

# REINFORCING THE ATTITUDES OF ASPIRING YOUNG AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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## ABSTRACT

*In this article it is argued that one of the aims of entrepreneurship education, among other things, is to reinforce the mind-sets or attitudes of young people so that they may become successful entrepreneurs. This may both help to solve the challenges experienced by job seekers and to discover or exploit opportunities available for the development of individuals and of countries at large. The purpose of this article is to highlight how appreciative inquiry can help to identify and reinforce the attitudes of aspiring young South African entrepreneurs so as to assist them to meet some of the many challenges associated with entrepreneurship successfully. The research methodology included an exploratory case study that focused on a singular appreciative inquiry workshop. During this workshop, seven aspiring young African entrepreneurs completed a standardised questionnaire and participated in oral presentations. The results of the questionnaire indicate that, despite lacking conviction and a good work ethic, some of the participants have unrealistic goals. These are attitudes that will have to change if they are indeed to become successful entrepreneurs. During the appreciative enquiry workshop, each participant was allowed an opportunity to give three oral presentations on specific topics. The successes, strengths and challenges of each participant's presentation were then discussed in the group. The researchers observed improvements in the presenters' attitudes, confidence levels and presentation skills as the presenters were gradually able to establish improved personal rapport with the other participants. A key recommendation of this research relates to addressing the concerns of setting realistic goals, strengthening conviction or self-confidence and of promoting a diligent work ethic among aspiring young African entrepreneurs.*

**Keywords:** Self-Confidence, Commitment, Entrepreneur, Presentation Skills.

## INTRODUCTION

*“An entrepreneur is not a person who starts a company, but he is the person who actually solves a problem.”* These words, by the successful Indian business person, Naveen Jain, clearly indicate that there is a link between entrepreneurship and problem solving. In fact, entrepreneurial education is often based on the tenets of problem-based learning (Swart, 2014). Often, an aspiring entrepreneur sees a problem in his or her community (that may be seen as an opportunity) that requires a solution. When this solution serves to improve the socio-economic development of the community, the entrepreneur has truly contributed to an improved quality of life for society.

A clear distinction should be drawn between a business person, an entrepreneur and an executive. A good business person should be able to see the entire field and be keenly aware of her or his opponents' every move (Yen, 2017), and is therefore usually geared to compete with a

number of local businesses. An executive, on the other hand, often has to give new meaning and life to an existing business (Nazemoff, 2014), and is therefore usually geared to enhancing a company's performance. Entrepreneurs do not usually start out to compete with or enhance the performance of other local entrepreneurs. They usually rather seek to provide a unique solution to a problem or service to a community. However, the concept of entrepreneurship embedded in the backdrop of business has increasingly been applied to the context of addressing social problems and sustainability challenges (Hossain et al., 2017).

The goal of entrepreneurship education is not only to effect changes in society by changing individual behaviour through transformational learning (Neergaard et al., 2015) but also to lead people, especially young people, to become responsible and enterprising so as not merely to contribute to economic development but to sustainable economic development (Sánchez-García et al., 2017). One of the missions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century University is therefore to encourage the social and economic development of its surroundings through venture-creation training and entrepreneurship development (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018). The goal of entrepreneurship is not exclusively hinged on the immediate creation of new businesses but also on the acquisition of skills geared towards a successful career in entrepreneurship (Olokundun et al., 2017). One of the aims of entrepreneurship education, among other things, is therefore to change the mind-sets of people so that each becomes an entrepreneur in the workplace. This may help to solve the problem of job-seekers by helping them either to discover or exploit available opportunities, which will be to the benefit of both individuals and the country at large (Katundu & Gabagambi, 2014). This, in its turn, will enhance further socio-economic development.

The terms changes in individual behaviour, acquisition of necessary skills and change the mindset are all linked to the word '*attitude*'. People's attitude to entrepreneurship and its tenets is vitally important if people are to become truly successful entrepreneurs. Attitude is often influenced by the local culture (Sun, 2017), which currently exerts a negative influence on entrepreneurship in South Africa (SA). Family pressure, limited financial and equipment resources, and bureaucratic laws hamper the advancement of entrepreneurship. Pressure from family members forces many young people in SA to seek employment directly after completing their first degree (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2017) in order that they may provide materially for their parents and siblings on a regular monthly basis. Hundreds of thousands of informal entrepreneurs struggle to gain access to financial resources in SA (Coetzer & Pascarel, 2014) because banking institutions have introduced stricter loan policies in response to the current global economic climate. Linked to this is the challenge of acquiring the necessary equipment for the production of products that meet the immediate needs of society. Bureaucratic red tape that limits entrepreneurial decision making and inhibits investment in modern manufacturing firms in SA (Grabowski, 2015) may deter aspiring young entrepreneurs from starting up their own businesses.

In view of the fact that aspiring young entrepreneurs are indeed challenged by the attitudes of family, by attitudes to policies and by attitudes to entrepreneurship itself, the following research questions arise:

1. What are the attitudes among current aspiring young African entrepreneurs that may either empower them or eventually dissuade them from continuing to be entrepreneurs in the future?
2. How can appreciative inquiry develop and reinforce the attitudes or skills of these entrepreneurs and empower them to be more effective in the future?

The purpose of this article is to highlight how appreciative inquiry may serve to identify and reinforce the attitudes of aspiring young entrepreneurs and thereby help them to meet some of the many challenges associated with entrepreneurship successfully. Though some of the challenges have already been mentioned in the previous paragraph, we shall expand on them in the results section. We start by describing the notions artistic marketer and appreciative inquiry. Next, we describe the research methodology that comprised an exploratory case study focusing on a single appreciative inquiry workshop. In this workshop, the successes, strengths and weaknesses of a number of presentations delivered by seven aspiring young African entrepreneurs were analysed and discussed. The results of this workshop are presented quantitatively. We conclude the article with a number of succinct conclusions.

### **THE ARTISTIC MARKETER AND APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY**

As stated earlier, aspiring young entrepreneurs today face many challenges. In the absence of the Internet, for example, their predecessors had the luxury of functioning and selling their products or services in a stable and predictable environment (Pink, 2012). While buyers' choices were severely limited, sellers had maximal information or then at least much more than their potential customers regarding the products or services they were selling.

However, with the advent of the Internet, individual customers were empowered by having access to the advice of their social network contacts (Pink, 2012). There is an increased reliance on websites—providing access to frequently asked questions (FAQ's)—and smartphones by means of which to locate and purchase what one needs. Broodryk (2017) accordingly argues that entrepreneurs' audiences and clients definitely use Google and social media, and that there are many tools on these digital platforms that are able to play the role of expert until one can afford a human one. He also argues that as a small business, the entrepreneur should only be interested in finding clients and closing deals, and that there is no better place to achieve this than on the Internet.

In this sense, the World Wide Web has opened up many opportunities for entrepreneurs and knocked down barriers to entering the markets on a global scale (Pink, 2012). Thanks to Kickstarter, it has also made fundraising easier by allowing them to post the basics of their projects and endeavour to sell their ideas to funders. An array of new technologies, such as Square from one of the founders of Twitter, PayHere from eBay and GoPayment from Intuit, has made it easier for individuals to accept credit-card payments directly on their mobile smartphones. In this way, anyone with a smartphone can become a shopkeeper. Pink (2012) calls this a "*personal storefront in the pocket*".

Within this complex environment, the modern entrepreneur's assignment is to persuade, convince and influence others to give up something—be it cash, time, effort or simply attention—in exchange for what he or she has to offer (Pink, 2012). Gangi (2015) points out that a specific product offers to meet the needs of consumers by making their existence better in some way, and consumers then exchange value for a product in order to meet their personal needs.

To accomplish this, the entrepreneur must wear several hats—often simultaneously—like enticing business partners, negotiating with suppliers and motivating employees (Pink, 2012). One of these hats is the selling cap: to enable them to sell their products, all entrepreneurs must at some stage deliver presentations or pitch their products to new clients (Pink, 2012). Therefore, to link potential entrepreneurs to the practices and experiences of the business community, the former should be offered the opportunity of presenting their products, ideas and work to their mentors and/or members of their own local business community (Jack & Anderson, 1999).

An entrepreneur with a selling cap has a daunting task: she or he must not only convince and persuade a diversity of potential clients but also consider and interpret the perceived or real needs of these clients. Since the audience is unique on each occasion, each entrepreneurial presentation is unique and probably idiosyncratic in that the entrepreneurial process is the crystallisation of complex and contingent variables (Jack & Anderson, 1999). If the entrepreneurial presenter is successful in interpreting and reflecting these variables, the audience will reward him or her with the most precious of commodities in the entrepreneurial world, namely their undivided attention. They now view the entrepreneur's product as need-satisfying or valuable (Fillis, 2009; Gangi, 2015).

We now wish to argue that, when this happens, the boundaries between entrepreneurship and the arts are blurred. We are supported in this by Jack and Anderson (1999) who hold that entrepreneurial creation appears to share a great deal with artistic production and might well be thought of as an economic art form. We therefore prefer to view entrepreneurs as artistic marketers. In fact, we agree with Fillis (2009) that one can think of them as artists of a kind. Not unlike a successful actor in a theatre, entrepreneurs have their audiences in the proverbial palm of their hands. It comes as no surprise, then, that Pink (2012) argues that sales and theatre have much in common. Both require courage: while salespeople phone strangers, actors walk onto a stage in front of strangers. Similarly, both risk rejection: salespeople have to deal with slammed doors, ignored calls and a barrage of no's, while actors risk failing auditions, having unresponsive audiences or getting scathing reviews. Pink (2012) even goes so far as to liken the conversation between an entrepreneur and a potential client or investor to a dance rather than to a wrestling match.

How then are we to help these young entrepreneurs to view themselves as artistic marketers? In this study, we wanted to influence and develop the skills of these young entrepreneurs in an enterprise that was essentially idiosyncratic—thus closer to an art than a science. A merely instrumental knowledge of the field would not suffice (Jack & Anderson, 1999). So, we turned to a methodology and approach called appreciative inquiry. This is fundamentally a social constructionist stance on reality and social knowledge (Watkins et al., 2011).

In a typically artistic way, we sought to co-create entrepreneurial worlds in the minds of the study participants, having planned to do so by means of our social discourse and through the conversations we would have with one another. These conversations would lead to agreement about how we would view the entrepreneurial world, how we would behave and what we would accept as reality (Watkins et al., 2011). Like Lewis et al. (2016) we preferred to adopt a relativist position as opposed to a realist one. We did this because we believed that an external (entrepreneurial) world does not exist independently of our attitudes or perceptions, thoughts, language, beliefs and desires. Our anticipated outcome would be reflective practitioners or presenters—that is, participants who would be able usefully to apply theory in a variety of contexts and who would be equipped for an entrepreneurial career (Jack & Anderson, 1999).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The Central University of Technology (CUT), located in the Free State Province of South Africa, attracts many Sesotho-speaking students from the central region of the country. It shares this large pool of Sesotho-speaking students with the University of the Free State (UFS). The two universities aim to provide students with the appropriate graduate attributes currently required by industry and society. In 2014, CUT introduced a student-peer mentorship programme to help

first-year students to transition successfully into higher education. During 2017, an entrepreneurial event was planned to help the first-year students and the mentors to better understand and appreciate the graduate attribute termed entrepreneurship. A number of students aspiring to be successful future entrepreneurs attended the event at which they exhibited their products or made known their services. This is in line with a proposal by Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2018) who recommend motivating students in entrepreneurship through start-up exhibitions of successful entrepreneurs. These role models represent a means of showing prospective entrepreneurs an example of the validity of a project so that they may be able to envisage it realistically and believe that it can be executed. Those that participated in the exhibition were invited to attend a one-day appreciative workshop (described in the previous section) aimed at improving a specific entrepreneurial skill, namely marketing or presentation by viewing and appreciating other participants as artistic marketers. In this way, the arts (A) are incorporated into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, thereby giving rise to STEAM education.

Seven students indicated their interest in the workshop that was scheduled for 17 February 2018. These seven participants were provided with reflective journals that had to be kept during the workshop and afterwards. They were also requested to complete a pre-workshop questionnaire that would serve as the primary data-collection instrument for this study. An audio recorder was used to capture participants' comments during the workshop. This was done to determine their attitudes and hear their stories relating to entrepreneurship. Participants were further asked to complete an indemnity form. It was stated that participation would be completely voluntary and that all responses would be anonymous.

An exploratory case study was used that could set the stage for future research. This type of case study usually involves a single case or a limited number of participants. The aim of an exploratory case study is not to infer but to understand and not to generalise but rather to determine a possible range of views (Daneva et al., 2014). It involves studying a smaller number of participants with a view to gaining insights into their operation (Maphosa et al., 2014). In some contexts, a case study involves a research method that is designed and undertaken to discover "*truths*" from one or more cases (Oyelami & Olivier, 2015). In this study, we wished to establish the "*truth*" regarding the attitudes of aspiring young African entrepreneurs to entrepreneurship in order to determine whether their minds were set on continuing with this course of action in the future.

A case study further involves an individual and the researcher. The individual may be a single person, single classroom, single office or single programme (Shank, 2006). According to Yin (2013), a case study is a story about something unique, special or interesting. Stories can be about individuals, organisations, processes, programmes, neighbourhoods, institutions and even events. In this study, the stories of seven, individual, aspiring young African entrepreneurs were sought with a view to allowing us to determine which of their attitudes or skills could be enhanced by means of appreciative inquiry.

The pre-workshop questionnaire, the instrument we used to answer our first research question, was adopted from Lüthje and Franke (2003). This instrument satisfies the requirement of content validity. The results of the questionnaire were analysed descriptively. No inferential statistics were used, this being primarily due to the small sample size ( $n=7$ ) and because all the participants were Sesotho-speaking students from the central region of SA. Although this is a key limitation of the study, it is nonetheless in compliance with the requirements for a case study. Furthermore, aspiring young African entrepreneurs are not readily found in the central

region of SA, this being mainly due to the reasons outlined in the introduction. Therefore, working with the “*stories*” and “*truths*” of these seven participants can shed further light on their cultural background and help to identify obstacles they need to overcome in order for them to become truly successful future entrepreneurs.

It is now necessary to explain the approach followed in appreciative inquiry, which was adopted to answer our second research question. At its very core, appreciative inquiry is the study of what gives life to humans and human systems when they function at their best (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). This approach to personal change “*is based on the assumption that questions and dialogues about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are themselves transformational*” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). These authors maintain that human change is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation. The act of inquiry requires sincere curiosity and openness to new possibilities, new directions and new understanding (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

To enable us to accomplish this, we had to accept that we could not directly provide or teach presentation skills because they are fundamentally experiential (Jack & Anderson, 1999). Clearly, we needed to provide the participants with an experience, which we did by organising and facilitating an appreciative-inquiry workshop. During this workshop, we facilitated appreciative discussions about the participants’ successes, strengths and deficiencies after they had each presented three times (Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1**  
**ONE OF THE ASPIRING YOUNG AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE PROCESS OF PRESENTING, WITH THE OTHERS LISTENING ATTENTIVELY. AFTER EACH PRESENTATION, APPRECIATIVE, SUPPORTING FEEDBACK WAS GIVEN.**

Twenty-one presentations were given on the day. Positive feedback was provided about each cycle of presentations, thereby enabling the participants to develop their presentation skills. In this way, their current attitudes to entrepreneurship were enhanced while in the process of developing a key performance area related to marketing their products or services and so, ideally, becoming artistic marketers.

A joint delegation committee of CUT and UFS approved the research project on 17 April 2017. No sensitive personal data would be collected and pseudonyms would be used for each of the workshop participants. The students' demographic particulars are presented in order to better contextualise the results.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

We firstly discuss the results pertaining to our first research question. In Table 1 we present information about the participants (labelled A–G) with regard to their field of study and their goals for the future. Five of the participants were male and two were female. All of the participants were younger than 30 and lived in and around Bloemfontein. It is noteworthy that participant G studied Law but was self-employed in the software-developing sector at the time of the study. This may very well speak to a key requirement of being an entrepreneur, namely of being able to identify a need in a community and then to seek to address that need. It has been stated that a successful entrepreneur must be able to identify innovative opportunities, determine the benefits of those opportunities and then convince people to invest their resources in the suggested innovation by using his or her charismatic personality (Bamshad, 2014). Participant D was somewhat overly ambitious in wishing to have a company in three years with approximately 50 employees. An entrepreneur who wants to be successful needs to set realistic, feasible goals (Masurel & Snellenberg, 2017). At the time of the study, only three of the participants were self-employed and one participant (F) planned to be self-employed in 10 years' time. This long-term goal seems a little unrealistic in that the participant could become distracted as the years pass by. By focusing too much on long-term goals, participants (and other stakeholders) could run the risk of disillusionment that is due to a lack of immediate success, the latter resulting in their attention and energy being directed elsewhere (Masurel & Snellenberg, 2017).

<b>Questions</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Field of study?	Accountancy	Financial information systems	Environmental management	Financial information systems	Marketing	Environmental management	Law
Currently self-employed?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Planning to be self-employed in the near future?	Very probable	Very probable	Rather probable	Very probable	Very probable	Very probable	Very probable
What kind of self-employment activity are you likely to seek?	Tutoring agency	Financial consultancy	Environmental awareness	Business consultancy	Communication consultancy	Pest control	Software development

In how many years do you plan to be self-employed?	3	0	5	0	2	10	0
With how many people do you want to establish a company?	1	1	2	1	1	1	5
How many employees do you aim to have after three years?	10	3	3	50	2	5	5

Table 2 reflects the results of the first section of the questionnaire (General opinions). A 5-point Likert scale has been used that is inherent to the questionnaire adopted from Lüthje and Franke (2003) and ranges from “*very accurate*” to “*very inaccurate*”. Questions 1, 3, 4 and 7 all have high averages. This suggests that the participants feel that those statements do not accurately reflect their actions. They feel that things can change, that luck has nothing to do with success, that they usually choose where they want to go with their friends, and that they like the idea of being different. These are important attitudes for a successful entrepreneur who needs to take charge of his or her own circumstances, changing them for the better through hard work and commitment, standing out as different among members of the traditional working class (Broodryk, 2017). There are low averages for question 2 and questions 8 to 10. This suggests that students agree they can easily start a conversation with a stranger, that they like trying new things, that they have taken risks and they will seek help when required. These are also important attributes of successful entrepreneurs, who daily need to market their products to strangers and who should be able to explore new ways of doing things, follow new approaches and take risks in regard to their marketing strategies (Opore-Addo & Smith, 2015). A key concern relates to questions 5 and 6. Participants seem to be divided as regards the attitude of conviction. The high variance value suggests this (1.6 and 3.1 respectively). One needs to have self-confidence as an entrepreneur and believe in oneself and in one’s product and service even when others do not share the same conviction. An entrepreneur should be able to convince others why her or his idea is worth investing in or paying for (Jansen et al., 2015). This is an attitude that will need to be modified among some of the participants if they are indeed to make a successful career out of entrepreneurship.

<b>Numb.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Av.</b>	<b>Var.</b>
1	I often feel that’s just the way things are and there's nothing I can do about it.	3.9	1.0
2	I can easily start a conversation with a total stranger.	1.6	0.5
3	When things go right, I think it’s mostly luck.	4.0	0.9
4	When we go out at night, I most of the time let the others decide where to go.	4.7	0.2



5	When I travel, I tend to use new routes.	3.3	1.6
6	If I am convinced of something, I would even defend an opinion that makes people feel uncomfortable.	2.7	3.1
7	I don't like the idea of being different.	4.1	1.0
8	I like to try new things (e.g. exotic foods or new places).	1.1	0.1
9	I have taken a risk in the last six months.	2.0	1.1
10	If I need anything from somebody, I would ask them a favour rather than wait for them to notice that there is something amiss.	1.4	0.5

The results of the second section of the questionnaire that dealt with attitudes to being self-employed are reflected in Table 3. Half of the questions pose concerns (questions 1 and 4 have variance values of above 1.6). Participants were divided on the aspect of a “*regular working time*” and on “*founding a new company*”. Both aspects are critical for an entrepreneur’s success. An entrepreneur may need to work long hours and probably even after hours to ensure the success of a new company (Broodryk, 2017). However, participants generally agree that they would rather be their own boss and that big money can only be made by being self-employed (questions 2 and 3). According to Broodryk (2017), it is true that successful entrepreneurs are their own bosses and that they generate more wealth than the average working class.

<b>Numb.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Av.</b>	<b>Var.</b>
1	Regular working time and a fixed income are important for me.	2.9	2.4
2	I'd rather be my own boss than have a secure job.	1.3	0.5
3	You can only make big money if you are self-employed.	2.1	1.0
4	I'd rather found a new company than be the manager of an existing one.	2.3	1.6

Table 4 indicates the results of the third section of the questionnaire, termed “*Conditions for founding a new company in SA*”. Participants generally feel that there are an adequate number of subsidies for new companies that the coursework at CUT has prepared them for self-employment, that bureaucratic laws do not really hamper the founding of a new company and that South African laws are not really averse to running a company (questions 2, 6, 7 and 9). These opinions run contrary to literature stating that bureaucracy limits entrepreneurial decision making in SA (Grabowski, 2015). However, participants generally agree that it is not easy to obtain venture capital, that entrepreneurs do not have a positive image in SA and that service support for new companies is not readily available (questions 3–5). This resonates with recent literature stating that informal entrepreneurs struggle to gain access to financial resources in SA (Coetzer & Pascarel, 2014). Three of the questions had a high variance (higher than 2), which suggests mixed feelings among the participants in this regard. Opinions seem to be divided on competitive pressures in the market, whether banks do/do not readily extend credit to start-up companies and whether it is/is not hard to find a totally new, unexplored business idea (questions 1, 8 and 10).

<b>Numb.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Ave.</b>	<b>Var.</b>
1	Start-ups face immediately high competitive pressures.	3.9	2.4
2	A sufficient number of subsidies are available for new companies.	3.3	0.8
3	It is easy to obtain venture capital.	2.1	0.4
4	Entrepreneurs have a positive image with South African society.	2.6	1.4
5	Qualified consultants and service support are available to new companies.	1.9	1.0
6	The coursework at CUT adequately prepared you for self-employment.	3.1	1.0
7	Bureaucratic procedures for the founding of a new company are not clear.	2.1	1.0
8	Banks do not readily extend credit to start-up companies.	3.0	2.0
9	South African laws are generally averse to the running of a company.	2.3	1.3
10	It is hard to come up with a totally new, unexplored idea for a business.	2.7	2.2

Table 5 reflects the average values obtained by the seven participants in each of the three sections above and also their deviations. This result indicates that the largest deviation is the one in respect of participants' attitudes to life in general and the smallest deviation in respect of their attitudes (or perceptions) regarding the availability of help and resources to aspiring entrepreneurs in South Africa. The highlighted cells respectively indicate the highest and the lowest averages. Participant D indicated two areas of concern.

<b>Sections</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Dev.</b>
Attitudes to life in general	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.1	3.2	3.1	3.9	2.01
Attitudes to self-employment	1.8	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.3	3.0	2.0	1.48
Attitudes to resources	3.2	3.0	2.7	1.8	2.6	3.0	2.6	1.26

Our second research question was related to how appreciative inquiry can influence the attitudes or skills of these aspiring young entrepreneurs and empower them to be more effective in the future. During the individual presentations and appreciative feedback to the participants, the researchers observed improvements in the student participants' confidence levels and presentation skills. They were, for example, gradually able to establish personal rapport with the other participants and with the researchers by focusing on each of us individually. They also moved around better, did not consult their notes and employed humour to capture and retain the attention of the attendees. Practically all of them were also much less nervous during the third round of presentations. Their attitude to conviction may well have been influenced in this regard.

## CONCLUSIONS

One of the research questions was aimed at determining the attitudes found among current aspiring young African entrepreneurs that may either empower them or eventually dissuade them from continuing to be entrepreneurs. The results from the pre-workshop

questionnaire revealed a few problems related to goal setting, conviction and work ethics. Whereas participant D set a goal of having 50 employees in three years' time, participant F wanted to be self-employed in 10 years' time. These goals seem somewhat unrealistic and may even serve to deter these aspiring entrepreneurs from later continuing in their particular line of business. Some of the participants lacked conviction (particularly participants E and G), as they were reluctant to defend an opinion that would make people feel uncomfortable. This is a course of action often called for when an entrepreneur suggests a new and innovative product or service. Some of the participants were also divided on aspects relating to both regular working hours and establishing a new company. Participants A and E seemed to have a problem with the fact that both of these aspects require more time and energy than does fixed-income employment (not reflected in the results). Finally, participants were also divided as to what possible challenges confront start-up companies, with participant D (not shown in the results) indicating that there are NO challenges in this regard.

A key recommendation of this research relates to addressing the concerns of setting realistic goals, strengthening conviction or self-confidence and promoting a diligent work ethic among aspiring young African entrepreneurs. More emphasis needs to be placed on these shortcomings in the content of the course offered to would-be entrepreneurs by CUT. A possible teaching strategy may be to use the artistic-marketer approach.

### **FUTURE RESEARCH, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research report is the first output of a research project that is set to culminate in a second workshop aimed at determining the progress, successes and frustrations of the participants. During the second workshop we shall again administer Lüthje and Franke's (2003) questionnaire to determine whether the responses differ from those of the first workshop. This will enable us to trace each respondent's individual progress. We shall also allow the young entrepreneurs to do further presentations, after which we shall again provide them with constructive, appreciative feedback to develop their presentation skills even further. During the second workshop, the entrepreneurs will also submit their reflective journals. These will be an additional source of information regarding their development in the intervening period.

During this period—between the two workshops—there will be little contact between the researchers and the young entrepreneurs. We have identified this as a limitation that might be addressed in similar, future research projects. In the social media era it is sure to be relatively easy to establish some form of social interaction by means of which to offer sustained support to the entrepreneurs. This does however not mean that they should be inundated with either information or other supporting mechanisms. They might themselves have ample opportunities and sufficient personal space to enable them to develop individually. We will only be able to determine the success of our approach during the second workshop.

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