as adult and female are grouped within the same high-strength cluster, suggesting

that demographic and participation-oriented entrepreneurship research forms a core and mature stream in the literature. A second strong cluster in this quadrant links entrepreneur, youth, and young population, showing that youth-focused entrepreneurship is not peripheral but structurally central and actively developed within the knowledge base.

The basic themes quadrant (lower right) includes terms such as agriculture, gender, and self-employment, which show high centrality but lower internal density. This indicates that these themes are widely connected across studies but are still evolving conceptually. Their position suggests that agriculture-linked and gender-linked youth entrepreneurship research is foundational but not yet deeply specialised.

In contrast, the emerging or declining quadrant (lower left) contains the theory of planned behaviour and rural revitalisation, both showing lower centrality and density. This placement signals a relative shift away from single-theory intention models toward broader behavioural and ecosystem-based approaches. The niche theme zone (upper left) includes focused clusters such as employment-motivation-self-employment, which appear internally developed but less connected to the wider thematic network.

Overall, the thematic structure indicates a maturing field with two clear cores entrepreneurship and youth supported by expanding applied and demographic sub-themes. This thematic mapping was generated using the Bibliometrix-Biblioshiny framework in the R environment.

Evolution of Research Focus Over Time

In the trend topics map(Fig.6) , each node represents a keyword, node size reflects term frequency, and the horizontal span shows the years during which the term remained active in the literature between 2015 and 2025.

The largest node is for entrepreneurship (about 25+ occurrences), remaining consistently active from 2021 to 2024, which confirms it as the central and stabilising theme in the dataset. Moderately large nodes are visible for entrepreneur, young population, and self-employment (roughly 15-20 occurrences), with most of their activity concentrated after 2020, indicating a shift toward execution and participation-oriented research. Broad demographic indexing terms such as human, female, adult, and male show long activity spans up to 2024, reflecting continued population-based classification across studies.

Behavioural and applied terms, including motivation, perception, employment, and agroindustry, appear as smaller nodes (around 10-15 occurrences) clustered mainly in the 2020-2023 period, suggesting a focused mid-phase expansion. More recent nodes, such as education and sustainability, show shorter but continuing spans, pointing to newer applied and ecosystem-linked directions. The map was generated using R software through the Biblioshiny interface from the final set of 98 articles.

Overall, the bibliometric patterns show that research on rural youth entrepreneurship has grown quickly in recent years, is largely driven by development-oriented regions, and is conceptually centred on behavioural factors, youth characteristics, and rural agrarian enterprise contexts. Across the networks, thematic map, and trend nodes, behavioural constructs remain the most connected and stable core, while social and institutional elements appear as strengthening layers around them. The shift from intention-focused terms to execution, sustainability, and agribusiness-linked topics further indicates that the field is moving toward more applied and context-grounded explanations. Based on this mapped structure, the next sections synthesise the evidence into determinant clusters and behavioural pathways that explain how rural youth transition from entrepreneurial readiness to actual enterprise action.

Behavioural Determinants of Rural Youth Entrepreneurial Transition

The reviewed literature consistently indicates that rural youth's entrepreneurial transition is shaped by interacting behavioural, social, institutional, and rural-context determinants rather than isolated factors (Giwu et al., 2025; Hintikka, Taipale-Erävala, Lehtinen, & Eskola, 2023; Tripopsakul & Puriwat, 2025 Thailand et al., 2025). Across the analysed studies, behavioural and psychological constructs form the central explanatory base for entrepreneurial transition, while demographic characteristics, institutional supports, and rural ecosystem conditions influence how behavioural readiness is translated into entrepreneurial action (Ephrem et al., 2021; Khan & Marzuki, 2020; Wang & Liu, 2024). As illustrated in Figure 7, these determinants operate as an interconnected system linking behavioural activation with social, institutional, and contextual influences.

At the individual level, entrepreneurial attitude, motivation, self-efficacy, and opportunity perception emerge as the most frequently examined and consistently supported predictors of entrepreneurial transition (Alene, 2023; Chenier, 2025; Thephavanh, Philp, Nuberg, Denton, & Alexander, 2022). Positive attitudes toward autonomy, innovation, and self-employment are regularly associated with stronger entrepreneurial orientation and readiness to initiate enterprise activities. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, in particular, appears as one of the most stable predictors across contexts, with higher perceived capability linked to greater persistence and execution confidence (Drottberger, Melin, & Lundgren, 2021; He & Ding, 2023; Pukkinen, Hytti, Heinonen, & Stenholm, 2024). Several studies further report that perceived behavioural control and feasibility assessments significantly increase the likelihood that entrepreneurial intention progresses toward action (Fani et al., 2021; Siregar et al., 2025).

Motivational drivers are widely reported in the literature but show strong context sensitivity (Toscher, Dahle, & Steinert, 2020; Yu & Wang, 2019). Opportunity-driven motivation is more often associated with innovation-oriented and growth-seeking enterprise behaviour, whereas necessity-driven motivation appears more frequently in resource-constrained rural environments (Dao et al., 2024 Vietnam et al., 2024; Wilde & Leonard, 2018). Although both motivational forms are linked to entrepreneurial entry, their behavioural trajectories differ in direction and sustainability (Kebede, 2023). In agriculture-linked contexts, opportunity visibility within local value chains further strengthens behavioural activation by shaping feasibility perceptions and expected rewards (Suanpong et al., 2025).

Social and demographic influences, including gender, education exposure, family business background, and peer networks, primarily function as behavioural moderators rather than direct triggers of entrepreneurial action (Deng & Wang, 2023; Dodescu, Botezat, Constăngioară, & Pop-Cohuț, 2021; Dungey & Ansell, 2022). Exposure to entrepreneurship-oriented and skill-based education is generally associated with higher confidence and preparedness, with practice-oriented and experiential learning showing stronger behavioural effects than purely theoretical instruction (Lindvert, 2023; Mukwedeya & Mudhara, 2023; Nwakpadolu et al., 2024). Family business exposure and entrepreneurial role models repeatedly reduce psychological entry barriers and strengthen behavioural legitimacy among rural youth (Z. Kang, 2022; Thephavanh, Philp, Nuberg, Denton, & Larson, 2023). Gender-based differences are frequently reported, although their magnitude and direction vary across cultural and regional contexts, indicating socially conditioned rather than uniform effects (Ogbari et al., 2024; Zelekha, 2021). Institutional drivers particularly entrepreneurship education systems, training programmes, advisory services, and youth enterprise schemes function mainly as behavioural enablers within the transition process (Abbes, 2024; Zeng, Zheng, Tian, & Jebbouri, 2022). Evidence suggests that these supports rarely generate entrepreneurial behaviour independently but significantly strengthen execution where motivational readiness already exists (Andreas, Asa, Nautwima, & Sunde, 2025; Iseselo, Mosha, Killewo, Sekei, & Outwater, 2019). Training and mentoring are consistently associated with increased competence and reduced uncertainty, with the strongest effects observed when combined with prior self-efficacy and opportunity awareness (Adeyanju et al., 2024; Rajak & Dolan, 2022).

Rural-specific determinants, including resource constraints, local opportunity structures, agribusiness potential, and market access conditions, shape both opportunity perception and enterprise direction (Bouichou, Abdoulaye, Allali, Bouayad, & Fadlaoui, 2021). In agriculture-linked regions, entrepreneurial behaviour is frequently embedded within local value chains and allied rural sectors (Kebede, 2023). Although infrastructure and resource limitations are commonly reported as barriers, locally visible agribusiness opportunities can act as behavioural catalysts when feasibility is perceived as attainable(Yamaguchi et al., 2020). Rural context therefore, operates as an active behavioural conditioning environment rather than a passive background setting (Wang & Liu, 2024).

Overall, the reviewed evidence indicates that behavioural determinants rarely operate independently in rural youth entrepreneurship (Xia, Wu, Wei, & Wu, 2021). Entrepreneurial transition is most often associated with reinforcing combinations of psychological readiness, social validation, institutional enablement, and context-specific opportunity environments (Greenwood et al., 2023; Wongphuka, Chai-Aroon, Phainoi, & Boon-Long, 2017). These recurring determinant configurations, as summarised in Figure 7, provide the empirical foundation for the behavioural transition pathways synthesised in the following section (Chandre Gowda et al., 2023; Wang & Liu, 2024).

Behavioural Pathways of Rural Youth Entrepreneurial Transition

As illustrated in Figure 8, the reviewed evidence shows that rural youth entrepreneurial transition rarely follows a single linear route and instead progresses through multiple behavioural pathways shaped by interacting psychological, social, institutional, and rural-context conditions. Several empirical studies indicate that entrepreneurial movement among rural youth is better explained through recurring driver combinations than isolated predictors, particularly in agrarian and development contexts (Ayamga, Lawani, Akaba, & Birindwa, 2023; Hunter, Nybom, Micheels, & Klyver, 2023).

Intention-to-Action Pathway

The most frequently observed pathway is the intention-to-action sequence, where entrepreneurial behaviour originates from internal psychological activation. Behavioural model–based studies show that attitude, self-efficacy, motivation, and opportunity perception jointly shape entrepreneurial intention and increase the likelihood of execution when feasibility is perceived as realistic (Arco-Tirado, Bojica, Fernández-Martín, & Hoyle, 2019; Saleem, Adeel, Ali, & Hyder, 2018).

Across youth entrepreneurship studies, self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control repeatedly function as bridging mechanisms between intention and actual start-up behaviour. Evidence consistently notes that intention alone is not sufficient unless reinforced by confidence and opportunity visibility (Consentino, Peri, Litrico, Spina, & Vindigni, 2024; Rusu, Roman, & Tudose, 2022).

Socially Embedded Pathway

A second pathway reflects socially embedded transition, where behavioural movement is strengthened through social exposure and normative validation (Ayeni, Ogunnaike, Ayeni, & Iyiola, 2021). Family enterprise background, role-model visibility, and peer entrepreneurial networks are widely reported to reduce psychological entry barriers and increase behavioural legitimacy (Igwe, Newbery, Amoncar, White, & Madichie, 2020; Kumalo & Kaseeram, 2019).

Field-based rural studies further show that youth exposed to entrepreneurial households or local enterprise ecosystems demonstrate higher confidence and lower perceived risk thresholds. Reported gender effects vary across contexts, suggesting socially conditioned rather than uniform behavioural influence (Heredia-Carroza, Chavarría-Ortiz, López-Estrada, & Zacharewicz, 2024; Zeng et al., 2022).

Institutionally Enabled Pathway

The institutionally enabled pathway describes entrepreneurial transition supported by entrepreneurship education, training systems, mentoring, and youth enterprise programmes. Programme evaluation and education-linked studies indicate that institutional mechanisms primarily act as execution enablers rather than behaviour creators (Adeyonu et al., 2019; Roy & Mukhopadhyay, 2019).

Training and advisory exposure are consistently associated with higher competence perception and reduced uncertainty, particularly among youth who already display behavioural motivation. Institutional support shows the strongest behavioural effect when combined with prior self-efficacy and opportunity awareness, indicating reinforcement rather than substitution (Mehari & Belay, 2017).

Context-Adaptive Rural Pathway

The context-adaptive pathway is especially visible in agriculture-linked and resource-constrained rural settings, where entrepreneurial behaviour emerges in response to local opportunity structures and livelihood pressures(Ilynykh, 2015). Agribusiness and rural enterprise studies show that youth frequently align enterprise choices with visible value-chain opportunities and locally available resources (Mukwedeya & Mudhara, 2023; Zickafoose, Wingenbach, Baker, & Price, 2023).

Although infrastructure and capital gaps are widely reported as constraints, locally observable opportunities often function as behavioural catalysts when feasibility is perceived as attainable. Rural context therefore, operates as an active conditioning environment influencing enterprise direction and timing (Madende, Henning, & Jordaan, 2023).

Together, these pathways, as synthesized in Figure 8, are analytically distinct but empirically overlapping, with most transitions shaped by combinations of psychological readiness, social validation, institutional support, and contextual feasibility. This pathway-based synthesis moves the literature beyond determinant listing toward a process-oriented explanation of rural youth entrepreneurial transition (Hunter et al., 2023).

Integrated Conceptual Framework of Rural Youth Entrepreneurial Transition

The integrated conceptual framework developed from this review explains rural youth entrepreneurial transition as an interactional system linking behavioural drivers, social moderators, institutional enablers, and rural ecosystem conditions. Rather than viewing determinants as isolated predictors, the framework treats entrepreneurial transition as a clustered and reinforcing process repeatedly observed across rural entrepreneurship studies (Rusu et al., 2022).

At the core of the framework are behavioural drivers particularly entrepreneurial attitude, motivation, self-efficacy, and opportunity perception which shape readiness by influencing desirability and perceived feasibility of enterprise action. Across behavioural model applications, self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control repeatedly emerge as the strongest bridges between intention and execution stages (Valencia-Arias et al., 2025).

These behavioural drivers are moderated by social and demographic influences, including gender context, education exposure, family business background, and role-model presence. Empirical rural youth studies show that such factors primarily strengthen confidence, legitimacy, and risk tolerance rather than independently generating entrepreneurial action (Bouichou et al., 2021).

A complementary enabling layer is formed by institutional supports such as entrepreneurship education, training programmes, advisory services, and youth enterprise schemes. Evidence indicates that these mechanisms function mainly as execution enhancers and produce stronger effects when behavioural readiness already exists (Gielnik et al., 2025; Mmbengwa, Qin, & Nkobi, 2021).

The outer layer of the framework consists of the rural and agrarian ecosystem, including resource conditions, agribusiness opportunities, and market access structures. Rural context is consistently described as an active conditioning environment that shapes feasibility perception and enterprise direction, especially in agriculture-linked settings (Naminse & Zhuang, 2018).

As illustrated in Figure 9, entrepreneurial transition emerges from the convergence of behavioural activation, social validation, institutional enablement, and contextual feasibility. This integrated structure aligns with the pathway patterns synthesised from the reviewed evidence and provides a practical base for future empirical testing and comparative rural entrepreneurship research (Valencia-Arias et al., 2025).

Future Research Directions

Future research should prioritise longitudinal and process-based designs to better capture how behavioural readiness develops into actual entrepreneurial action, as most existing studies rely on cross-sectional intention measures. Repeated evidence across the reviewed studies highlights the need for cross-country, cross-context, and rural–urban comparative research to test the stability of behavioural determinants under varying ecosystem and institutional conditions.

Greater emphasis is also required on rural and agriculture-linked settings, where opportunity structures, value chains, and resource constraints shape entrepreneurial execution differently from urban environments. Future work should explicitly test behavioural–institutional interactions, since training, policy support, and advisory programmes appear most effective when combined with prior self-efficacy and motivational readiness.

More focused research is needed on gender, family enterprise exposure, role-model influence, and youth subgroup heterogeneity, as their effects vary across regions and social contexts. Intervention-based and policy-evaluation studies comparing education, training, mentoring, and extension models would further strengthen causal understanding.

Emerging areas such as digital rural entrepreneurship, sustainability-oriented enterprise, agribusiness pathways, and hybrid livelihood models offer additional directions for extending behavioural transition research. Mixed-method and field-grounded approaches that connect behavioural mechanisms with real rural enterprise ecosystems will be especially valuable for improving both theoretical precision and policy relevance.

Limitations

This review was conducted within defined scope boundaries to ensure consistency and quality. Only Scopus-indexed, English-language journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 were included, which may have excluded relevant regional or non-indexed studies. Much of the available evidence is cross-sectional, limiting direct observation of behavioural transition over time. Although broad search strings were applied, some context-specific terminology may not have been captured. The proposed framework and behavioural pathways are synthesis-based and require further empirical validation in diverse rural settings.

CONCLUSION

This review integrates systematic and bibliometric evidence to explain rural youth entrepreneurial transition as a process shaped by interacting behavioural, social, institutional, and rural-context factors. Behavioural drivers, particularly attitude, motivation, self-efficacy, and opportunity perception, form the activation core, while social exposure, institutional support, and local opportunity structures condition execution. The pathway-based synthesis and integrated framework shift the field from listing isolated determinants to a process-oriented understanding of transition. These findings provide a structured foundation for future empirical research and the design of more context-sensitive rural entrepreneurship policies and interventions.

Table 1. Combination of keywords used and the total number of publications from databases

Databases	Search Terms	Number of articles
SCOPUS	"entrepreneur" OR "entrepreneurship" OR "self-employment" OR "business start-up" OR "new venture" OR "venture creation" AND "intention" OR "behaviour" OR "behavior*" OR "attitude" OR "motivation" OR "self-efficacy" OR "mindset" OR "aspiration" AND "youth" OR "young people" OR "young adult" OR "students" AND "rural" OR "village" OR "agrarian" OR "farming" OR "countryside" OR "remote area"	**1016**

Table 2. Shows the Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time Span	2015-2025	<2015
Document Type	Article	Conference papers, Book chapters, review, Editorial
Language	English	Non English
Source Type	Journal	Trade Journal
Publication Stage	Final	Press
Open Access	All Open Access	Restricted access
Screening		
Title and Abstract	Studies were screened based on the relevance of their titles and abstracts to the research objectives.	
Full Text	Full-text articles were assessed for their direct relevance to the review topic, and only the relevant studies were included.	

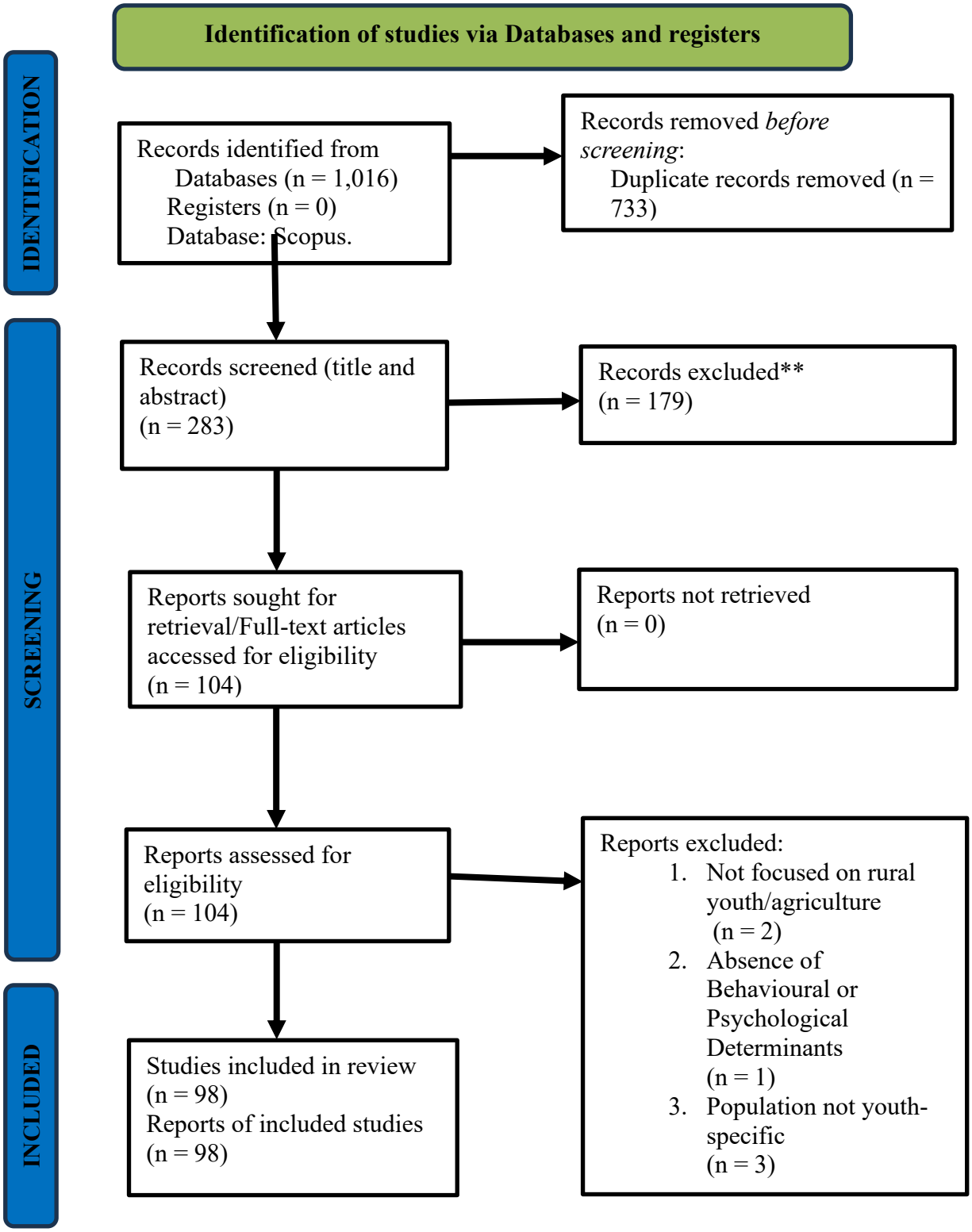

Fig.1. PRISMA flowchart depicting the search literature for a systematic review of Behavioural determinants and transition pathways

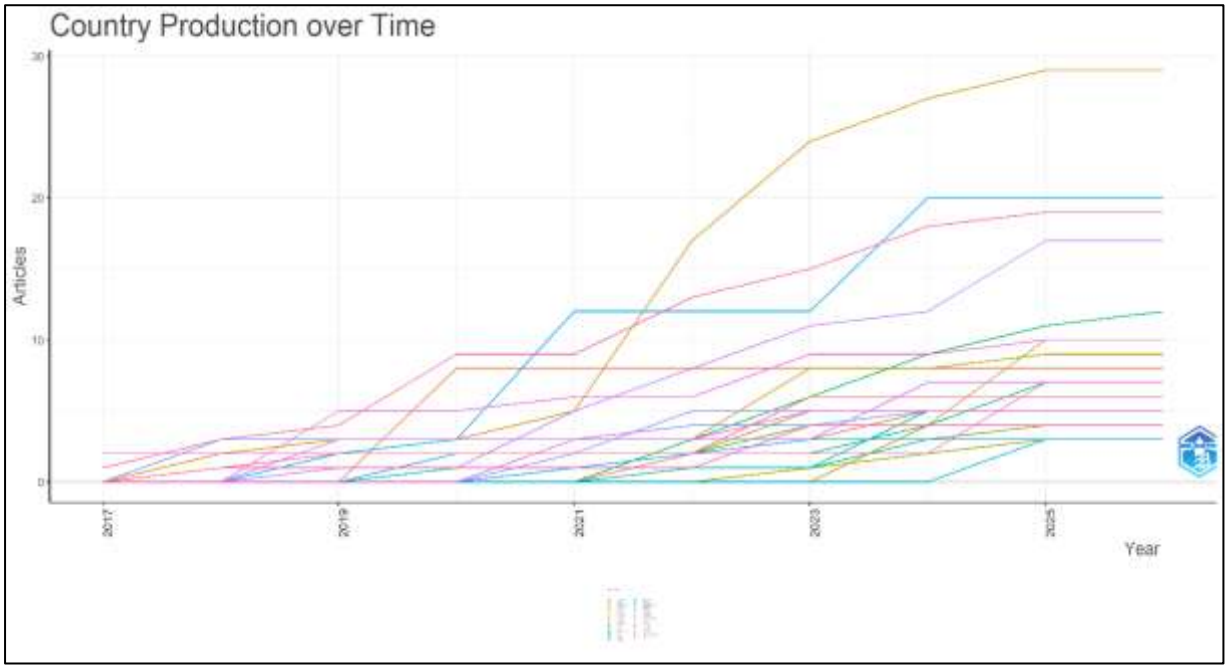

Fig.2. shows the country's production over time

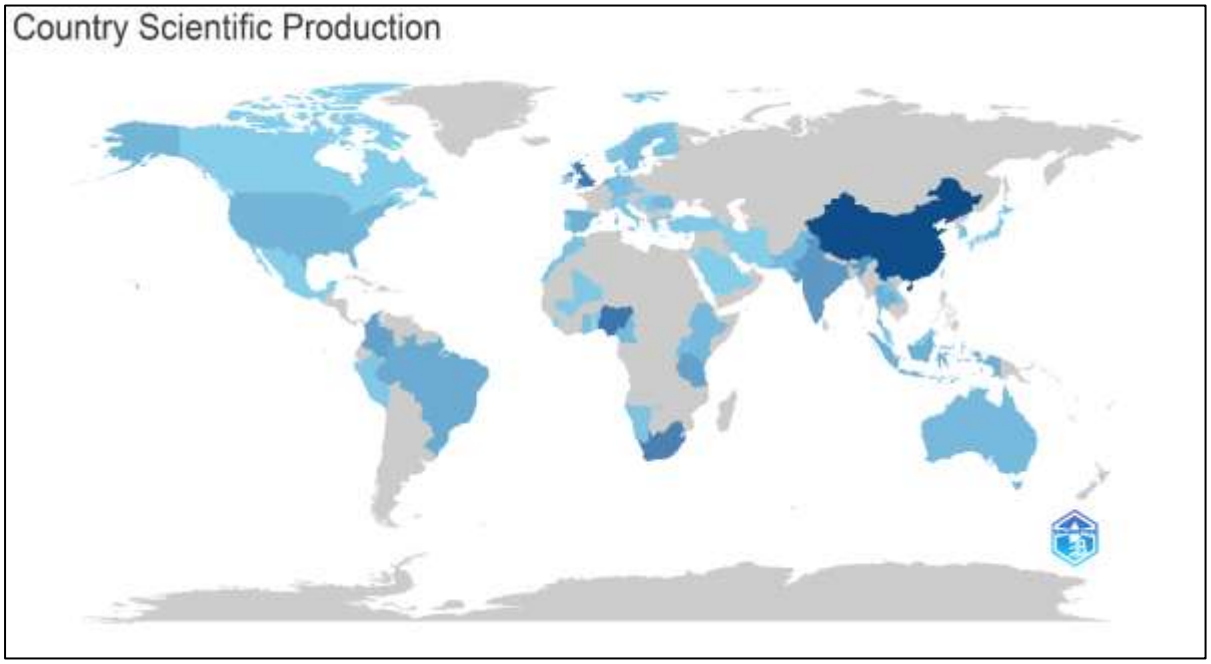

Fig.3. shows the country's scientific production

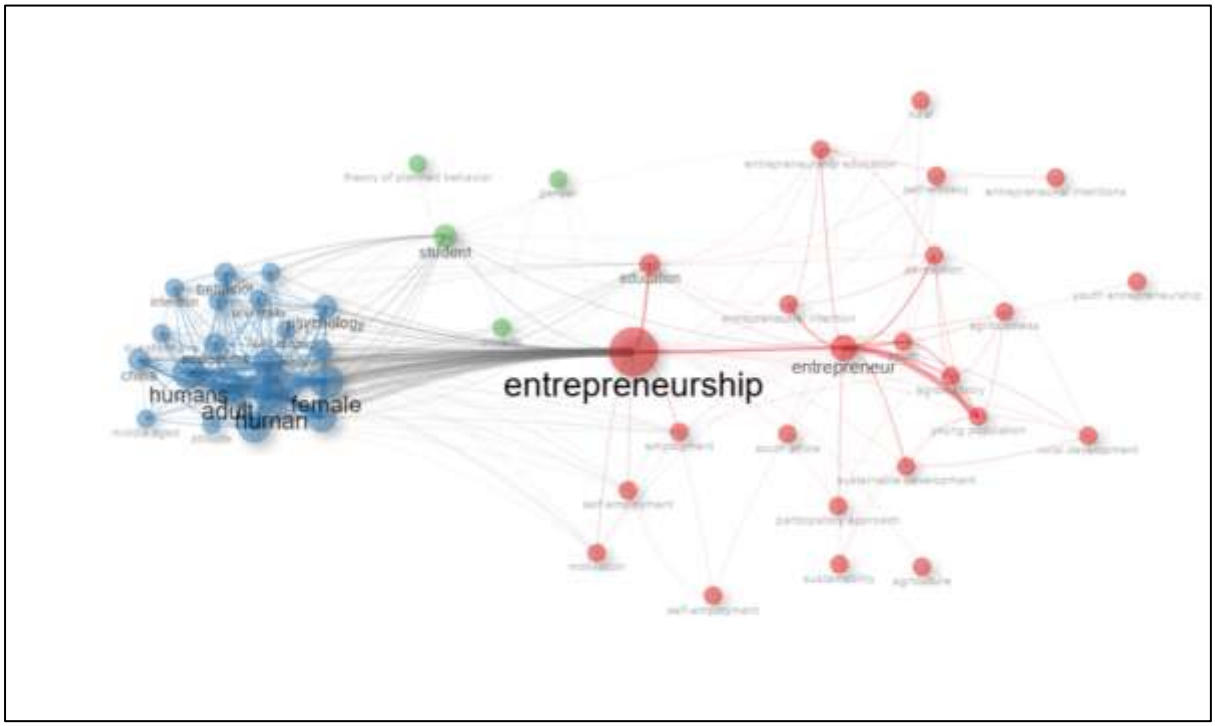

Fig.4. shows the co-occurrence network

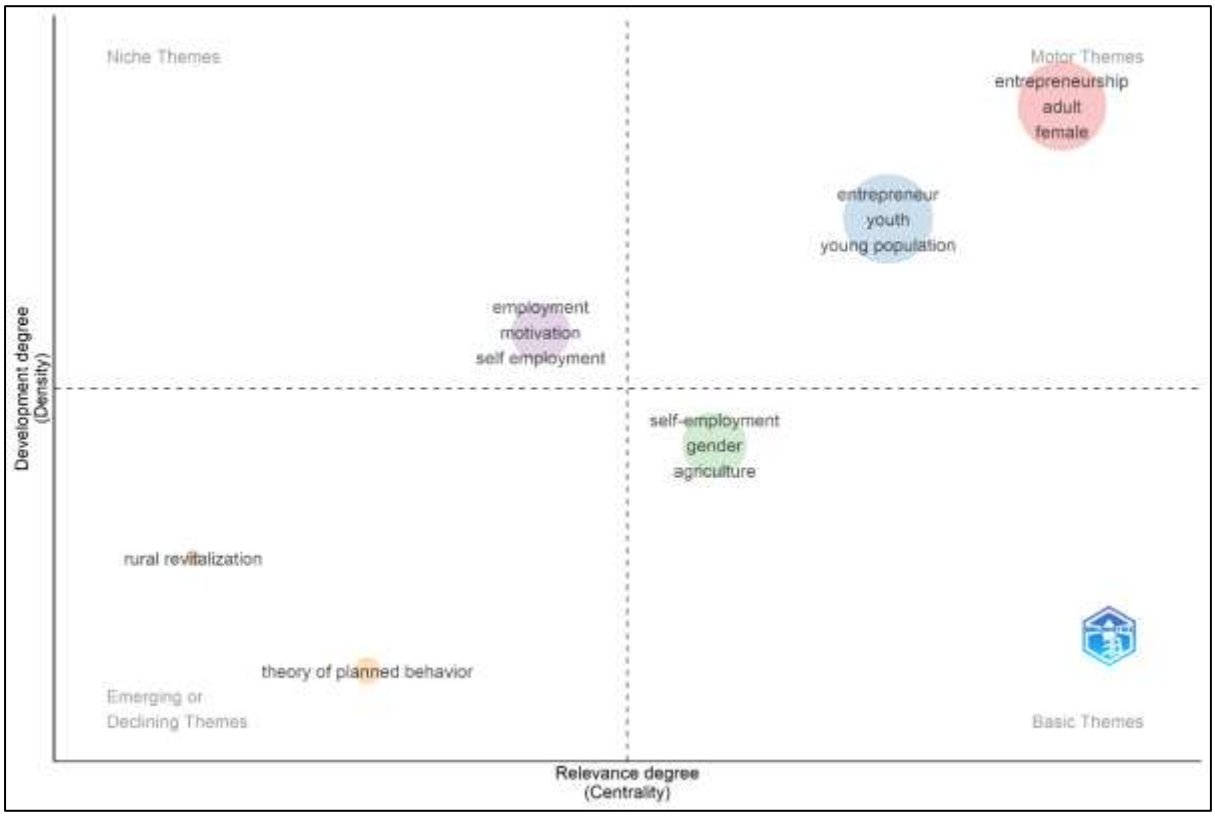

Fig.5. shows the Thematic Map

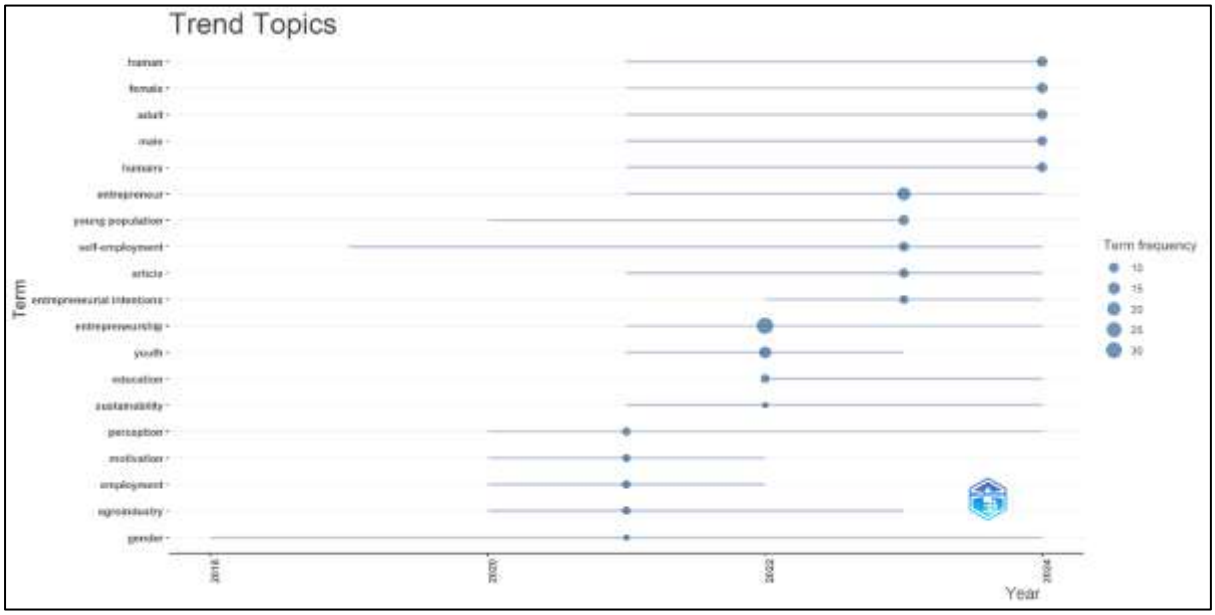

Fig.6. shows the trend topics

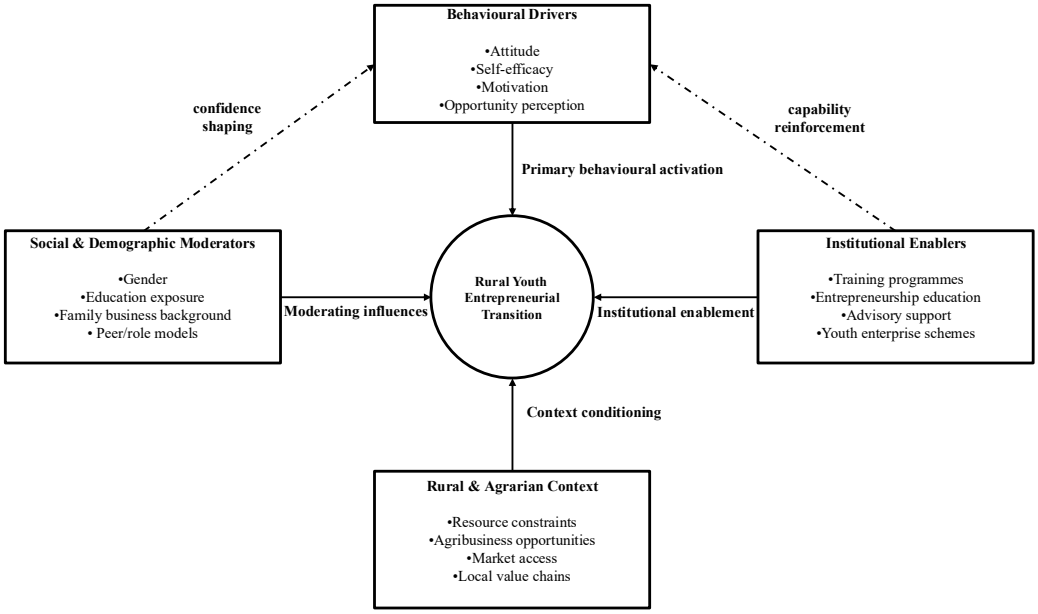

Fig.7. shows the Clustered determinant structure influencing rural youth entrepreneurial transition

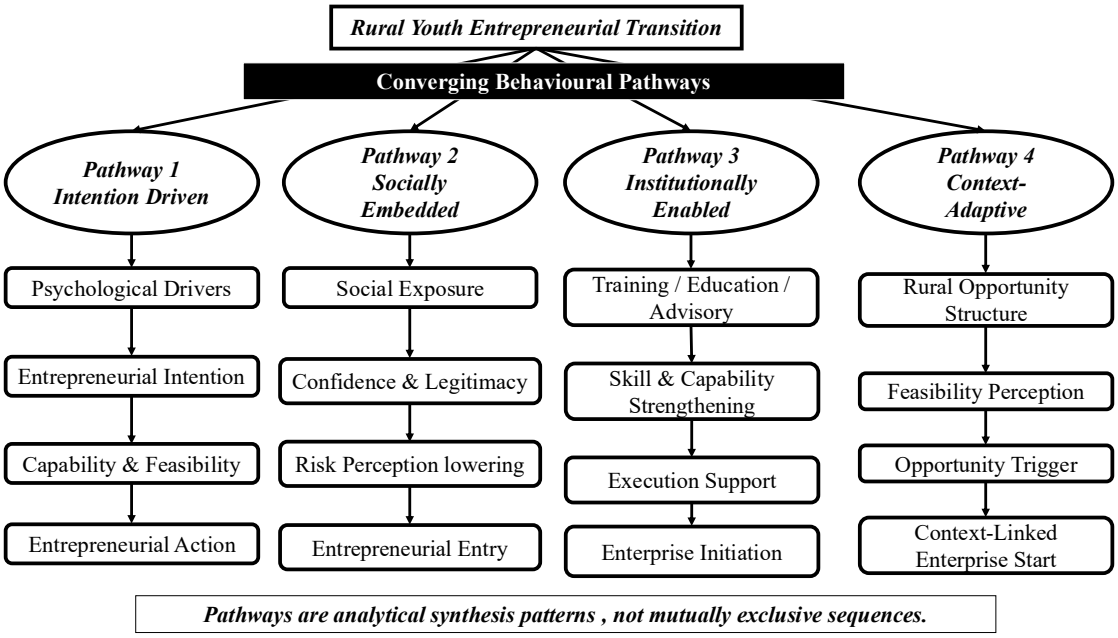

Fig.8. shows the Behavioural Pathways of Rural Youth's Entrepreneurial Transition

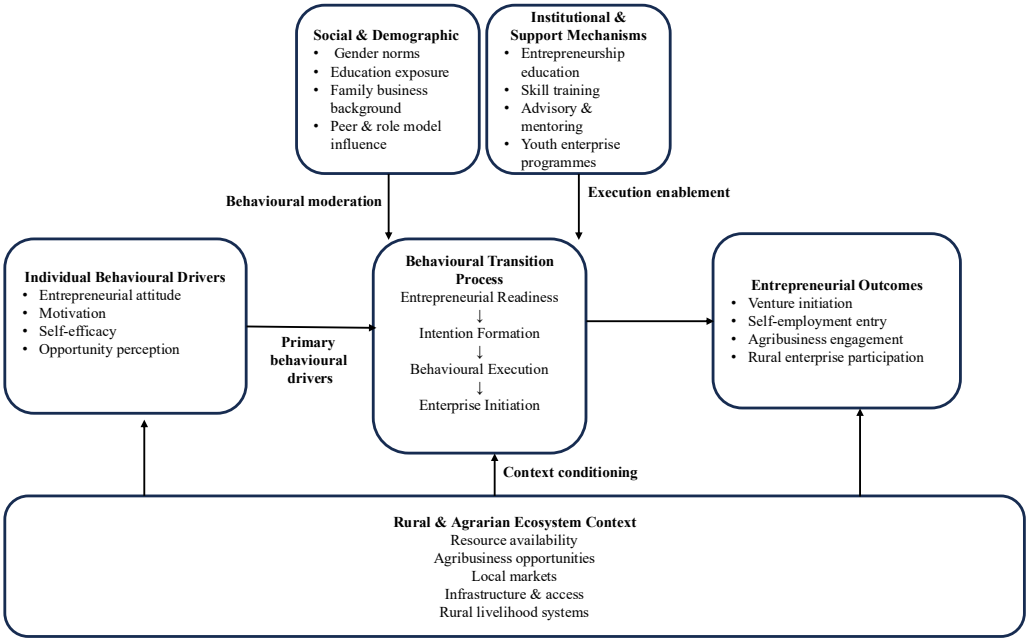

Fig.9. Integrated behavioural contextual framework of rural youth entrepreneurial transition

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