



Entrepreneurship Education in South Africa's Higher Education Institutions: In Pursuit of Promoting Self-Reliance in Students

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Purpose: Entrepreneurship Education (EE) has garnered increased attention in South African higher education institutions due to its potential to foster self-reliance and job creation in a country grappling with high unemployment rates. This study examines entrepreneurship education's role in promoting economic development and poverty alleviation in South Africa.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a systematic review approach to explore the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in addressing unemployment, creating employment opportunities, and fostering economic growth in South Africa. The study seeks to identify key findings and insights regarding integrating entrepreneurship education into teaching and learning practices in higher education institutions by synthesising existing literature.

Findings: The findings indicate that entrepreneurship education has the potential to accelerate economic growth, reduce unemployment rates, and alleviate poverty traps in South Africa. By equipping students with entrepreneurial skills and mindset, entrepreneurship education can empower individuals to establish and sustain small businesses, thus contributing to economic development and poverty reduction.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the role of entrepreneurship education in addressing socio-economic challenges in South Africa. The findings underscore the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education into teaching and learning practices across all higher education institutions to tackle unemployment and poverty in the country effectively. The study emphasises the need for concerted efforts from stakeholders in higher education to prioritise entrepreneurship education to foster economic resilience and social upliftment in South Africa.

Keywords: entrepreneurship education, higher education, unemployment, curriculum, self-reliance

Introduction

The unemployment rate has become increasingly high in the South African economy. It has generated some spin-offs that bode undesirable consequences, not only for economic development but also for the sane social-cultural coexistence of the people. Rather than clinging to an endless hope for formal employment, recourse to entrepreneurship has been touted as a possible antidote for confronting the situation. However, a prerequisite to self-employment is entrepreneurial intention. Thousands of students graduate annually from various higher education institutions across South Africa, and many are unemployed years after graduation. Hence, South Africa's graduate unemployment is a significant concern for many – families, businesses, and government. Notably, the unemployment rate has surpassed 25%, a trend associated with Chimucheka (2014), one of the factors increasing social ills in South African society. This high unemployment implies that a degree is insufficient to be employed (GEM, (2015; Iwu et al., 2021), but also entrepreneurship skills. However, despite the suitability of entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional employment, entrepreneurial activity is currently low in South Africa. A recent OECD economic survey identified low entrepreneurship in South Africa compared to other emerging economies (OECD, 2017). Therefore, a critical way forward is to expose South African youths to entrepreneurial education, enabling them to

escape the vicious cycle of poverty (North, 2002). The likelihood of a business venture succeeding depends on a graduate's business skills (GEM, 2012). It is, therefore, not a question of whether to provide students with entrepreneurship education or whether those in entrepreneurial training find any value in it. By finding value, we mean taking up an entrepreneurial activity at the end of the study. This is the basis upon which this study was conducted.

Entrepreneurship education stimulates the desire of students to choose self-employment after graduation (Lawan et al., 2015; Premand et al., 2016). Through this programme, students become aware of different ways to start business ventures and the available support services (Fatoki, 2010; Katundu & Gabagambi, 2016). Interestingly, Makgosa and Ongori (2012) and Rudhumbu, Sivotwa, Munyanyiwa, and Mutsau (2016) note that despite vocational education and entrepreneurship support programmes, graduates rarely consider entrepreneurship as a career or show interest in becoming entrepreneurs. This study aimed to provide insight into the need for entrepreneurship education in higher education curricula across the Republic to deal with the rising unemployment and other related social issues. Entrepreneurship, as a multi-faceted paradigm, has been defined by various scholars. Thus, the literature needs to provide a cohesive definition of entrepreneurship. According to Nicolaides (2011), entrepreneurship is a process that nurtures and promotes economic growth, job creation and prosperity through viable businesses. Rwigema and Venter (2004) also define entrepreneurship as the process of innovative conceptualisation, organisation, and management of a sustainable business. Conversely, it is an educational approach that provides knowledge and skills that can create economic goods and services while creating job opportunities simultaneously.

Entrepreneurship education offers its students a combination of different experiences (Walter et al., 2013). Different studies have revealed that entrepreneurship education enhances the intention to be an entrepreneur, behaviour, and attitude through improving entrepreneurial attention and competency (Bae et al., 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Martin et al., 2013). The advancement of entrepreneurship education in recent years is closely related to research on entrepreneurial learning, which has received significant research attention since the start of the twenty-first century and has been an increasingly important basis for developing pedagogy in entrepreneurship education. Different learning theories were influenced on teaching entrepreneurship, including action learning (Revans, 1982), transformative learning (Paprock, 1992), experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), and additional theories of learning focusing on action and change. Through teaching and learning, skills and knowledge that are believed to be one of a handful of areas in which a nation can have a competitive advantage can be developed. Various scholars have argued that the significance of entrepreneurial education is derived from the economic benefits to individuals, communities and the nation at large (Adeoye, 2020).

Conversely, several studies have highlighted entrepreneurship teaching and learning in higher education as one of the most important factors that could contribute to entrepreneurial activities in South Africa (Van Vuuren & Groenewald, 2007; Kanayo, 2021). Similarly, classroom teaching and learning entrepreneurship education play an essential role in developing entrepreneurial skills in students (Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011). Alvarez-Risco et al. (2021) argue that having entrepreneurial skills considerably expands the chance of an individual owning or managing a business. Kanayo (2021) asserts that a likely resolution for entrepreneurs is the introduction of teaching and learning entrepreneurial skills in universities. Such programs assist students in owning businesses and positively impact the sustainability of their businesses.

Clark et al. (2021) assert that teaching and learning entrepreneurship skills alone is insufficient, but taking emotional charge must be encouraged. For entrepreneurship students to successfully own and manage their businesses, a positive attitude and confidence are essential for their intentions and actions. Students must be taught how to take risks, as the ability to take risks is an essential characteristic of being an entrepreneur (Adeoye, 2020). It is believed that people with a strong sense of ability make a more significant effort to master challenges. Hence, a successful entrepreneur needs strong entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which can push such an entrepreneur to perform various tasks and roles successfully (Adeoye, 2020). Students need to construct meaningful concepts from entrepreneurship education to embrace and grow their interests. Thus, the authors adopt cognitive constructivist learning theory to underpin this study.

Theoretical foundation

According to Sailin and Mahmor (2018), cognitive constructivist learning theory involves drawing meaningful learning from experiences. Meaningful learning means that the students can acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to learn the necessary vocations and start and become successful entrepreneurs in society. The theory is a combination of cognitive and constructivist approaches. According to Stewart (2021), cognitivist teaching strategies aim to help South African students integrate new knowledge into their body of prior knowledge and empower them to adapt their existing conceptual framework to incorporate that knowledge. This indicates that entrepreneurship students will acquire new knowledge and skills to build on their previous knowledge. They are building on previously acquired knowledge to develop and understand new knowledge offered to them, to make quality meaning that can be acted upon. While constructivism is considered an innovative approach that influences the teaching method, constructivism creates strategies that enable students to gain knowledge. For students to actively gain knowledge, teachers need to create a method by which the content of the study will be thought through. This method or strategy will change the teaching content for easy understanding by the students in various South African HEIs. Li & Guo (2015) aver that in constructivism, the teacher is a facilitator rather than the only resource during the teaching and learning process. A constructivist approach's underlying premise is that learning involves creating knowledge rather than simply receiving it. Instead of repeating, it is about comprehending and applying (Sulistiyowati, 2019). Constructivism's main takeaway is that students can build their knowledge through active learning and interpret ideas in their own ways. This motive is essential for entrepreneurship students who aim to gain knowledge that will prepare them to start and successfully manage businesses.

Based on cognitive constructivist learning theory, students assume responsibility for actively constructing meaning through conversation with others and themselves. Understanding is a valuable goal since it allows for incorporating the content into the student's existing knowledge. The main takeaway is that learning is a dynamic and ongoing process (Stewart, 2021). To develop students' entrepreneurial skills effectively, teaching and learning must continuously evaluate and adjust to unexpected changes in students' behaviour and thinking as teaching progresses. According to the theory, teachers must structure lessons so that students can link and make sense of concepts and facts. The objective is to integrate and inspire students to take a broad and critical view of society. This goal correlates with the aim of the study, which is to develop university students' entrepreneurial skills to make meaningful contributions to the economy and society.

The Realities of Entrepreneurship Education in South Africa's Higher Education Institutions

Entrepreneurship education in South Africa's higher education institutions (HEIs) is increasingly recognised as a pivotal avenue for fostering student self-reliance and economic empowerment (Iwu et al., 2021). As Kitchenham et al. (2009) emphasised, HEIs play a crucial role in equipping graduates with the skills and mindset necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern economy. In the South African context, where youth unemployment rates remain persistently high, entrepreneurship education holds promise as a pathway towards self-sufficiency and job creation (OECD, 2019). However, the realisation of these prospects is accompanied by many challenges. One of the primary challenges facing entrepreneurship education in South African HEIs is the need to reconcile academic rigour with practical relevance. While theoretical knowledge forms the cornerstone of traditional higher education, the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial endeavours necessitates a more experiential learning approach (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Bridging this gap requires HEIs to adapt their curricula to incorporate hands-on learning experiences, such as internships, incubators, and real-world business projects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, integrating entrepreneurial education across disciplines can enhance its impact and relevance, fostering a culture of innovation and creativity (Jonassen, 1997).

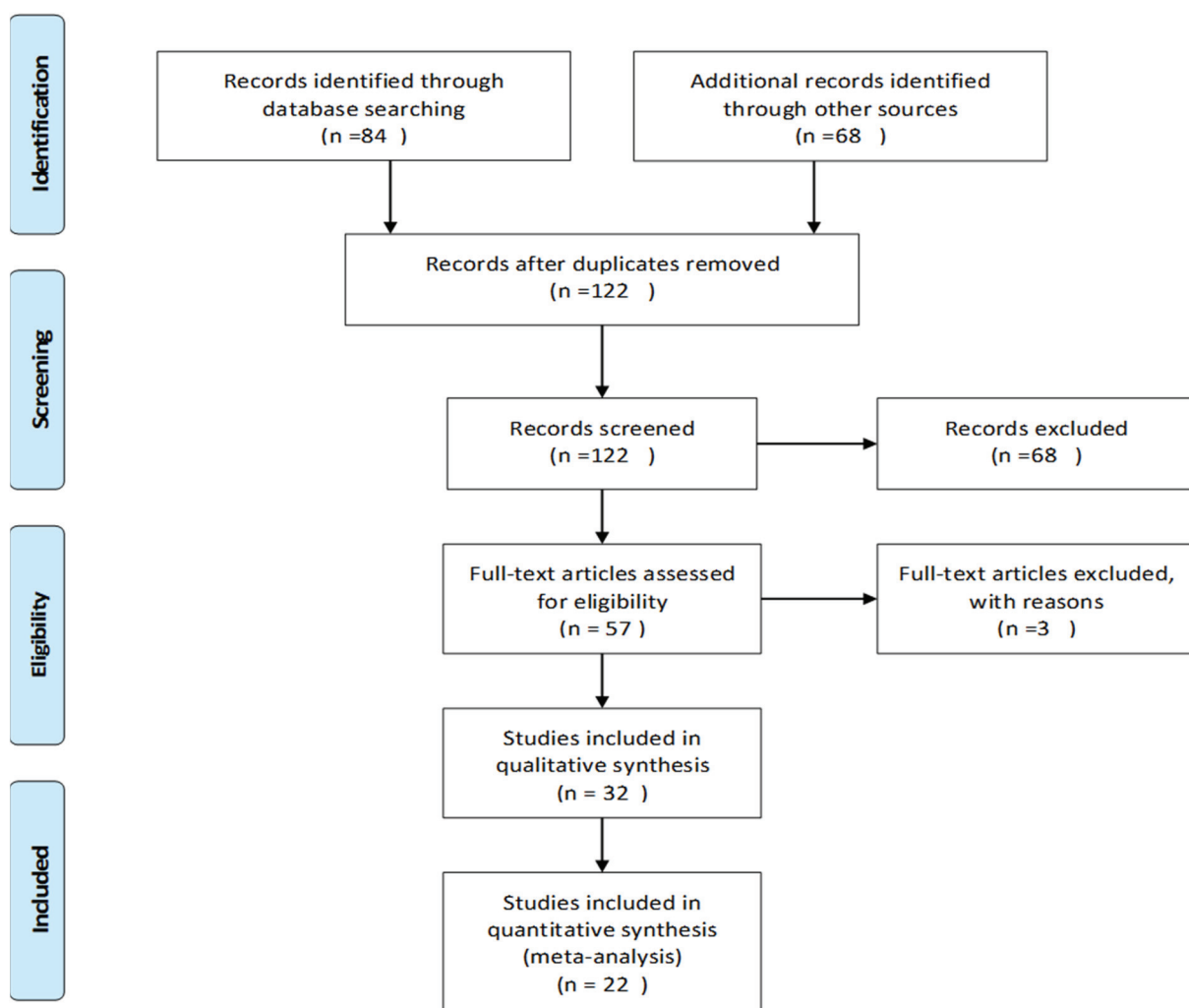
Moreover, the accessibility and inclusivity of entrepreneurship education remain significant challenges in South Africa. Historically marginalised communities, including women, rural populations, and individuals from low-income backgrounds, often face barriers to accessing entrepreneurial opportunities and resources (Hart, 2018). Addressing these disparities requires a concerted effort to democratise entrepreneurship education, providing tailored support and mentorship to underrepresented groups (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Additionally, partnerships between HEIs, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders are crucial for expanding access to funding, networking, and infrastructure (European Commission, 2013). Another critical challenge confronting entrepreneurship education in South African HEIs is the imperative to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among students. Beyond acquiring technical skills, entrepreneurship requires resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to take calculated risks (Bandura, 1986). Cultivating these attributes demands a holistic approach to education that encompasses academic instruction, personal development, and mentorship (Kunter et al., 2013). Furthermore, embedding entrepreneurship within the broader socio-economic context of South Africa can help students recognise the role of entrepreneurship in addressing societal challenges and driving sustainable development (Gu et al., 2020).

Conversely, while entrepreneurship education holds immense promise for fostering self-reliance and economic empowerment in South Africa's HEIs, it has its challenges. Balancing academic rigour with practical relevance, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset are among the key imperatives facing stakeholders in higher education. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that combines curriculum innovation, targeted support for marginalised groups, and collaborative partnerships across sectors. By overcoming these obstacles, entrepreneurship education can play a pivotal role in shaping a more prosperous and equitable future for South Africa.

Research Methodology

This study utilised a systematic literature review, following Kitchenham (2004) and Kitchenham and Charters (2007) guidelines. A systematic literature review states a research protocol for evaluating and interpreting all relevant research based on the research question, phenomenon of interest, or area (Kitchenham, 2004). The review was conducted in three phases: planning, conducting, and reporting. Those three phases have sub-elements, including (1) identification of review questions; (2) formulation of a review protocol; (3) developing inclusion and exclusion criteria; (4) reviewing strategy and selection procedures; (5) studying quality assessment; and (6) strategy for data extraction and reporting the answers to the research questions. Research methodology ensures scholarly investigations' rigour, validity, and reliability. In studying entrepreneurship education (EE) in South African higher education institutions, a systematic review methodology is employed to synthesise existing literature and generate evidence-based insights. Systematic reviews offer a structured approach to identifying, selecting, and critically appraising relevant studies, providing a comprehensive overview of current knowledge on a particular topic (Higgins & Green, 2011). By systematically searching multiple databases and sources, researchers can minimise bias and ensure the inclusivity of diverse perspectives and findings, enhancing the robustness of the synthesis process (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

Fig.1 PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram (Adapted from Page et al., 2020).



The systematic review methodology adopted in this study adheres to established guidelines and protocols, including the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al., 2009). Following a predefined search strategy, relevant articles, reports, and studies about EE in South African higher education are systematically identified and screened for eligibility. Through a rigorous selection process based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, studies meeting the predefined criteria are included for detailed analysis and synthesis (Higgins & Green, 2011). Thus, the study employed PRISMA flow to search for relevant literature sources, using keywords like "Entrepreneurship Education", "Higher Education", "South Africa", "Self-Reliance", and "Entrepreneurs". A total of 122 literature sources were accessed and screened to 52, appropriately focusing on the objectives of this study (see Fig 1 below). All studies written in other languages, not focused on the study's keywords, were excluded from the data.

Page et al. (2021) argue that this flow enables researchers to include and exclude sources based on their relevance to the study. Critical appraisal of the selected studies is conducted to assess the evidence's quality, relevance, and methodological rigour, ensuring the synthesised findings' validity and reliability (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). This study aims to advance knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship education in South African higher education by employing a systematic review methodology. Through the synthesis and analysis of existing literature, the study seeks to identify key themes, trends, and gaps in the current research landscape, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education initiatives. Additionally, the systematic review methodology enhances the transparency, reproducibility, and credibility of the research findings, thereby strengthening the overall impact and utility of the study in informing evidence-based decision-making and future research endeavours (Higgins & Green, 2011; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

Presentation of the findings

Findings from the systematic literature review revealed some themes that will be used to present findings in this section. These themes explain the findings from the study to present in-depth information for scholarship.

Theme 1: Universities' roles in teaching entrepreneurship

Given the increasing diversity of scholarship regarding entrepreneurship education, this study aims to use a systematic literature review to assess research published in the last decade and evaluate its general involvement in and impact on the field. This paper has three main objectives. First, it aims to systematically collect, summarise, analyse, and synthesise the information from previous studies published between 2009 and 2019. Second, it aims to examine in detail the findings of these systematically collected studies to offer a detailed picture of the present situation of entrepreneurship education. Finally, it aims to identify the research gaps that require further investigation and reveal opportunities for future research in entrepreneurship education. Universities are acknowledged as knowledge-intensive institutions and settings that support the growth of human capital, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Universities can encourage business thinking and entrepreneurial culture when their contributions to advanced research, education, and knowledge networking are considered. Universities play a role in developing business thinking and the general transfer of technology (Jessop, 2017; Adanlawo & Chaka, 2022). Universities participate actively in the entrepreneurial discovery process. Universities are the connecting institutions between all partners in an entrepreneurial ecosystem (Wang, 2021). These universities, according to Wang, are engaged in collaborations, networks, and other connections with public and private entities to support interaction, collaboration, and cooperation within the country's innovation system

(Wang, 2021). Universities are not socially isolated; they work closely with business and government while maintaining their mostly independent status.

South African universities should encourage entrepreneurship (Ajani et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial universities, innovation clusters, and knowledge transfer are intimately tied to entrepreneurial ecosystems (Fuster et al., 2019; Ajani et al., 2023). Universities that have created various systems for producing and disseminating information to advance national development are called entrepreneurial universities (Foster, 2022). They deliver instruction and extracurricular activities to promote the growth of entrepreneurial behaviour. Collaboration with external stakeholders is crucial for "entrepreneurial universities" since it offers connections, knowledge, and entrepreneurial experience for entrepreneurship education. Webb (2021) and Foster (2022) aver that innovation can flourish in universities, where knowledge and skills are taught in greater depth than at other levels of education.

Additionally, programs and soft skills are combined with technical business training in university entrepreneurship education. Universities frequently serve as change agents that encourage human connection, knowledge transfer, and the development of trust amongst many stakeholders due to their closeness to other communities (Jessop, 2017; Klofsten et al., 2019). For students to work in an entrepreneurial manner, universities provide entrepreneurship education that cultivates and develops the attitudes, knowledge, and competencies necessary (Fuster et al., 2017; Wang, 2021). They aid in developing a business's culture and help students gain human abilities, including teamwork, leadership, creativity, and the capacity to function under pressure (Jessop, 2017). The role of universities in building students to become successful entrepreneurs who will make meaningful contributions to the economy is immeasurable.

Theme 2: Nexus between Entrepreneurship Education and the Global Economy

Entrepreneurship education has been given various definitions. Fayolle and Lassas-Clerc (2006) indicated that entrepreneurship education is an educational method related to entrepreneurs' attitudes and skills and can also be used to improve the qualities of individuals. Entrepreneurship education is also called developing behaviours, skills, and attitudes that individuals can use in an entrepreneurship-based career (Wilson, 2008). Also, according to Bechard and Toulouse (1998), EE is defined as formal teachings that inform, educate, and train those who want to start businesses or develop small ventures. Based on all these definitions, the researchers of this paper defined entrepreneurship education as developing entrepreneurship skills to enhance entrepreneurial intention, improve employability, and educate entrepreneurs to start a successful business. The recent global economic recession has witnessed many of the world's largest companies continuing to engage in massive downsizing.

Conversely, small businesses continue to create more jobs. For instance, in the US, small businesses created 1,625,000 jobs (Martin, 2015). In sub-Saharan African countries, massive improvements have been recorded. In Zambia, 55 per cent of the working population is involved in small businesses (Richardson et al., 2004). Mozambique records 98.6% of enterprises, which employ 46.9% of the nation's workforce. Similarly, about 4 million people in Tanzania who are small businesses contribute about 45% to the country's GDP (Anderson, 2017). With these statistics, small businesses have found a home in most African nations, primarily because they are easier to set up than big enterprises.

Nevertheless, the maximum potential of entrepreneurship in South African universities is yet to be achieved simply because of its constraints from the start-up stage to the survival stage (Ajani et al., 2023). Unfortunately, these limitations have not received enough attention from university academics (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021). The gap necessitated this study. Though South Africa is confronted with challenges of insufficient managerial abilities because of

inadequate frameworks of instruction and skills training to tap entrepreneurship potential to the fullest, Clark et al. (2021) advise the need for entrepreneurship skills development among university students through teaching and learning. Entrepreneurship education has the potential to significantly contribute to economic growth, which supports the value of increasing awareness of this field (Carland & Carland, 2004; Hall et al., 2010). Gartner and Vesper (1994) indicated that the provision of entrepreneurial education programs for undergraduates and postgraduates has grown significantly in Asia, North America, New Zealand, Europe, and Australia. Entrepreneurship education's influence, however, varies based on the national and local context (Ahmad et al., 2018; Chen & Agrawal, 2018). Notably, Nabi et al. (2017) revealed that studies related to the influence of entrepreneurship education in rapidly developing countries are only used in 5% of empirical samples (e.g., Four of the BRICS countries "China, Russia, India, and Brazil"). In the 1980s, management education appeared in a few universities in China, while in the early 1990s and the mid-1990s, management schools were established, and MBA programs were introduced. Businesses later helped further develop entrepreneurship education (Liet al., 2003). In China, according to Liet al. (2003), entrepreneurship education has been improved recently (it was a new concept till 2001), with testing for entrepreneurship education introduced in nine universities by the Ministry of Education, which proved successful and has since been developed extensively.

Theme 3: The need for Entrepreneurship skills among university students

Entrepreneurship education fosters entrepreneurial intentions, behaviours, and attitudes among students, thereby contributing to entrepreneurial development (Walter et al., 2013; Bae et al., 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Martin et al., 2013). This educational paradigm has evolved significantly in recent years, drawing from research on entrepreneurial learning and various learning theories to inform pedagogical approaches (Revans, 1982; Paprock, 1992; Kolb, 1984). Particularly in regions like Africa, where local private enterprise is deemed vital for economic advancement, entrepreneurship education has gained traction as a strategic intervention to address unemployment and stimulate economic growth (Rooke et al., 2011; Brixiova et al., 2015; Oluwatobi et al., 2015). However, the predominant traditional teaching methods in many higher education institutions, characterised by passive learning approaches, often need to be revised to nurture entrepreneurial competencies and innovative thinking among students (Blanton et al., 2006; Gorghiu et al., 2015).

Education is pivotal in laying the foundation for successful entrepreneurship, with entrepreneurial skills acquisition paramount to business success (Martin, 2015; Adanlawo & Magigaba, 2022; Aminu, 2014). Through teaching and learning, students can acquire management skills, business planning acumen, and financial literacy, which are essential for navigating the complexities of entrepreneurship (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021; Martin, 2015). Moreover, integrating mentoring, counselling, and networking opportunities into entrepreneurship programs can further enhance students' readiness for entrepreneurial endeavours (Ferrerias-Garcia, Sayoung les-Zaguirre, & Serradell-Lopez, 2021). Despite the challenges posed by the high cost of education, technological advancements have democratised access to educational resources, enabling aspiring entrepreneurs to acquire valuable knowledge and skills online (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015).

Entrepreneurship education equips students with practical business skills and cultivates an entrepreneurial and managerial mindset essential for seizing opportunities and navigating uncertainties (Alvarez-Risco et al., 2021). Aspiring entrepreneurs access social, human, and financial capital through education, facilitating innovation and fostering business success (Adanlawo & Magigaba, 2021; Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Moreover, education empowers entrepreneurs to leverage prior knowledge, personal traits, and social networks to effectively

identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Alvarez-Risco et al., 2021; Greblikaite et al., 2016). By adopting a skills-based pedagogy that emphasises experiential learning and problem-solving, higher education institutions can inspire the development and practice of entrepreneurial skills among students, thereby nurturing a new generation of innovative and resilient entrepreneurs (Alvarez-Risco et al., 2021).

Theme 4: Integration of Entrepreneurship Education into learning spaces to promote entrepreneurship skills

Entrepreneurship education is widely recognised as a pivotal driver of entrepreneurial development, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to initiate and sustain successful business ventures (Martin et al., 2013; Lin~an et al., 2011). However, while entrepreneurship education holds promise for cultivating a new generation of entrepreneurs, several studies have highlighted discrepancies between the outcomes of such education and graduates' expectations (Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2006; Solomon & Matlay, 2008; Ajani et al., 2021). To address this gap, it is imperative to delineate the objectives and approaches of entrepreneurship education within the higher education landscape.

Firstly, entrepreneurship education should create awareness and impart theoretical knowledge about the various facets of starting and managing a business (Ismail et al., 2021). This entails incorporating modules on business management and skills enhancement to provide students with a foundational understanding of business principles. Additionally, entrepreneurship education should prepare students for self-employment by imparting practical skills for initiating and managing small businesses (Ismail et al., 2021). Practical components such as business plan preparation and project development can instil students' entrepreneurial confidence and readiness (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021).

Moreover, entrepreneurship education's teaching and learning process should go beyond imparting knowledge to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and cultivating essential entrepreneurial attributes (Clark et al., 2021). This involves nurturing risk-taking, creativity, and innovativeness through experiential learning opportunities, role modelling, and exposure to real-world entrepreneurial experiences (Bischoff et al., 2018). Additionally, integrating learning strategies emphasising experiential learning and problem-solving can enhance students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts (Deon, 2017). By prioritising the development of entrepreneurial skills and attributes, entrepreneurship education can empower students to navigate the complexities of the entrepreneurial journey and contribute meaningfully to economic development.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education hinges on the alignment between teaching methodologies and learning outcomes (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021). Emphasising active learning techniques, such as case studies, group discussions, and experiential exercises, can enhance students' engagement and comprehension of entrepreneurial concepts (Clark et al., 2021). Moreover, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset requires shifting from traditional teaching to learning approaches, where students actively engage in problem-solving and critical thinking (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021). By adopting innovative pedagogical strategies prioritising experiential learning and skill acquisition, entrepreneurship education can empower students to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations and contribute to economic growth and innovation.

Theme 5: Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education originated in the US and Europe and has spread to other regions aiming to develop entrepreneurial attitudes, skills, intentions, and knowledge; however, it has

faced several challenges. Matlay (2009), Oosterbeek et al. (2010) and Smith et al. (2006) have asserted that entrepreneurship education does not always lead to the intended outcomes and Does not develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to engender entrepreneurial intention in students. Further, interest and activity in entrepreneurship education among higher-education students is low (Heinonen & Poikkijoki, 2006). Studies have also found that some students have a negative attitude toward entrepreneurship education (Hannon, 2005; Ajani et al., 2021). Some limitations of entrepreneurship education were mentioned in the studies reviewed. According to Honing (2004), many researchers indicated that there needs to be more studies determining EE effectiveness and outcomes. Entrepreneurship education research has received much attention recently based on the benefits that it can bring to individuals and countries; however, Fayolle (2013) and Rideout and Gray (2013) have stated that entrepreneurship education suffers from the lack of a coherent conceptual research framework that is comprehensively grounded on the knowledge of general education and the philosophy of entrepreneurship education. Concerning this point, very few sample studies were based on a mixed-methodology approach. Based on the research reviewed, the topics the researchers have discussed relate to different contexts, with most focusing on entrepreneurship education development but very much discussing entrepreneurship education policies or the entrepreneurship education gender perspective. Notably, a study conducted by Alakaleek (2019) regarding the level of entrepreneurship education in Jordan Universities stated that, although Jordan had reformed its education system, there remained a gap between the real-world implementation and the formal policies for improving higher education.

Discussion

The role of universities in fostering entrepreneurship is paramount in driving economic growth, innovation, and human capital development. As knowledge-intensive institutions, universities contribute significantly to advancing research, education, and knowledge networking, thereby nurturing entrepreneurial culture and business thinking among students (Jessop, 2017; Adanlawo & Chaka, 2022). By actively participating in entrepreneurial discovery processes and serving as connecting institutions within entrepreneurial ecosystems, universities facilitate collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders, including public and private entities (Wang, 2021). Through collaborations and networks, universities harness resources and expertise to support entrepreneurship education, promoting the growth of entrepreneurial behaviour and fostering innovation clusters (Fuster et al., 2019; Ajani et al., 2023). Moreover, as change agents, universities play a pivotal role in cultivating entrepreneurial attitudes, knowledge, and competencies among students, equipping them with essential skills such as teamwork, leadership, and creativity (Jessop, 2017). Despite the potential of entrepreneurship education to drive economic development and innovation, several challenges hinder its effectiveness in realising intended outcomes. Studies have highlighted discrepancies between entrepreneurship education outcomes and graduates' expectations, with some students exhibiting negative attitudes toward entrepreneurship education (Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2006; Ajani et al., 2021). Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive research frameworks and mixed-methodology approaches limits our understanding of entrepreneurship education's effectiveness and outcomes (Fayolle, 2013; Rideout & Gray, 2013). Additionally, entrepreneurship education faces challenges related to policy implementation, gender perspectives, and the alignment between formal policies and real-world practices in higher education institutions (Alakaleek, 2019).

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that emphasises integrating entrepreneurship education into learning spaces, promotes stakeholder collaboration, and fosters an entrepreneurial mindset among students. Universities can enhance students'

engagement and comprehension of entrepreneurial concepts by adopting active learning techniques like case studies and experiential exercises (Clark et al., 2021). Moreover, shifting from traditional teaching to learning approaches, where students actively engage in problem-solving and critical thinking, can nurture an entrepreneurial mindset and cultivate essential entrepreneurial attributes (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021). Furthermore, fostering collaborations and networks with external stakeholders can provide students with valuable connections, knowledge, and entrepreneurial experiences, enriching entrepreneurship education programs and promoting the growth of entrepreneurial behaviour (Ferrerias-Garcia et al., 2021; Webb, 2021). In conclusion, universities are pivotal in promoting entrepreneurship education and driving economic development. However, challenges such as discrepancies in outcomes, limited research frameworks, and policy implementation gaps hinder the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to integrate entrepreneurship education into learning spaces, promote stakeholder collaboration, and foster an entrepreneurial mindset among students. By adopting innovative pedagogical strategies and fostering collaborations with external stakeholders, universities can empower students to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations and contribute meaningfully to economic growth and innovation.

Conclusion

The significance of entrepreneurship education cannot be ruled out in the recent scenario of the highly competitive market. Moreover, entrepreneurs are reportedly contributing positively to the economic development of the economy by increasing gross production, generating wealth, providing employment opportunities, etc. Universities play a crucial role in the development of entrepreneurial abilities. Universities are crucial in developing the innovative concepts of new enterprises. They provide teaching in entrepreneurship that fosters and develops the attitudes, skills, and competencies necessary for students to engage in an entrepreneurial manner (Peschl et al., 2021). Universities serve as significant institutional determinants for knowledge creation because they provide training and the ability for academics to produce "knowledge innovations" that can be formally or informally passed on to students through teaching and learning. Universities should encourage entrepreneurial behaviour, from raising awareness to inspiring and implementing ideas. They should run the Supporting Entrepreneurship programme, which provides training, teaching, learning, and infrastructural assistance to support and encourage knowledge-based entrepreneurship while preparing students for careers as entrepreneurs after their studies. We conclude that entrepreneurial growth in teaching and learning, regarded as a critical tool for supporting effective entrepreneurial activity, requires specific attention.

Recommendations

As good as entrepreneurship education is for South African students, various challenges have been identified. However, with serious commitment and focus, stakeholders can capacitate students at various higher education institutions with entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. Thus, based on the findings from various reviewed literature sources, this study recommends involving higher education institutions to provide entrepreneurship education to more students across South Africa. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education should be strengthened with practical training, especially hard skills, through collaboration with companies/industries for student internship programmes. In addition, it is also recommended that the teaching material and curriculum be regularly updated to keep students abreast of dynamic information in the economy. Moreover, professional development in entrepreneurship education should be regularly, adequately, and appropriately provided to lecturers/facilitators to enhance their personal skills and provide students with quality and necessary knowledge and skills. Adequate provision of necessary technological gadgets should be provided and used. Starting

funds/capital should be provided for students upon their studies to kick off their entrepreneurship activities.

Limitations and future research directions

Despite the valuable insights gained from the systematic literature review on entrepreneurship education, several limitations and areas for future research warrant consideration. Firstly, the review primarily focused on literature published between 1997 and 2024, potentially overlooking recent developments and emerging trends in entrepreneurship education. Additionally, the review predominantly drew from studies conducted in specific geographic regions, limiting the generalizability of findings to a broader global context. Furthermore, the need for standardised metrics for assessing the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programmes poses challenges for comparative analysis and evaluation. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating more diverse literature sources, including recent publications and studies from a broader range of geographical contexts. Moreover, there is a need for longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education on graduates' entrepreneurial outcomes and economic development. Additionally, efforts to develop standardised assessment tools and metrics for evaluating entrepreneurship education programmes could facilitate comparative analysis and contribute to evidence-based policy development in this field. Finally, exploring the role of technology and digital platforms in enhancing entrepreneurship education delivery and outcomes represents a promising avenue for future research.

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