

Agripreneurship Innovation and Inclusive Development in Tanzania: A Systematic Literature Review Approach

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Abstract

Agripreneurship innovation has emerged as a critical pathway for advancing inclusive development in agrarian economies. In Tanzania, where agriculture constitutes the primary livelihood source for the majority of the population, agripreneurial initiatives are increasingly promoted as mechanisms for addressing unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion, particularly among youth, women, and smallholder farmers. This study undertakes a systematic literature review to synthesise existing evidence on the relationship between agripreneurship innovation and inclusive development in Tanzania. Guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2000 and 2024 were retrieved from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, and screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. A total of 48 studies met the eligibility requirements and were included in the final analysis. The findings indicate that agripreneurship innovation contributes to inclusive development by creating employment, diversifying income, improving market access, empowering marginalized groups, and enhancing food security and community resilience. Key innovation pathways identified in the literature include digital agriculture, agro-processing and value addition, cooperative entrepreneurship, innovative financing mechanisms, and climate-smart agricultural practices. However, the review also identifies persistent structural and institutional barriers such as limited access to finance, infrastructure deficits, regulatory complexity, land tenure insecurity, and skills gaps that constrain the scalability and sustainability of agripreneurial initiatives. The study proposes an integrative thematic framework linking agripreneurship innovation, enabling ecosystem factors, and inclusive development outcomes, and concludes with policy recommendations to strengthen agripreneurial ecosystems and foster inclusive and sustainable rural transformation in Tanzania.

Keywords: Agripreneurship innovation; inclusive development; Tanzania; systematic literature review; rural development

1. Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of Tanzania's economy, employing more than two-thirds of the population and serving as the primary source of income for rural communities (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2021); (World Bank, 2022). Despite its central role, the sector still faces structural challenges, including low productivity, limited value addition, fragmented markets, climate vulnerability, and persistent rural poverty. These constraints disproportionately affect smallholder farmers, women, and youth, thereby undermining progress towards inclusive development (Barrett, Christiaensen, Sheahan, & Shimeles, 2020). In response, agripreneurship innovation has emerged as a strategic approach for transforming traditional agriculture into a more dynamic, market-oriented, and inclusive sector (Kazungu & Kumburu, 2023). Agripreneurship innovation extends beyond primary production to encompass entrepreneurial activities along agricultural value chains, including agro-processing, digital agriculture, input provision, logistics, financing innovations, and cooperative business models (Ndemezo & Kayunze, 2020). Through innovation-driven enterprise creation, agripreneurship has the potential to generate employment, diversify incomes, enhance food security, and promote socio-economic inclusion (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2017).

At the same time, inclusive development has become a central paradigm in development theory and practice. Inclusive development emphasises equitable participation, empowerment, and the fair distribution of development benefits, rather than economic growth alone (Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015); (Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2010). Agripreneurship innovation aligns closely with this paradigm by enabling marginalized groups to participate meaningfully in agricultural transformation and value creation. Despite growing scholarly interest, the literature on agripreneurship innovation in Tanzania remains fragmented across disciplines, with considerable variation in definitions, theoretical grounding, methodologies, and outcome indicators. Existing reviews tend to adopt regional or global perspectives, often subsuming Tanzania within broader Sub-Saharan African analyses, thereby obscuring country-specific institutional and socio-economic dynamics. Consequently, there is no consolidated understanding of how agripreneurship innovation contributes to inclusive development in Tanzanian communities, nor clarity regarding the mechanisms and enabling conditions through which such outcomes are achieved. This gap underscores the need for a systematic synthesis of the existing evidence.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to systematically examine the role of agripreneurship innovation in advancing inclusive development in Tanzania. In order to achieve this aim, the study pursues the following specific objectives:

- To identify and categorize the principal forms of agripreneurship innovation implemented within Tanzanian communities;
- To analyze the mechanisms through which agripreneurship innovations contribute to inclusive development outcomes

- To examine the institutional, financial, technological, and socio-cultural factors that enables or constrains agripreneurship innovation.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

2.1. Agripreneurship Innovation

Agripreneurship innovation encompasses a broad range of technological, organizational, financial, and institutional innovations that enhance productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness within agricultural systems. Technological innovations include the adoption of digital platforms, improved production technologies, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) that facilitate access to market information, price discovery, and coordination among value-chain actors. Organizational and institutional innovations involve new business models, cooperative arrangements, and contractual mechanisms that restructure relationships between producers, processors, and markets. Empirical evidence from Tanzania demonstrates that agripreneurship innovation plays a pivotal role in transforming smallholder agriculture from subsistence-oriented production into commercially viable enterprises. Studies indicate that digital agricultural platforms significantly improve farmers' access to market information and price transparency, thereby reducing information asymmetries and transaction costs (Mmasa & Msuya, 2012). Similarly, agro-processing and value-addition innovations enable smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs to capture greater shares of value within agricultural value chains, contributing to income diversification and enhanced economic resilience.

Furthermore, cooperative and collective entrepreneurship models have been shown to strengthen the bargaining power of smallholders by facilitating economies of scale, improving access to inputs and markets, and reducing transaction costs. Such models support inclusive participation in agricultural markets and contribute to broader processes of rural economic transformation (Barrett, Christiaensen, Sheahan, & Shimeles, 2020). Collectively, these forms of agripreneurship innovation underscore the potential of entrepreneurial approaches to reposition agriculture as a dynamic and inclusive engine of rural development in Tanzania.

2.2. Tanzania's Agripreneurship Situation

Agripreneurship in Tanzania is increasingly recognized as a strategic pathway for transforming the agricultural sector and promoting inclusive development, although its full potential has yet to be realized. Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Tanzania's economy, contributing a substantial share to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing the majority of the population, particularly in rural areas where smallholder farmers dominate production systems (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2021); (World Bank, 2022). The sector's diversity encompassing subsistence food crops, commercial cash crops, livestock production, and related agribusiness activities provides a broad foundation for entrepreneurial innovation and agricultural value-chain development (Barrett, Christiaensen, Sheahan, & Shimeles, 2020).

Despite its economic significance, the adoption of agripreneurial activities in Tanzania remains relatively nascent. Participation in formal agribusiness is constrained by persistent structural challenges, including low productivity, inadequate physical and market

infrastructure, limited access to finance, weak extension services, and insufficient technical and entrepreneurial skills (Ndemezo & Kayunze, 2020); (World Bank, 2022). These constraints restrict the ability of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs to transition from subsistence-oriented production to higher-value agribusiness enterprises, thereby limiting income diversification and market integration. In response, the Government of Tanzania has introduced a range of policy instruments and development programmes aimed at stimulating agricultural innovation, productivity, and market participation. Key initiatives include the Agricultural Sector Development Programme Phase II (ASDP II), the establishment of agricultural development financing mechanisms, and the implementation of input subsidy schemes (URT, 2021). These interventions are explicitly designed to enhance agribusiness opportunities and improve inclusivity, with particular emphasis on youth and women, who constitute a growing share of agribusiness actors within the sector.

Technological innovation, particularly in digital agriculture, has begun to play a transformative role in Tanzania's agribusiness landscape. Digital platforms and ICT-enabled solutions have enhanced access to market information, improved decision-making, and facilitated linkages between producers and markets (Mmasa & Msuya, 2012). Youth-focused digital initiatives have been especially significant in promoting technology adoption, improving productivity, and strengthening entrepreneurial skills among emerging agribusinesses.

The participation of youth and women in agribusiness is increasingly prioritized within national development strategies due to its potential contribution to employment creation and economic growth. Policy frameworks such as the National Youth Policy and sectoral investment plans seek to integrate young people into agricultural value chains through targeted incentives, training, and access to productive resources (Fox & Sohnesen, 2016); (Njau, Mwakaje, & Manyong, 2019). These efforts reflect broader inclusive development objectives aimed at reducing unemployment and socio-economic inequality.

Nevertheless, significant barriers continue to constrain the scaling and inclusivity of agribusiness in Tanzania. Limited access to capital, high transport and transaction costs, climatic vulnerability, land tenure insecurity, and low adoption of modern technologies remain pervasive challenges (North, 1990); (World Bank, 2022). The literature consistently underscores the need for coordinated policy interventions that strengthen financial access, improve infrastructure, enhance extension and training services, and foster supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems (Stam, 2015).

In summary, agribusiness in Tanzania is gaining momentum as a pathway for inclusive development and rural transformation. However, its transformative potential remains constrained by structural, institutional, and capacity-related challenges. Addressing these constraints through coherent policy frameworks and ecosystem-based support is essential for fully harnessing agribusiness as a driver of inclusive and sustainable development.

2.3. Inclusive Development

Inclusive development represents a normative and analytical approach to development that extends beyond income growth to emphasize equitable participation, empowerment, and

social justice. Rather than focusing solely on aggregate economic expansion, inclusive development seeks to ensure that the benefits of economic transformation are broadly shared, particularly among historically marginalized groups such as women, youth, and smallholder producers. Central to this perspective is the reduction of structural inequalities related to gender, age, and unequal access to productive resources, capabilities, and opportunities (Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015).

In the Tanzanian context, the inclusive development paradigm is especially salient due to the predominance of smallholder agriculture and the persistence of rural poverty and vulnerability. A significant proportion of the population relies on agriculture for livelihoods, yet many rural households remain excluded from high-value markets, formal employment, and productive assets. Consequently, development strategies that fail to integrate inclusivity risk reinforcing existing inequalities and limiting the sustainability of economic growth. The literature identifies several key indicators through which inclusive development outcomes can be assessed, including employment creation, income generation, poverty reduction, empowerment of women and youth, food security, and social inclusion (Fox & Sohnesen, 2016); (Njau, Mwakaje, & Manyong, 2019). These dimensions reflect both economic and social aspects of development, capturing improvements in material well-being as well as enhanced agency and participation in decision-making processes.

Agripreneurship innovation aligns closely with inclusive development objectives by expanding opportunities for marginalized groups to participate meaningfully in agricultural value chains beyond primary production. Through engagement in agro-processing, marketing, service provision, and digital platforms, agripreneurial initiatives enable smallholders, women, and youth to access higher-value activities, diversify income sources, and strengthen their economic resilience. In this regard, agripreneurship innovation serves as a critical mechanism through which agricultural transformation can contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in Tanzania.

2.4. Theoretical Foundations

This systematic literature review is grounded in four complementary theoretical perspectives that collectively explain the mechanisms through which agripreneurship innovation contributes to inclusive development in Tanzania. Integrating these theories provides a robust analytical framework for interpreting empirical evidence and understanding the multidimensional pathways linking innovation, institutions, and development outcomes.

First, Schumpeterian innovation theory conceptualizes innovation as the primary engine of economic development, driven by the introduction of new combinations of resources, products, processes, and organizational forms (Schumpeter, 1934). Within the context of agripreneurship, this perspective highlights the transformative role of entrepreneurial innovation in disrupting traditional agricultural practices, enhancing productivity, and creating new market opportunities. Agripreneurship innovation reflects Schumpeterian dynamics by enabling value addition, technological adoption, and novel business models across agricultural value chains.

Second, institutional theory emphasizes the role of formal and informal institutions in shaping economic behavior and entrepreneurial activity. According to this perspective, regulatory frameworks, property rights regimes, land tenure systems, and governance structures significantly influence the incentives and constraints faced by agripreneurs (North, 1990). In Tanzania, institutional arrangements play a critical role in determining access to land, finance, and markets, thereby affecting the emergence, performance, and inclusivity of agripreneurial ventures. Institutional theory is therefore essential for understanding both enabling conditions and structural barriers to agripreneurship-led inclusive development.

Third, entrepreneurial ecosystem theory underscores the interconnected nature of entrepreneurial activity, highlighting the importance of networks of actors, supportive institutions, financial capital, human skills, and market access in fostering entrepreneurial success (Stam, 2015). From this perspective, agripreneurship innovation does not occur in isolation but is embedded within broader socio-economic systems. The effectiveness of agripreneurial initiatives depends on the strength and coherence of local and national ecosystems that facilitate knowledge diffusion, resource mobilization, and collaboration among stakeholders.

Finally, inclusive development theory provides a normative framework linking agripreneurship innovation to broader social and developmental objectives. This perspective emphasizes equity, empowerment, participation, and the reduction of structural inequalities as central goals of development processes (Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2010). Inclusive development theory is particularly relevant for evaluating whether agripreneurship innovation translates into tangible benefits for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and smallholder farmers, rather than merely generating aggregate economic gains.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing agripreneurship innovation as both an economic and social process. Their integration enables a nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial innovation, institutional contexts, ecosystem dynamics, and inclusivity considerations interact to shape development outcomes in Tanzania.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology in accordance with the PRISMA, 2020 guidelines (Page, et al., 2021). The systematic review approach was selected to ensure transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor in the identification, selection, and synthesis of existing research on agripreneurship innovation and inclusive development in Tanzania. By following a structured and protocol-driven process, the review minimizes selection bias and provides a comprehensive and reliable synthesis of the available evidence.

3.2. Search Strategy

A comprehensive search strategy was implemented to identify relevant peer-reviewed literature. Major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, were systematically searched using combinations of keywords and Boolean

operators. The primary search terms included agripreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship, innovation, inclusive development, and Tanzania. To enhance coverage and reduce the risk of omitting relevant studies, the reference lists of all eligible articles were manually screened to identify additional pertinent publications.

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the screening process to ensure consistency and relevance. Studies were included if they were peer-reviewed journal articles, focused on agripreneurship or agricultural entrepreneurship, examined inclusive development outcomes, were conducted in, or directly relevant to, the Tanzanian context, and were published in English between 2000 and 2024.

Studies were excluded if they were conference papers, policy reports, theses, or other forms of grey literature, lacked a clear focus on agripreneurship or inclusive development, or focused exclusively on non-Tanzanian contexts without relevant comparative insights.

3.4. Study Selection and Data Extraction

The study selection process followed the PRISMA flow protocol, resulting in the inclusion of 48 studies in the final review. After removing duplicates, titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text assessment based on the predefined criteria. Data were systematically extracted from each included study using a structured extraction form. The extracted information included publication year, research methodology, sectoral focus, types of agripreneurship innovation, and reported inclusive development outcomes.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed journal and quality articles	Blogs, Editorials, and Opinion pieces
Papers published in English	Non-English published articles without translation
Article focused on agripreneurship or agricultural entrepreneurship	Studies lacking a clear focus on agripreneurship or inclusive development
Articles with relevance to promotion of Agripreneurship	Articles without showing the relevance to Agripreneurship promotion

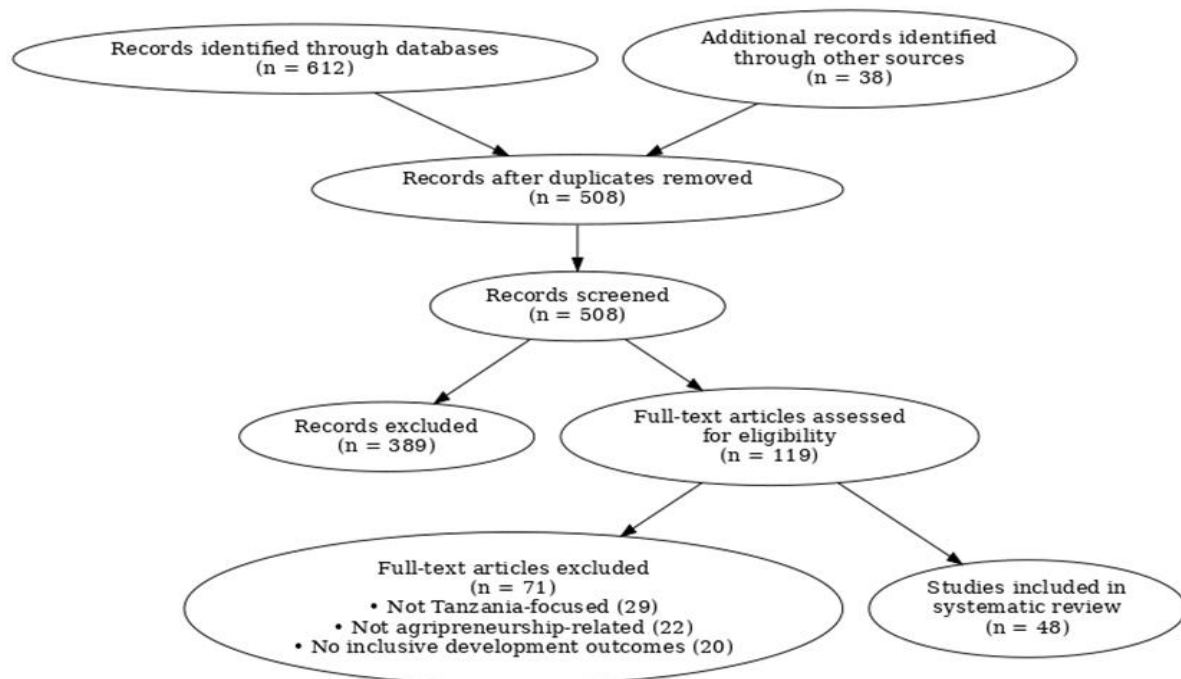


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process

3.5. Data Analysis

A thematic synthesis approach was employed to analyze the extracted data. This involved iterative coding and categorization to identify recurring patterns, themes, and relationships across the reviewed studies. The findings were organized around key thematic areas, including agripreneurship innovation pathways, enabling and constraining ecosystem factors, and inclusive development outcomes. This analytical approach facilitated the integration of diverse empirical and conceptual insights into a coherent and interpretable synthesis.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Characteristics of Reviewed Studies

The descriptive analysis reveals a notable increase in scholarly attention to agripreneurship innovation in Tanzania over the past decade, with the majority of reviewed studies published after 2015. This trend reflects growing academic and policy recognition of agripreneurship as a strategic mechanism for agricultural transformation and inclusive development (Barrett, Christiaensen, Sheahan, & Shimeles, 2020); (World Bank, 2022). Methodologically, qualitative research designs dominated the literature, followed by quantitative and mixed-methods approaches, indicating a strong emphasis on contextual exploration and case-based analysis of agripreneurial initiatives (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

In terms of sectoral focus, most studies concentrated on crop agriculture, agro-processing, and youth-led agribusiness ventures (Ndemezo & Kayunze, 2020). This distribution underscores the importance of these sub-sectors in Tanzania's agrarian economy and their potential for employment creation and income diversification among marginalized populations.

Table 2: Descriptive Characteristics of Reviewed Studies (n = 48)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency
Publication period	2000–2010	7
	2011–2015	9
	2016–2024	32
Methodology	Qualitative	21
	Quantitative	15
	Mixed methods	12
Sector focus	Crop agriculture	20
	Agro-processing	11
	Youth agribusiness	9
	Livestock & others	8

4.2. Agripreneurship Innovation Pathways

The thematic synthesis identified five dominant agripreneurship innovation pathways in the Tanzanian context. First, digital agriculture and ICT-enabled platforms were widely reported as mechanisms for improving access to market information, price transparency, and coordination among value-chain actors (Mmasa & Msuya, 2012). These innovations reflect Schumpeterian innovation dynamics through the introduction of new production and exchange processes (Schumpeter, 1934). Second, agro-processing and value addition innovations enable agripreneurs to move beyond primary production, capture higher value, and diversify income streams. Third, cooperative and collective entrepreneurship models enhance smallholder bargaining power, reduce transaction costs, and facilitate economies of scale, consistent with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, which emphasizes networks and collective action (Stam, 2015). Fourth, innovative financing mechanisms, including microfinance, blended finance, and savings-based group models, address capital constraints that disproportionately affect small-scale agripreneurs (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015). Finally, climate-smart agricultural practices support resilience to climate variability while improving productivity and sustainability.

Table 3: Agripreneurship Innovation Pathways Identified in the Literature

Innovation pathway	Description	Key theoretical linkage
Digital agriculture	ICT platforms, mobile markets	Schumpeterian innovation
Agro-processing	Value addition, local processing	Innovation theory
Cooperative models	Collective action, scale economies	Ecosystem theory
Innovative finance	Microfinance, blended finance	Institutional theory
Climate-smart practices	Resilience and sustainability	Inclusive development

Among the innovation pathways identified, digital agriculture is the most frequently examined, appearing in 24 of the 48 reviewed studies, followed by agro-processing and value addition (22 studies) and cooperative entrepreneurship models (19 studies). Innovative

financing mechanisms are discussed in 14 studies, while climate-smart agricultural practices feature in 12 studies. This distribution suggests a growing scholarly emphasis on technology-driven and market-oriented innovations, with relatively less attention paid to environmental sustainability and long-term resilience.

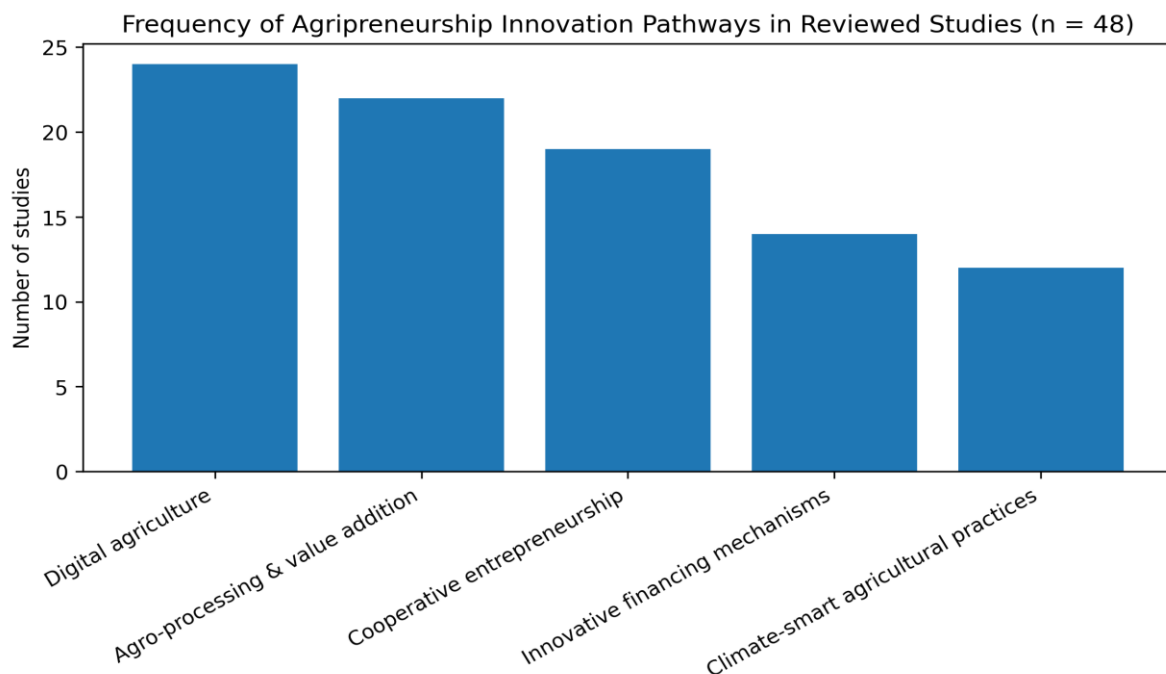


Figure2: Frequency of Agripreneurship Innovation Pathways Identified in Reviewed Studies (n = 48)

Sources: Researcher, 2026

4.3. Inclusive Development Outcomes

Across the reviewed studies, agripreneurship innovation was consistently associated with positive inclusive development outcomes. Employment creation particularly for youth and women emerged as one of the most frequently reported impacts, reflecting the labour-absorbing potential of agripreneurial ventures (Fox & Sohnesen, 2016); (Ndemezo & Kayunze, 2020). Income diversification and poverty reduction were also widely documented, as agripreneurs engaged in higher-value activities along agricultural value chains (Njau, Mwakaje, & Manyong, 2019).

Improved market access for smallholder farmers was facilitated through digital platforms, cooperative arrangements, and contractual value-chain integration (Mmasa & Msuya, 2012). Several studies further highlighted enhanced empowerment and participation in economic decision-making, particularly among women and youth, aligning with inclusive development theory's emphasis on agency and equity (Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015). Additionally, agripreneurship innovation contributed to improved food security and community resilience by strengthening local production systems and income stability.

Table 4: Inclusive Development Outcomes Associated with Agripreneurship Innovation

Outcome	Evidence from literature	Theoretical linkage
Employment creation	Youth & women engagement	Inclusive development
Income diversification	Value-chain upgrading	Innovation theory
Market inclusion	Digital & cooperative models	Ecosystem theory
Empowerment	Decision-making participation	Inclusive development
Food security	Local value addition	Institutional theory

Table5: Frequency of Inclusive Development Outcomes Reported in Reviewed Studies (n = 48)

Inclusive development outcome	Number of studies	Percentage (%)
Employment creation (youth & women)	32	66.7
Income diversification / poverty reduction	29	60.4
Improved market access	27	56.3
Empowerment & decision-making participation	21	43.8
Food security improvement	18	37.5
Community resilience	15	31.3

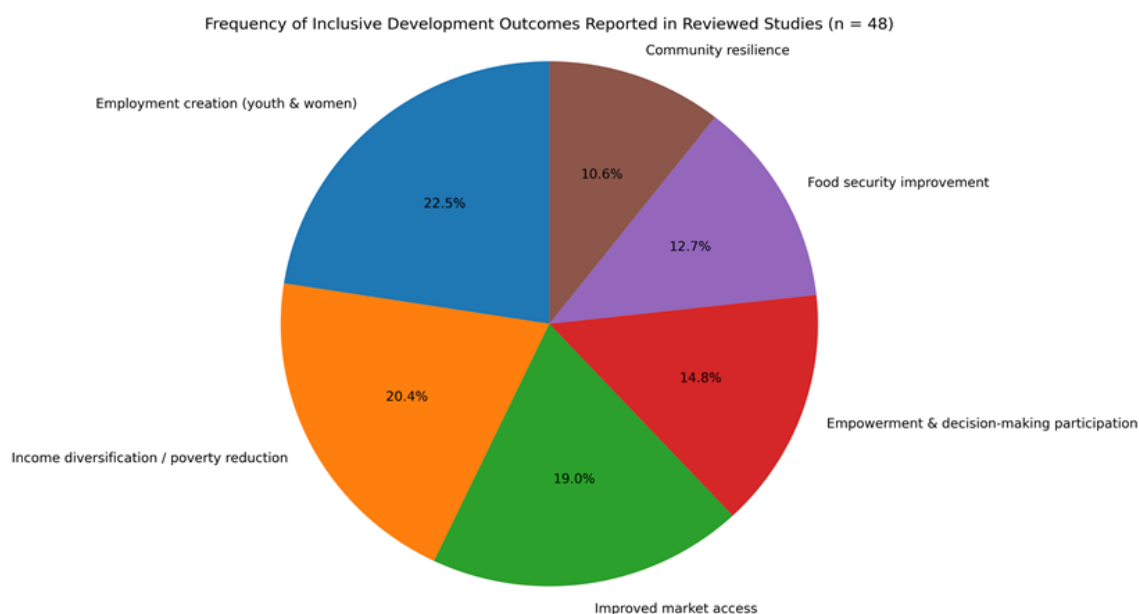


Figure 3: Frequency of Inclusive Development Outcomes Reported in Reviewed Studies (n = 48)

Overall, employment creation emerges as the most frequently reported inclusive development outcome, documented in approximately two-thirds of the reviewed studies. Income diversification and poverty reduction also feature prominently, particularly in studies focusing on agro-processing and cooperative entrepreneurship. Market access improvements are widely reported but vary in depth and sustainability across contexts. In contrast,

empowerment-related outcomes and community resilience are less frequently examined, indicating a relative emphasis in the literature on economic inclusion over social and institutional dimensions of inclusivity.

4.3.1. Convergent and Divergent Evidence on Inclusive Development Outcomes

While the reviewed studies largely converge on the positive role of agripreneurship innovation in advancing inclusive development, important variations emerge regarding the magnitude and distribution of these outcomes. A substantial body of literature reports consistent positive effects on employment creation, income diversification, and market access, particularly for youth and smallholder farmers. These findings are most pronounced in studies examining agro-processing, cooperative entrepreneurship, and digital agriculture initiatives, which facilitate value-chain upgrading and participation beyond primary production.

However, a smaller but significant subset of studies presents more nuanced or conditional findings. In these studies, inclusive development outcomes were found to be unevenly distributed, with benefits accruing disproportionately to better-resourced farmers or agripreneurs with prior market access, higher education levels, or stronger social networks. For example, while digital agriculture platforms improved market access overall, several studies noted limited benefits for women and remote rural producers due to digital literacy gaps and infrastructure constraints. Similarly, climate-smart agricultural innovations enhanced resilience and productivity but did not always translate into immediate income gains, particularly in contexts characterized by weak market integration.

These contrasting findings suggest that agripreneurship innovation does not automatically yield inclusive outcomes. Rather, inclusivity is contingent upon complementary factors such as institutional support, ecosystem readiness, and targeted inclusion mechanisms. This reinforces the argument that agripreneurship innovation must be embedded within enabling policy and ecosystem frameworks to ensure equitable development outcomes.

4.4. Enablers and Barriers

The review identifies a range of enabling and constraining factors shaping agripreneurship innovation and its inclusive development impacts. Key enablers include supportive policy frameworks, access to entrepreneurial training and extension services, strong social networks, and the availability of digital technologies (URT, 2021; (World Bank, 2022)). These factors correspond closely with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, which emphasises the interdependence of institutions, skills, finance, and networks (Stam, 2015).

Conversely, persistent barriers limit the scalability and sustainability of agripreneurial initiatives. These include limited access to finance, inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, regulatory complexity, land tenure insecurity, and skills gaps (North, 1990). From an institutional theory perspective, these barriers reflect structural constraints embedded within formal and informal governance systems that disproportionately affect smallholder agripreneurs and marginalized groups.

Table 6: Enablers and Barriers to Agripreneurship Innovation

Enablers	Barriers
Supportive policies	Regulatory complexity
Training & skills	Skills gaps
Social networks	Limited finance
Digital technologies	Infrastructure deficits
Market access	Land tenure insecurity

The systematic review identifies a range of enabling and constraining factors that shape the emergence, performance, and inclusivity of agripreneurship innovation in Tanzania. These factors operate at institutional, ecosystem, and firm levels, influencing both the adoption of innovation and the distribution of development outcomes.

On the enabling side, supportive policy frameworks emerge as a critical determinant of agripreneurship innovation. Approximately 26 of the 48 reviewed studies (54%) highlight the role of government-led programmes, agricultural development strategies, and sectoral policies in facilitating agripreneurial activities, particularly through investment incentives, youth and women entrepreneurship schemes, and agricultural modernization initiatives (URT, 2021; (World Bank, 2022). Closely related to policy support is access to entrepreneurial training and extension services, which is emphasized in 29 studies (60%) as essential for enhancing technical competence, business skills, and innovation adoption among agripreneurs.

Social networks and cooperative arrangements are also identified as significant enablers, reported in 21 studies (44%). These networks facilitate knowledge sharing, collective action, market coordination, and risk reduction, particularly for smallholder farmers and resource-constrained agripreneurs. In addition, the availability of digital technologies, including mobile platforms and ICT-enabled market systems, is highlighted in 24 studies (50%) as a key enabler of market access, price transparency, and value-chain integration. These enabling factors collectively align with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, which emphasizes the interdependence of institutions, human capital, finance, infrastructure, and networks in fostering entrepreneurial activity (Stam, 2015).

Despite these enabling conditions, the review reveals persistent barriers that constrain the scalability, sustainability, and inclusivity of agripreneurship innovation. Limited access to finance is the most frequently cited constraint, appearing in 33 studies (69%), reflecting difficulties related to collateral requirements, high interest rates, and the limited availability of tailored financial products for agripreneurs. Infrastructure deficits, including inadequate transport, storage facilities, and unreliable digital connectivity, are reported in 28 studies (58%), significantly increasing transaction costs and limiting market participation.

Institutional barriers are particularly prominent. Regulatory complexity and administrative burdens are identified in 22 studies (46%), with agripreneurs facing challenges related to licensing procedures, taxation, and compliance costs. Land tenure insecurity is reported in 19 studies (40%), disproportionately affecting smallholder farmers, women, and youth, and constraining long-term investment and innovation adoption. Additionally, skills

gaps, particularly in business management, digital literacy, and value-chain coordination, are highlighted in 25 studies (52%), undermining the effectiveness of agripreneurship initiatives.

From an institutional theory perspective, these barriers reflect structural constraints embedded within formal and informal governance systems that shape access to resources and opportunities (North, 1990). The findings indicate that while agripreneurship innovation holds substantial potential for inclusive development, its impact is highly contingent upon the presence of enabling institutional frameworks and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems. Without targeted interventions to address financial, infrastructural, regulatory, and capability-related constraints, agripreneurship innovation risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than delivering broad-based inclusive development.

4.5. Synthesis and Link to Theory

Overall, the findings of this systematic literature review provide strong empirical support for the integrated theoretical framework outlined in Section 2.3. In line with Schumpeterian innovation theory, the evidence demonstrates that agripreneurship innovation facilitates the introduction of new combinations of resources, technologies, and organizational arrangements that enable value creation, productivity enhancement, and market upgrading within agricultural value chains (Schumpeter, 1934). Innovation pathways such as digital agriculture, agro-processing, and climate-smart practices exemplify the transformative role of entrepreneurial innovation in reshaping traditional agricultural systems.

The findings also substantiate the relevance of institutional theory, which emphasizes the influence of formal and informal rules on economic behavior. The reviewed studies consistently show that policies, land tenure arrangements, regulatory frameworks, and governance structures play a decisive role in enabling or constraining agripreneurial activity in Tanzania (North, 1990). Institutional barriers such as regulatory complexity and insecure property rights emerge as key constraints limiting the scalability and inclusivity of agripreneurial initiatives, while supportive policy environments enhance innovation adoption and enterprise growth.

Furthermore, the results align closely with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, highlighting the importance of interconnected actors, financial capital, skills development, market access, and social networks in shaping agripreneurship outcomes (Stam, 2015). Agripreneurship innovation is shown to be embedded within broader ecosystem dynamics rather than occurring in isolation, underscoring the need for coordinated, system-level interventions to support inclusive agribusiness development.

Finally, inclusive development theory provides a normative lens through which the developmental significance of agripreneurship innovation can be evaluated. The findings indicate that agripreneurship contributes not only to economic outcomes but also to social inclusion, empowerment, and equitable participation, particularly among women, youth, and smallholder farmers (Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015); (Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2010). This synthesis underscores that agripreneurship innovation can serve as an effective mechanism for inclusive development when supported by enabling institutional frameworks and robust entrepreneurial ecosystems.

5. Discussion

This systematic literature review set out to synthesize existing evidence on the role of agripreneurship innovation in advancing inclusive development in Tanzania. The findings provide compelling support for the argument that agripreneurship innovation constitutes a critical mechanism through which agricultural transformation can generate both economic and social benefits. However, the discussion also reveals that the inclusivity and sustainability of agripreneurial outcomes are highly contingent upon institutional contexts, ecosystem conditions, and the nature of innovation pathways adopted.

First, the findings demonstrate that agripreneurship innovation contributes meaningfully to inclusive development by expanding participation in agricultural value chains beyond primary production. Innovations such as digital agriculture, agro-processing, and cooperative entrepreneurship enable smallholder farmers, youth, and women to engage in higher-value activities, thereby enhancing employment opportunities, income diversification, and market inclusion. This supports broader development literature that emphasizes the importance of value-chain upgrading and entrepreneurship as drivers of rural transformation in agrarian economies. Importantly, the review highlights that inclusion is not an automatic outcome of agripreneurship but is most evident where innovations deliberately lower entry barriers and enhance access to markets, information, and productive resources.

Second, the findings reinforce the explanatory relevance of Schumpeterian innovation theory, which conceptualizes innovation as a driver of economic development through new combinations of resources and processes. In the Tanzanian context, agripreneurship innovation manifests through novel organizational arrangements, technological adoption, and value-addition strategies that disrupt traditional subsistence-oriented farming systems. Digital platforms and climate-smart practices, in particular, illustrate how innovation can simultaneously enhance productivity and resilience, aligning economic objectives with sustainability considerations.

Third, the review underscores the centrality of institutional theory in understanding both the opportunities and constraints associated with agripreneurship innovation. While supportive policies and development programmes have created enabling conditions for agripreneurial activity, persistent institutional barriers such as regulatory complexity, land tenure insecurity, and limited access to finance continue to constrain scalability and long-term impact. These findings suggest that agripreneurship innovation alone is insufficient to deliver inclusive development in the absence of coherent and inclusive institutional frameworks. Institutional weaknesses disproportionately affect marginalized groups, thereby limiting the equity-enhancing potential of agripreneurship.

Fourth, the results strongly align with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, which emphasizes the interdependence of actors, resources, and institutions in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes. Agripreneurship innovation in Tanzania is embedded within broader socio-economic ecosystems that include financial institutions, extension services, digital infrastructure, social networks, and policy environments. The findings indicate that where these ecosystem components are fragmented or underdeveloped, agripreneurial

initiatives struggle to scale and sustain inclusive impacts. Conversely, coordinated ecosystem support enhances innovation adoption, market participation, and enterprise growth.

Finally, from the perspective of inclusive development theory, the findings highlight that agripreneurship innovation contributes not only to economic growth but also to empowerment, participation, and social inclusion. Evidence of improved decision-making power among women and youth, enhanced food security, and strengthened community resilience underscores the multidimensional nature of agripreneurship-led development. However, the uneven distribution of benefits across regions and social groups suggests that inclusivity remains conditional rather than universal, reinforcing the need for targeted and context-sensitive interventions.

Overall, the discussion reveals that agripreneurship innovation represents a promising but incomplete pathway to inclusive development in Tanzania. Its effectiveness depends on the interaction between innovation types, institutional arrangements, and ecosystem dynamics. These findings contribute to the literature by moving beyond a purely optimistic view of agripreneurship and emphasizing the conditions under which it can meaningfully support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation.

6. Conclusion

This systematic literature review provides robust evidence that agripreneurship innovation constitutes a critical pathway for advancing inclusive development in Tanzania. By facilitating engagement in agricultural value chains beyond primary production, agripreneurship innovation contributes to employment creation, income diversification, and enhanced social inclusion, particularly among youth, women, and smallholder farmers. The review highlights the capacity of agripreneurial initiatives to generate both economic and social benefits, thereby aligning agricultural transformation with the broader objectives of inclusive development.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the transformative potential of agripreneurship innovation remains constrained by persistent structural and institutional barriers. Limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, regulatory complexity, land tenure insecurity, and skills gaps continue to impede the scalability and sustainability of agripreneurial ventures. These constraints underscore the importance of moving beyond isolated interventions towards coordinated, ecosystem-based approaches that integrate policy support, institutional reform, capacity development, and market access.

6.1. Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of this systematic literature review, several policy recommendations are proposed to strengthen the contribution of agripreneurship innovation to inclusive development in Tanzania.

First, there is a need to strengthen agripreneurship-focused financing instruments that are specifically tailored to the needs of youth and women. This includes the expansion of accessible credit facilities, blended finance mechanisms, and guarantee schemes that reduce collateral requirements and address structural financing constraints faced by marginalized agripreneurs. Such targeted financial interventions can enhance enterprise formation, growth, and sustainability.

Second, policymakers should promote investment in digital infrastructure and market platforms in rural areas. Expanding access to digital technologies and ICT-enabled agricultural platforms can improve market connectivity, price transparency, and coordination across value chains, thereby enhancing the competitiveness and inclusivity of agripreneurial activities.

Third, the integration of agripreneurship training into existing agricultural extension services is essential. Extension programmes should move beyond production-focused approaches to incorporate entrepreneurial skills, business management, value addition, and innovation capabilities. Strengthening human capital in this manner can improve the capacity of agripreneurs to identify opportunities, adopt innovations, and engage effectively with markets.

Fourth, there is a need to enhance policy coherence across agriculture, entrepreneurship, and youth development sectors. Fragmented policy frameworks often result in overlapping mandates and inefficiencies. Improved coordination among relevant ministries and agencies can create a more enabling institutional environment for agripreneurship innovation and inclusive development.

Finally, policymakers should support cooperative and collective agribusiness models as a means of improving market inclusion for smallholder farmers. By facilitating collective action, such models can strengthen bargaining power, reduce transaction costs, and enable small-scale producers to participate more effectively in higher-value agricultural markets.

Together, these policy measures can contribute to the development of inclusive agripreneurial ecosystems capable of advancing sustainable rural transformation and equitable economic growth in Tanzania.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contributions of this systematic literature review, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review is restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English, which may have resulted in the exclusion of relevant grey literature, policy reports, and locally disseminated studies that could provide additional insights into agripreneurship innovation in Tanzania. Second, the reliance on secondary data limits the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships between agripreneurship innovation and inclusive development outcomes. The reviewed studies vary in methodological rigor and outcome measurement, which may affect the comparability and generalizability of findings.

These limitations highlight important avenues for future research. There is a need for longitudinal and impact-evaluation studies that examine the long-term effects of agripreneurship innovation on livelihoods, inclusion, and rural transformation. Future studies should also explore region-specific and context-sensitive dynamics within Tanzania, recognizing variations in agro-ecological conditions, institutional arrangements, and socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, further research should assess the sustainability and scalability of inclusive agripreneurial models, particularly in relation to environmental resilience, market volatility, and policy support mechanisms. Addressing these research gaps would deepen

understanding of the conditions under which agripreneurship innovation can effectively contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.

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