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An Integrated Growth and Scaling Framework for Emerging Organisations: A VUCA-Based Conceptual Model

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Abstract
Emerging organisations operating in contemporary business environments are increasingly confronted with conditions characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). While prior research has identified a range of growth strategies including innovation, leadership development, market entry, digital transformation, and funding mechanisms these approaches are often examined in isolation, limiting their explanatory power in understanding how firms successfully transition from start-up to scalable enterprises. This paper addresses this gap by developing an integrated conceptual framework that explains the mechanisms through which emerging organisations achieve sustainable growth and scalability under VUCA conditions. Drawing on a synthesis of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory, Innovation Management Theory, and Strategic Decision-Making Theory, the study adopts a theory-building approach to construct a VUCA-based Input–Process–Output (IPO) model with embedded feedback loops. The proposed framework conceptualises growth as a dynamic and iterative process driven by key inputs such as innovation capability, leadership capacity, digital readiness, financial resources, and market intelligence. These inputs are transformed through a set of interrelated organisational processes, including opportunity sensing and innovation, market expansion strategies, organisational capability development, digital and operational optimisation, and strategic financial management. Central to the framework is the integration of feedback mechanisms that enable continuous learning, adaptation, and recalibration of strategic priorities in response to environmental turbulence. This recursive structure positions emerging organisations not as passive responders to uncertainty, but as adaptive systems capable of leveraging VUCA conditions as catalysts for innovation and competitive advantage. The model further incorporates contextual moderators such as institutional pressures, resource constraints, and market dynamics, which shape the pace and trajectory of organisational scaling. By extending existing conceptualisations of strategic emergence beyond sector-specific applications, this paper contributes a holistic and transferable framework for understanding growth and scalability in emerging organisations, particularly within developing and resource-constrained environments. The framework provides both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for entrepreneurs, managers, and policymakers seeking to navigate the complexities of organisational growth in uncertain contexts.
Keywords: Emerging organisations; VUCA; Scaling; Dynamic capabilities; Innovation strategy

1. Introduction

In the contemporary global economy, emerging organisations have become critical drivers of innovation, employment creation, and economic transformation. These organisations, particularly start-ups and early-stage firms, operate in environments increasingly characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), where rapid technological change, shifting consumer preferences, and intensified competition demand continuous adaptation and strategic agility. The global shift towards knowledge-based economies and digitalisation has further amplified the need for organisations to develop capabilities that enable not only survival but scalable growth (Teece, 2023; Zhao, 2023). While studies have identified key growth drivers such as innovation, leadership, and market expansion, there remains limited integration of these elements into coherent frameworks that explain how emerging organisations transition from inception to sustained scalability under turbulent conditions (Morris & Kuratko, 2021; Murray & O'Neill, 2023).

Within the African context, the growth of emerging organisations is increasingly viewed as central to economic development, industrialisation, and job creation. African economies are experiencing rapid entrepreneurial activity, yet this growth is often constrained by infrastructural deficits, institutional weaknesses, and limited access to finance (Audretsch, 2012; Klein, 2023). Furthermore, the VUCA nature of many African markets characterised by regulatory uncertainty, economic instability, and socio-political dynamics intensifies the challenges faced by emerging organisations attempting to scale. Despite these constraints, African firms have demonstrated resilience and innovation, often leveraging digital platforms, informal networks, and adaptive business models to overcome structural limitations (Kuratko, 2017; Perez & Hult, 2022). However, the absence of integrated growth frameworks limits the ability of these organisations to systematically translate entrepreneurial activity into sustained competitive advantage.

At the regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) presents a unique environment for emerging organisations, marked by both opportunity and constraint. The region offers expanding markets, increasing regional integration, and growing investment in infrastructure and technology. However, disparities in economic development, policy inconsistencies, and institutional inefficiencies continue to pose significant barriers to business growth and scalability (Van Stel et al., 2018). Emerging organisations within SADC must therefore navigate cross-border complexities, regulatory fragmentation, and resource constraints while simultaneously pursuing growth opportunities. These dynamics necessitate strategic approaches that integrate innovation, market entry, partnerships, and organisational capability development within a coherent framework capable of addressing regional realities.

In Zimbabwe, the challenges and opportunities associated with emerging organisations are particularly pronounced. The country's economic landscape is characterised by macroeconomic instability, liquidity constraints, and evolving regulatory frameworks, all of which contribute to a highly uncertain operating environment. Despite these challenges, Zimbabwe has witnessed significant entrepreneurial activity, with firms leveraging innovation, digital technologies, and alternative financing mechanisms to sustain operations and pursue growth. For example, the rise of mobile money platforms and digitally enabled businesses highlights the capacity of emerging organisations to innovate under constraint. However, many of these organisations struggle to transition from start-up to growth phase due to structural challenges such as limited access to capital, weak institutional support, and managerial capability gaps (Davila et al., 2003; Gompers & Lerner, 2001). This underscores the need for a structured and contextually relevant framework to guide scaling in such environments.

Although existing literature provides valuable insights into individual growth strategies—such as innovation, leadership, customer-centricity, and funding, there is a notable gap in integrative models that synthesise these elements into a unified conceptual framework tailored for emerging organisations operating under VUCA conditions. Conceptual work such as that of demonstrates the value of integrating multiple theoretical lenses into an Input–Process–Output (IPO) model with feedback loops to explain organisational emergence and sustainability. However, such frameworks have largely been applied in sector-specific contexts, particularly higher education, leaving a gap in their application to business-oriented emerging organisations.

This paper addresses this gap by developing **an integrated growth and scaling framework for emerging organisations** grounded in VUCA conditions. Drawing on Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovation Management, and Strategic Decision-Making Theory, the study proposes a conceptual model that explains how key organisational inputs are transformed through strategic processes into scalable outcomes, supported by continuous feedback and learning mechanisms.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on emerging organisations, growth challenges, and key strategic drivers of scaling. Section 3 outlines the theoretical foundations underpinning the study. Section 4 presents the proposed conceptual framework, detailing its components and underlying logic. Section 5 discusses the strategic and practical implications of the framework for emerging organisations operating in VUCA environments. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper and offers recommendations for future research and practice.

2. Positioning Organisations as Emerging Organisations in the Zimbabwean Context

Emerging organisations are typically characterised as firms that operate under conditions of resource constraints, institutional fluidity, and high environmental uncertainty, while simultaneously demonstrating adaptive learning, innovation, and growth potential (Morris & Kuratko, 2021; Murray & O'Neill, 2023). In the context of Zimbabwe, these characteristics are particularly pronounced, positioning many firms especially start-ups and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) as prototypical emerging organisations. Zimbabwe's economic environment, marked by macroeconomic instability, currency volatility, and regulatory shifts, creates a VUCA landscape within which organisations must continuously adapt their strategies to survive and scale.

Within this context, emerging organisations in Zimbabwe are not merely defined by their size or age, but by their capacity for strategic adaptation and resilience under constraint. As highlighted in the study, firms transitioning from start-up to growth phase face critical challenges including inadequate infrastructure, limited financial literacy, weak formal structures, and funding constraints. These challenges are compounded by the need to maintain organisational culture, retain customers, and manage leadership transitions as firms expand. Such dynamics reinforce the notion that emerging organisations in Zimbabwe operate within a complex interplay of internal capability gaps and external environmental pressures.

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A defining feature of emerging organisations in Zimbabwe is their reliance on innovation as a survival and growth mechanism. Given limited access to traditional resources, firms often leverage product, process, and business model innovation to remain competitive. For instance, digital platforms and mobile-based solutions have transformed sectors such as finance, retail, and logistics, enabling firms to bypass infrastructural limitations and reach underserved markets. The study emphasises that innovation, supported by theoretical lenses such as Schumpeterian innovation and disruptive innovation theory, serves as a critical driver of differentiation and market positioning in such environments. This aligns with broader scholarship which positions innovation as central to competitive advantage in resource-constrained settings (Schilling, 2017; Ries, 2011).

In addition to innovation, entrepreneurial orientation and leadership capability play a pivotal role in shaping organisational emergence in Zimbabwe. Leaders of emerging organisations are required to navigate uncertainty, make rapid decisions, and mobilise limited resources effectively. As noted in the study, building strong leadership teams with diverse competencies enhances organisational agility and strategic responsiveness. This is consistent with Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory, which emphasises innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking as key dimensions of organisational success (Covin & Wales, 2019). In Zimbabwe's volatile environment, these attributes enable firms to identify opportunities within constraints and respond proactively to market changes.

Furthermore, emerging organisations in Zimbabwe are increasingly adopting customer-centric and digitally enabled business models to sustain growth. The study highlights the importance of aligning products and services with customer needs, particularly in competitive and resource-constrained markets. This is evident in the widespread use of digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and mobile payment systems, which allow firms to engage customers directly, reduce transaction costs, and enhance service delivery. Such practices reflect the growing importance of digital transformation as a strategic enabler of scalability and operational efficiency (Zhao, 2023).

Another critical dimension of organisational emergence in Zimbabwe is the role of strategic partnerships and alternative funding mechanisms. Due to limited access to formal financing, many emerging organisations rely on bootstrapping, informal networks, and strategic alliances to mobilise resources and expand operations. The study underscores the importance of partnerships in accessing new markets, technologies, and capabilities, thereby accelerating growth and reducing risk. This aligns with Network Theory, which emphasises the value of inter-organisational relationships in enhancing competitiveness and resource access (Perez & Hult, 2022). Additionally, firms often adopt flexible funding strategies, combining internal financing with external sources such as venture capital, crowdfunding, and debt financing to support scaling efforts.

Despite these adaptive strategies, emerging organisations in Zimbabwe continue to face significant barriers to scaling. Structural challenges such as policy inconsistency, limited infrastructure, and constrained access to capital create an environment where growth is often nonlinear and unpredictable. As a result, many firms remain trapped in survival mode, unable to transition effectively into sustained growth phases. This highlights the need for integrated frameworks that not only identify growth strategies but also explain how these strategies can be systematically combined and operationalised within a VUCA context.

In summary, organisations in Zimbabwe can be positioned as emerging organisations based on their adaptive capacity, innovation-driven strategies, entrepreneurial orientation, and reliance on dynamic capabilities to navigate uncertainty. However, the fragmented nature of existing strategic approaches underscores the need for a more holistic and integrated perspective. This paper builds on these insights by developing a conceptual framework that synthesises key growth drivers into a coherent model for scaling emerging organisations in VUCA environments.

3. Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning the Study

This study draws on an integrative set of theoretical perspectives to explain how emerging organisations can achieve growth and scalability within VUCA environments. Specifically, the framework is grounded in Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory, Innovation Management Theory, and Strategic Decision-Making Theory, with complementary insights from institutional and network perspectives. These theories collectively provide a multi-dimensional lens for understanding how organisations mobilise resources, respond to environmental turbulence, and sustain competitive advantage over time.

3.1 Dynamic capabilities theory

Dynamic Capabilities Theory posits that an organisation's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies is critical for responding to rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2023). The theory emphasises three core processes: sensing opportunities, seizing opportunities, and transforming organisational capabilities. In VUCA contexts, these capabilities enable firms to continuously adapt their strategies, processes, and structures in response to external shocks and emerging opportunities.

In the Zimbabwean context, where economic instability and resource constraints are prevalent, dynamic capabilities are particularly relevant. Emerging organisations must constantly reconfigure their business models, leverage digital tools, and adapt to fluctuating market conditions. The study highlights how technological investments and agile organisational structures enable firms to respond effectively to market dynamics and scale operations. However, while Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding adaptability, it has been critiqued for being conceptually abstract and difficult to operationalise, particularly in resource-constrained environments where firms may lack the capacity to systematically develop such capabilities (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

3.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) Theory focuses on the strategic posture of organisations, characterised by innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Covin & Wales, 2019). EO is widely associated with firm growth and performance, particularly in uncertain environments where opportunity recognition and exploitation are critical.

In Zimbabwe, EO manifests through the ability of firms to identify opportunities within constrained environments and act decisively despite uncertainty. As noted in the study, emerging organisations leverage entrepreneurial leadership and innovative thinking to navigate competitive pressures and resource limitations. This is evident in sectors such as fintech and retail, where firms have introduced disruptive solutions to address market inefficiencies. However, EO Theory has limitations in that it tends to overemphasise firm-level agency while underplaying structural constraints, such as regulatory instability and limited access to finance, which significantly shape organisational outcomes in developing economies (Kuratko, 2017).

3.3 Innovation management theory

Innovation Management Theory conceptualises innovation as a structured process involving search, selection, implementation, and learning (Tidd & Bessant, 2023). The theory distinguishes between product, process, and business model innovation, all of which are critical for organisational growth and competitiveness. The study underscores the centrality of innovation as a growth strategy, highlighting how firms utilise product innovation, process improvements, and business model transformation to differentiate themselves and scale. In Zimbabwe, innovation often takes the form of frugal and adaptive solutions that address infrastructural and institutional gaps. However, Innovation Management Theory has been critiqued for assuming the existence of formal systems and resources to support innovation, which may not always be present in emerging markets. As a result, innovation in Zimbabwe tends to be more informal and opportunistic rather than systematically managed.

3.4 Strategic Decision-Making Theory

Strategic Decision-Making Theory explains how organisations make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and bounded rationality. It emphasises the use of heuristics, iterative experimentation, and real-options logic, where firms make incremental investments and adjust strategies based on emerging information (Love, 2023). This perspective is highly applicable to Zimbabwean emerging organisations, which often operate under high uncertainty and limited information. The study illustrates how firms adopt flexible and adaptive strategies, particularly in areas such as market entry and funding, to manage risk and sustain growth. However, the theory's reliance on incrementalism may limit its ability to explain rapid scaling or breakthrough growth, which requires more deliberate and coordinated strategic action.

3.5 Complementary perspectives: institutional and network theories

Institutional Theory highlights how organisational behaviour is shaped by regulatory, normative, and cultural pressures (Scott, 2008). In Zimbabwe, regulatory uncertainty and policy shifts significantly influence organisational strategies, requiring firms to align with institutional expectations to maintain legitimacy. The study notes the importance of customer-centric approaches and market alignment, which are influenced by institutional norms and expectations. Similarly, Network Theory emphasises the importance of relationships and partnerships in accessing resources and capabilities (Perez & Hult, 2022). In resource-constrained environments, strategic alliances play a critical role in enabling growth. As highlighted, partnerships allow firms to access new markets, technologies, and knowledge, thereby enhancing their scalability.

3.6 Synthesis and relevance to the proposed framework

While each of the above theories provides valuable insights into organisational growth, they are fragmented in their explanatory power when considered independently. Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains adaptability but lacks operational clarity; Entrepreneurial Orientation captures strategic posture but overlooks structural constraints; Innovation Management provides process logic but assumes resource availability; and Strategic Decision-Making Theory explains incremental adaptation but not integrated scaling.

In the Zimbabwean context, where organisations must simultaneously navigate resource scarcity, institutional instability, and competitive pressures, there is a need for a holistic and integrated framework that combines these theoretical perspectives. The proposed framework in this study addresses this gap by synthesising these theories into an Input–Process–Output (IPO) model with feedback loops, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of how emerging organisations can scale under VUCA conditions.

Specifically, Dynamic Capabilities underpin the transformation process, enabling organisations to sense and respond to opportunities; Entrepreneurial Orientation drives strategic intent and opportunity exploitation; Innovation Management structures the processes through which value is created and delivered; and Strategic Decision-Making provides the logic for navigating uncertainty through iterative and adaptive actions. Institutional and network perspectives further contextualise the framework by highlighting the influence of external environments and relationships on organisational outcomes.

By integrating these theoretical lenses, the study advances a contextually grounded and practically relevant framework that reflects the realities of emerging organisations in Zimbabwe. This synthesis not only enhances theoretical coherence but also provides a robust foundation for understanding and guiding organisational growth and scalability in VUCA environments.

4. Discussion of the proposed framework: An Integrated growth and scaling model for emerging organisations

This section discusses the proposed Integrated Growth and Scaling Framework for Emerging Organisations, conceptualised as a VUCA-based Input–Process–Output (IPO) model with embedded feedback loops. The framework synthesises insights from Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovation Management, and Strategic Decision-Making Theory to explain how emerging organisations transition from survival to scalable growth within volatile and resource-constrained environments. In the Zimbabwean context, the framework provides a structured lens through which fragmented growth strategies can be integrated into a coherent and adaptive system.

4.1 Inputs: Strategic Drivers of Organisational Emergence

The framework begins with a set of critical inputs that shape the organisation's capacity to initiate and sustain growth. These include innovation capability, leadership capacity, digital readiness, financial resources, and market intelligence. These inputs represent the foundational assets and competencies that organisations must mobilise to respond effectively to environmental turbulence.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides the underlying logic for this stage, emphasising the importance of sensing opportunities and mobilising resources accordingly (Teece, 2023). In Zimbabwe, where firms operate under significant resource constraints, these inputs are often developed incrementally and through improvisation. The The study highlights how emerging organisations prioritise innovation, leadership development, and financial management as critical enablers of growth. However, the uneven distribution of these inputs across firms contributes to disparities in scaling outcomes, reinforcing the need for a structured framework that aligns and optimises their utilisation.

4.2 Core Processes: Mechanisms for Scaling and Value Creation

The transformation of inputs into scalable outcomes occurs through a set of interrelated organisational processes. These processes form the core of the framework and are grouped into five key domains:

4.2.1 Opportunity and Innovation Engine

This component focuses on the identification and exploitation of market opportunities through product, process, and business model innovation. Innovation Management Theory conceptualises this as a cycle of search, selection, implementation, and learning (Tidd & Bessant, 2023). In Zimbabwe, innovation often takes adaptive and frugal forms, enabling firms to overcome infrastructural and institutional limitations. The The study demonstrates how innovation strategies, including disruptive innovation and Blue Ocean approaches, enable firms to differentiate themselves and create new market spaces.

However, innovation alone is insufficient without alignment to market needs and organisational capabilities. The framework therefore positions innovation as an integrated process linked to other strategic functions rather than a standalone activity.

4.2.2 Market Expansion and Positioning Engine

Scaling requires effective market entry and expansion strategies, including exporting, partnerships, franchising, and diversification. The Ansoff Matrix and Porter's Generic Strategies provide theoretical grounding for this component, emphasising the importance of aligning growth strategies with competitive positioning (Porter, 2022; Ansoff, 1957).

In the Zimbabwean context, firms often rely on strategic partnerships and informal networks to overcome barriers to market entry. The study highlights the role of alliances in accessing new markets and capabilities, thereby accelerating growth. This aligns with Network Theory, which underscores the importance of inter-organisational relationships in enhancing competitiveness (Perez & Hult, 2022). The framework integrates these insights by positioning market expansion as a coordinated and strategic process rather than an ad hoc activity.

4.2.3 Organisational Capability Development Engine

This component focuses on building internal capabilities related to leadership, talent management, and organisational structure. Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory emphasises the role of leadership in fostering innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Covin & Wales, 2019). The study further highlights the importance of strong leadership teams and agile organisational structures in managing growth transitions.

In Zimbabwe, organisational capability development is often constrained by limited access to skilled talent and formal training systems. As a result, firms must invest in continuous learning and capacity building to sustain growth. The framework addresses this by embedding capability development as a core process that supports all other strategic activities.

4.2.4 Digital and Operational Optimisation Engine

Digital transformation plays a critical role in enhancing efficiency, scalability, and customer engagement. Emerging organisations increasingly leverage digital tools to streamline operations, automate processes, and expand market reach (Zhao, 2023). The study illustrates how firms utilise digital platforms such as social media and mobile technologies to engage customers and improve service delivery. Within the framework, digital transformation is not treated as a standalone strategy but as an enabling mechanism that enhances the effectiveness of all other processes. This integrated approach reflects the growing importance of technology as a driver of organisational agility and competitiveness.

4.2.5 Financial Strategy and Resource Mobilisation Engine

Access to finance remains a critical determinant of growth for emerging organisations. The framework incorporates diverse funding strategies, including bootstrapping, venture capital, crowdfunding, and debt financing. The Pecking Order Theory provides a theoretical basis for understanding financing decisions, suggesting that firms prioritise internal funding before seeking external sources (Myers & Majluf, 1984). The study highlights the challenges associated with funding and the need for strategic financial management to support scaling. In Zimbabwe, where access to formal finance is limited, firms often rely on hybrid funding models and informal mechanisms. The framework integrates financial strategy as a core process, recognising its central role in enabling and sustaining growth.

4.3 Outputs: growth, scalability, and competitive advantage

The outputs of the framework represent the desired outcomes of the scaling process, including **revenue** growth, market expansion, customer retention, competitive advantage, and financial sustainability. These outcomes reflect the organisation's ability to successfully transform inputs through strategic processes into measurable performance gains. Dynamic Capabilities Theory suggests that sustained competitive advantage arises from the continuous reconfiguration of resources and capabilities (Teece, 2023). In Zimbabwe, firms that effectively integrate innovation, leadership, and market strategies are more likely to achieve scalable growth. However, the realisation of these outcomes is contingent on the alignment and coordination of all framework components.

4.4 Feedback Loops: Learning and Adaptive Renewal

A key distinguishing feature of the proposed framework is the incorporation of feedback loops, which enable continuous learning and adaptation. These loops connect outputs back to inputs and processes, allowing organisations to refine their strategies based on performance outcomes and environmental changes. This recursive structure aligns with the concept of organisational learning and dynamic capabilities, where firms continuously update their knowledge and capabilities

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in response to feedback (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The The study emphasises the importance of customer feedback, financial monitoring, and strategic adjustment in sustaining growth. In VUCA environments, such feedback mechanisms are critical for maintaining agility and responsiveness.

4.5 Contextual Moderators: The Influence of the Zimbabwean Environment

The framework is embedded within a broader contextual layer that includes institutional pressures, resource constraints, and market dynamics. Institutional Theory highlights how regulatory and socio-economic factors shape organisational behaviour (Scott, 2008). In Zimbabwe, policy uncertainty, economic instability, and infrastructural challenges significantly influence the effectiveness of growth strategies. By incorporating these contextual moderators, the framework acknowledges that organisational growth is not solely determined by internal capabilities but is also shaped by external environmental conditions. This enhances the framework's relevance and applicability to emerging markets.

4.6 Synthesis: towards an integrated understanding of scaling

The proposed framework advances existing literature by integrating multiple theoretical perspectives into a unified model that explains how emerging organisations can scale under VUCA conditions. Unlike fragmented approaches that examine individual strategies in isolation, this framework provides a holistic view of growth as a dynamic, iterative, and context-dependent process. In the Zimbabwean context, the framework offers a practical and theoretically grounded roadmap for organisations seeking to transition from start-up to scalable enterprises. By aligning inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback mechanisms within a coherent system, the model enhances both explanatory power and practical relevance. Ultimately, it positions emerging organisations as adaptive systems capable of transforming environmental uncertainty into opportunities for innovation, growth, and sustained competitive advantage.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This paper set out to develop an integrated growth and scaling framework for emerging organisations operating in VUCA environments, with particular emphasis on the Zimbabwean context. Drawing on Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovation Management, and Strategic Decision-Making Theory, the study addressed a critical gap in the literature, namely, the lack of a holistic and contextually grounded framework that explains how emerging organisations transition from start-up to scalable enterprises.

The findings indicate that emerging organisations in Zimbabwe operate within highly volatile and resource-constrained environments, where traditional linear growth models are insufficient. Instead, growth is best understood as a dynamic, iterative, and adaptive process, driven by the interaction of strategic inputs, organisational processes, and continuous feedback mechanisms. As highlighted in the study, firms face persistent challenges such as limited access to finance, infrastructural deficiencies, weak formal structures, and leadership constraints, all of which complicate the scaling process. At the same time, these organisations demonstrate resilience through innovation, digital adoption, and entrepreneurial orientation, enabling them to navigate uncertainty and exploit emerging opportunities (Schilling, 2017; Zhao, 2023).

The proposed framework contributes to theory by integrating fragmented strategic perspectives into a unified Input–Process–Output (IPO) model with feedback loops, extending existing conceptualisations of organisational emergence beyond sector-specific applications. By synthesising multiple theoretical lenses, the study demonstrates that sustainable scaling is not driven by isolated strategies, but by the alignment and coordination of interdependent capabilities, including innovation, leadership, market positioning, digital transformation, and financial management (Teece, 2023; Covin & Wales, 2019).

Furthermore, the study reinforces the view that emerging organisations should be conceptualised as adaptive systems capable of leveraging VUCA conditions as catalysts for growth rather than barriers. This aligns with Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasises continuous reconfiguration of resources in response to environmental change (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2023). In developing economies such as Zimbabwe, where uncertainty is endemic, this adaptive capacity becomes a critical determinant of long-term sustainability and competitive advantage.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the proposed framework, the following recommendations are advanced:

6.2.1 Institutionalise Integrated Growth Strategies: Emerging organisations should adopt integrated and coordinated growth strategies rather than fragmented approaches. Aligning innovation, leadership, market entry, and financial strategies enhances coherence and improves scaling outcomes (Murray & O'Neill, 2023). The study supports this by highlighting the need for combining multiple strategic levers to achieve sustained growth.

5.2.2 Strengthen Dynamic Capabilities: Organisations should prioritise the development of dynamic capabilities, particularly the ability to sense opportunities, seize them, and transform operations accordingly (Teece, 2023). In VUCA environments, this capability enables firms to remain agile and responsive to change. Continuous learning, process reconfiguration, and strategic flexibility are essential for sustaining growth (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

5.2.3 Invest in Leadership and Talent Development: Strong leadership is critical for navigating uncertainty and driving organisational transformation. Emerging organisations should invest in developing leadership capacity and building diverse, skilled teams. As emphasised in the study, leadership plays a central role in managing growth transitions and fostering innovation. This aligns with Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory, which links leadership behaviour to firm performance (Covin & Wales, 2019).

5.2.4 Leverage Digital Transformation: Digital technologies should be strategically deployed to enhance efficiency, scalability, and customer engagement. In resource-constrained environments, digital platforms provide cost-effective solutions for market expansion and operational optimisation (Zhao, 2023). The study further demonstrates how digital tools enable firms to overcome infrastructural limitations and improve service delivery.

5.2.5 Adopt Flexible and Hybrid Funding Models: Access to finance remains a major constraint for emerging organisations. Firms should adopt diversified and flexible funding strategies, combining internal financing with external sources such as venture capital, crowdfunding, and debt financing (Myers & Majluf, 1984). This approach reduces financial risk and enhances the ability to scale operations effectively.

5.2.6 Strengthen Strategic Partnerships and Networks: Emerging organisations should actively pursue strategic partnerships and alliances to access resources, knowledge, and markets. Network Theory highlights the importance of inter-organisational relationships in enhancing competitiveness (Perez & Hult, 2022). The study reinforces this by demonstrating how partnerships can accelerate growth and reduce market entry barriers.

5.2.7 Enhance Policy and Institutional Support: Policymakers should create stable and enabling environments that support entrepreneurial growth. This includes improving access to finance, strengthening infrastructure, and ensuring regulatory consistency. Institutional Theory suggests that supportive regulatory frameworks enhance organisational legitimacy and performance (Scott, 2008). In Zimbabwe, policy stability is critical for fostering investor confidence and enabling business scaling.

5.3 Scope for Further Research

While this study provides a comprehensive conceptual framework, it is limited by its theoretical orientation and lack of empirical validation. Future research should focus on:

- **Empirical testing of the proposed framework** across different sectors and organisational contexts
- **Comparative studies across African and SADC countries** to examine contextual variations in scaling dynamics (Van Stel et al., 2018)
- **Longitudinal research** to analyse how emerging organisations evolve over time in VUCA environments
- **Quantitative modelling of the IPO framework**, particularly the interaction between inputs, processes, and outputs
- **In-depth case studies** of high-growth firms to validate and refine the framework

Additionally, future studies could explore the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, fintech, and platform economies in shaping new growth trajectories for emerging organisations (Zhao, 2023).

5.4 Final Reflection

In conclusion, this paper advances both theoretical and practical understanding of organisational growth in uncertain environments by proposing a holistic, integrated, and context-sensitive framework. By aligning multiple strategic dimensions within a dynamic system, the study provides a roadmap for emerging organisations to navigate complexity, exploit opportunities, and achieve sustainable scaling in VUCA contexts.

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