THE EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention of high school students. A quantitative approach was used, and a self-administered questionnaire was employed during the data collection process. Correlation and regression analyses were performed to determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention of high school students. The Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure of reliability. The results revealed that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention of high school students. This study further found that entrepreneurship education does shape entrepreneurial intention. Recommendations to improve the teaching of entrepreneurship at high school level are suggested.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intention, High School Students, Theory of Planned Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been the most frequent topic discussed in these past years. Many observers found that entrepreneurship is one of the most important mechanisms to promote economic growth of a country through innovation, employment, and welfare (Elfenbein et al., 2010; Zwan et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2013). Entrepreneurship is one of the main factors for the economic development and job creation (Ayyagari et al., 2014). Some studies show that entrepreneurship education is one of the factors that affect entrepreneurial intention (Fayolle & Gailly, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013).

The South African education system has introduced entrepreneurship as a subject in their syllabuses at high school level. The reason for this was to creatively market entrepreneurship as a viable option for young persons who are still at high school (Nieman & Nieuwenhuizen 2014). Entrepreneurship has been recognised as a determinant or pivotal element of economic growth and development (Kidane & Harvey 2009). This is because entrepreneurship (1) leads to the creation of small and medium scale businesses, (2) providing employment opportunities, (3) income generation, (4) uplifting of standard of living, and (5) utilisation of human, material and financial resources of a country in the right direction. Many countries have placed intensive, efforts and programmes towards the development of entrepreneurship. Schmitt-Rodermund (2007), finds that early entrepreneurial competence such as early inventions, leadership, and

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early commercial activities are expected to positively predict conditional and unconditional entrepreneurial intentions in adulthood. The low entrepreneurial activity among youth is found to be the primary reason for the low overall rate of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa (Anthony, 2013). Promoting entrepreneurship may be vital for the success of today's societies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour focuses on intentions by an individual which will determine the actual behaviour towards something. The theory implies that there is a relationship between the intention to be an entrepreneur and the act of becoming one. Therefore, an individual's intention largely explains their behaviour. Linan & Chen (2006) point out that the theory of planned behaviour can be applied to almost all voluntary behaviour. The fundamental assumptions of this theory are that most human behaviour is planned and therefore preceded by intention towards that behaviour.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education consists of any pedagogical (program) or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. The main role of entrepreneurship education program is to increase students' awareness towards entrepreneurship, to allow students to develop entrepreneurial skills, to teach students to put theory into practice, and highlight the entrepreneurial path as a career option (Bae et al., 2014; Fayolle & Gailly, 2013; Oosterbeek et al., 2010). Peterman & Kennedy (2003) indicated that entrepreneurship support programs were successful in encouraging entrepreneurs to start a business or to improve their business performance. Wu & Wu (2008) confirm that students who follow entrepreneurship education indeed show a greater intention to start their own business.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurship is defined as the process, brought about by individuals, of identifying new entrepreneurial opportunities and converting them into marketable products or services (Schaper et al., 2014). According to Bird (1988), intention is a state of mind directing a person's attention, which leads to experience and action to achieve something. Entrepreneurship intention focuses on an individual's motivation to start a business, and these are internal motivation and positive perceptions of starting a business (Lorz & Volery, 2011). It is a driving force of the entrepreneurial activity (Wu & Wu, 2008). Previous studies have also shown that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect towards entrepreneurial intentions (Bae et al., 2014; Fayolle & Gailly, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurship Intention

Weaver et al. (2010) notes that despite the teaching of entrepreneurship education at high school level, very little is known about their impact on students' entrepreneurial competencies and intentions. Martin et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of entrepreneurship education and training outcomes, and identified a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship skills, intentions, and outcomes. Liao & Gartner (2007) find that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behaviours and intentions. Johansen (2010); Sanchez (2010) reached the conclusions that young people who

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participate in specialised educational programmes are more likely to become entrepreneurs. By the end of the entrepreneurship programme intention to become self-employed is detected.

Entrepreneurial intention is generally very low in South Africa (Herrington et al., 2017). However, entrepreneurship education is one of the ways to improve the relatively low levels of entrepreneurship in the country. Therefore, entrepreneurship education has been added on the curriculum. Students perceive both the traditional and the non-traditional teaching methods as important to the development of their entrepreneurship skills and knowledge (Fatoki 2010; Fatoki 2014). According to Von Broembsen et al. (2005) youth in South Africa are far less likely to start their own businesses as compared to those from other countries. The low entrepreneurial activity among youth was found to be the primary reason for the low general rate of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa. Baumol and Klein (2011) find that entrepreneurial education and the pedagogical strategies for teaching course content are significantly related to students' innovation intentions. Fayolle & Gailly (2013) also find that through education, entrepreneurial intention and behaviour can be influenced. The above arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

H_1: *Entrepreneurship education is positively related to entrepreneurial intention*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed the quantitative research design. Probability sampling was deemed suitable for this study because of the availability of a sample frame; all prospective respondents had an equal chance being considered as a sample (Yang et al., 2020). Simple random sampling was used to obtain a sample for this study. Self-administered questionnaires were employed during the data collection process. The questionnaire items were based on the five-point Likert Scale with "*1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agree*" and adapted from previous studies (Hu et al., 2016; Walter & Blocks, 2016). The participants in the survey were high school students in Sekhukhune district in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The participants were randomly sampled. The questionnaire was pre-tested with twenty-five high school students in a pilot study. Correlation and regression analyses were performed to determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention and the Cronbach's alpha was used as the measure of reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate and Biographical Details

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed, and one hundred and forty-five questionnaires were returned. The gender composition of the respondents was forty-eight males and ninety-two females. All the respondents were between 13 and 19 years.

Table 1
CORRELATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

Variable		**Entrepreneurship education**
Entrepreneurial intention	Pearson Correlation	0.635
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
N		140

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Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 points out a positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, which is highlighted with entrepreneurial intention (r=0.635, p=0.000). The results of Pearson correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention are very strong since the Pearson's r value is closer to 1. The results conclude that changes in entrepreneurship education strongly correlates with changes in the entrepreneurial intention of high school learners. This is supported by the sig. value of less than 0.05, confirming a positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention of high school learners.

Table 2
LINEAR REGRESSION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

Variable	Unstandardised B	Standard error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Entrepreneurial intention	0.464	0.251	0.250	1.642	0.007

SIG<0.05

Table 2 shows the results of the linear regression that there is a significant (B=0.250, P<0.05) relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, the results indicate a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Overall, the results indicate that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention of high school students. These findings are consistent with Martin et al., who also found that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship skills, intentions, and outcomes. The results support the findings of Byabashaija & Katono (2011) which indicated that college entrepreneurship training increases the intention of college students to start businesses. Liao & Gartner (2007); Nsahlai et al. (2020), find that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial behaviours and intentions.

RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study indicated a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. The findings of the study can assist the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to better comprehend how entrepreneurship education can promote entrepreneurial intention. The study provides an understanding of the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention, especially on high school students' perspective. We found that entrepreneurship education does shape entrepreneurial intention; that students who took entrepreneurship classes are more likely to have the intention to start their own business. Based on the findings it can be concluded that the general entrepreneurial intention among high school students in the South Africa is high and encouraging. Moreover, the department should allocate professionals such as subject advisors, material design specialists, digital pedagogical specialist; educational psychologists; clinical psychologists and social workers to school with the aim to promote entrepreneurial intentions among learners in high school.

We did recommend that DBE make clear national policy about inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the Grade 10-12 curriculum. Key to the success of such national policy would be the clear clarification of roles and responsibilities and accountabilities of provincial and local government. In addition, we recommended that other government departments also become part of the value cluster for the implementation of such education.

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CONCLUSION

We concluded by recommending that, in a country where youth unemployment is high and increasing year on year, it is the responsibility of all institutions, private and public, to initiate the change. We conclude by recommending that the kind of education our youth receive might well be a good point at which to start to make the difference to youth unemployment and poverty.

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