

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF LECTURERS' TEACHING ON STUDENT'S ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN TVET COLLEGE

N. Malawu*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9817-226X>

Z. Waghid*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3404-1041>

*Faculty of Education

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Cape Town, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the challenges faced by a group of TVET college students in establishing their own entrepreneurial ventures. It further aimed to explore how lecturers' current pedagogical approaches were or were not cultivating the entrepreneurial intentions of these students. The study employed a qualitative approach informed by an interpretive design. The sample participants included five (n=5) lecturers employed to teach entrepreneurship and business management across different courses, and thirty students (n=30) at a TVET college. The Theory of Planned Behaviour served as a barometer to both guide and frame the interpretation of results. A combined student- and teacher-centered approach was found, according to the views of the participants, to have a positive impact on the development of the participating students' entrepreneurial intentions. The findings also suggest that using real-life business challenges as part of pedagogy, has the potential to help TVET college students develop entrepreneurial intentions, together with the appropriate skills, values, and attitudes.

Keywords: theory of planned behaviour, entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship education, pedagogical approaches

INTRODUCTION

South African policy makers, economists, and researchers see entrepreneurship as likely to remain critical to the country's economy, and its economic growth. Many also see youth participation guided by entrepreneurship as critical to social and economic transformation (Waghid and Oliver 2017; Waghid 2019; Radebe 2019; Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017). To create adequate entrepreneurship training opportunities for the country's youth the government's 2011 National Development Plan recognised the need to increase the number of

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges by 2030 (National Planning Commission [NPC] 2011). TVET programmes already include a significant entrepreneurship component (Badawi 2013).

Despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the national TVET curriculum, the country's low entrepreneurial uptake rate remains a major concern (Bosma et al. 2020; Radebe 2019; Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017). Particularly concerning is South Africa's youth persistent lagging behind their counterparts in other countries, including developing countries, in terms of establishing independent entrepreneurial ventures (Bosma et al. 2020; Radebe 2019; Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017). According to Bosma et al. (2020), the total early-stage entrepreneurship activity (TEA) in South Africa in 2020 was only 10 per cent, with the Established Business Ownership rate 5 per cent for people aged 18–64. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) of 2019, records youth unemployment figure of 55.2 per cent, of youth aged 15–34, more than double that of the country's BRICS (Brazil, China, India, and Russia) counterparts (Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis 2017).

A literature review reveals entrepreneurship education research in South Africa remains in its infancy, with no endorsement of an appropriate standard pedagogical approach to effective entrepreneurship education (Mukesh, Pillai, and Mamman 2020). Building on Ndofirepi's (2020) argument that entrepreneurship education can only be revised and improved if educators are aware of its implications, the purpose of this research is to investigate the sampled lecturers' degree of awareness of these consequences and the specific ways in which their current pedagogical approaches advance, or not, the entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of a sampled group of students at a TVET college. The following questions guide the article:

- RQ1: What are the attitudes of a sample of students towards entrepreneurship at a TVET college?
- RQ2: What, according to these students and their lecturers, are the challenges students face in participating effectively in local entrepreneurial activities?
- RQ 3: In what ways can the lecturers teaching approaches be said to be enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of their students?

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) describes an individual's formation of entrepreneurial intentions from three precursors: attitudes, subjective norms, and the individual's perceived

behavioural control. The original developer of TPB, Ajzen (1991), saw an individual's intention to perform or act out a specific behaviour as a critical component of TPB. The four components of the TPB framework are described and discussed:

Entrepreneurship intentions

Ajzen (1991) viewed intentions in terms of predicting deliberate behaviour, based on the assumption that behaviour can be deliberate, especially when it is difficult to detect, is sporadic, or involves random time lags. The model depicts how an individual's intentions are formed prior to their decision to engage in a particular behaviour. Their decision to participate in the new venture creation process is conscious or deliberate rather than spontaneous (Ajzen 1991). Existing literature supports the entrepreneurship intentions link to the development of a conscious state of mind and a level of "cognitive conscience". These act together to lead to the individual's establishment of a new venture (Mei et al. 2015; Ndofirepi and Rambe 2017; Bird and Jellinek 1983, cited in Youssef et al. 2021).

Ajzen (1991) identified personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control as predictors of entrepreneurship intentions. The intention to engage in a particular behaviour is determined by the person's attitude toward that behaviour, as well as their perceived subjective norms and behavioural control, and thus, the stronger an individual's attitude, the greater their intention to engage in that specific behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

The TPB framework conceptualises subjective norms as formed by significant others or a role model's perceived expectations and behaviours, combined with a person's motivation to conform to those expectations (Ajzen 1991). These are referred to as normative beliefs because they are immediately available in memory and combine to produce an individual's perceived social pressure to perform the behaviour (Ajzen 1991). This framework is seen as helping to predict with high accuracy an individual's intentions to perform certain types of behaviours based on their attitude toward these behaviours, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These behaviours, along with perceptions of behavioural control, account for a significant portion of an individual's actual behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

Attitude towards the behaviour

Ajzen (1991) defined a person's attitude toward their behaviour as the degree to which they possess a positive or negative evaluation of the type of behaviour, including their attitude toward the enactment of starting a new business. Thus, the more favourable the attitude toward the behaviour, the stronger the individual's intention to engage in that specific behaviour (Ajzen 1991). A person's development of a positive evaluation of starting a new business increases the

likelihood of their developing a positive intention to start the business.

Ajzen (1991) saw attitudes as precursors of intentions, which in turn are the precursors of behaviours. Easily and clearly remembered behavioural views result in either a positive or negative attitude toward that behaviour (Ajzen 2015). People generally form beliefs about an object or phenomenon by associating it with specific attributes, such as other objects, features, or occasions (Ajzen 1991). When it comes to attitudes toward a behaviour, each belief associates the behaviour with a specific outcome or a perceived encouraging or discouraging aspect, such as the personal or financial cost likely to be incurred. We automatically and simultaneously acquire a specific attitude toward the behaviour because we already positively or negatively value the attributes that become associated with that behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

A strong and/or positive attitude toward an outcome implies an individual's expectation of significant psychic and emotional satisfaction from experiencing that outcome, which in turn favours the individual pursuing that action later (Douglas and Fitzsimmons 2013). This model divides attitude into two components: instrumental and affective (Vamvaka et al. 2020). Individual affective attitude and perceived self-efficacy are by far the strongest predictors of individual intention, highlighting the role of emotions in the entrepreneurial process (Vamvaka et al. 2020).

Attitudes toward entrepreneurial behaviour are influenced by one's belief that becoming an entrepreneur will result in particular outcomes, and one's assessment of the outcomes of this venture (Cavazos-Arroyo et al. 2017, cited in Fenech, Baguant, and Ivanov 2019). Linen and Chen (2009, 596, cited in Vamvaka et al. 2020) define "attitude toward start-up" as "the degree to which an individual holds a positive or negative personal evaluation of an entrepreneur". Thus, if their behavioural beliefs indicate that becoming an entrepreneur is likely to yield positive results, individuals are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward entrepreneurship (Cavazos-Arroyo et al. 2017, cited in Fenech et al. 2019). These theoretical models and studies suggest a significant relationship between attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions (Mei et al. 2015).

Shapero and Sokol (1982), Van Gelderen and Jansen (2006), and Wu and Wu (2008) have regarded people who venture into business as being self-sufficient and wealthy, and the success of their business being instrumental in their achieving that goal. However, Ajzen (1991) cautioned that the relative importance of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in the prediction of intention, could vary across behaviours and circumstances: in some cases, only attitudes have a significant effect on intentions, while in others, attitudes and perceived behavioural control would be sufficient to account for intentions, in yet others, all three predictors make independent contributions.

More recently, Anjum, Ramani, and Nazar (2020) found attitudes to play a significant facilitating role in developing a creativity disposition toward entrepreneurial intentions, and attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions to have a significant relationship. While several studies have found entrepreneurship education to have a positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions, others have shown opposite findings (Anjum et al. 2020). The TPB has been expanded to account for those entrepreneurial aspirations, influenced by an individual's mind-set regarding entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Kuttim et al. 2014).

Subjective norms

Subjective norms are the second TPB framework concept, and refer to an individual's perception of social pressure to perform, or refrain from performing, a behaviour (Ajzen 1991). Subjective norms are formed by the individual's perceptions of the expectations and behaviours of significant people or role models, as well as by the individual's incentive to live up to those expectations (Ajzen 2015). A subjective norm wielding a particularly strong influence is an individual's belief that a well-known individual or group of people will value and support this behaviour (Ajzen and Klobas 2013). These normative beliefs are formed from memories that combine to produce an individual's perceived social pressure to perform the behaviour (Ajzen 2015). Ajzen (1991) initially defined normative beliefs as an individual's perception of the likelihood that significant referent persons or groups would strongly approve or disapprove of their performance of a behaviour.

Already mentioned, is the positive correlation between the subjective norm regarding the behaviour and the individual's intention to perform that behaviour (Ajzen 1991), as is the relative importance of the three TPB considerations in expectation of intention to vary across behaviours and circumstances.

Intention control of the three TPB concerns reveals a different aspect of the behaviour in each situation, and each can be used as a starting point for behaviour modification efforts. The underlying rationale for these ideas provides the detailed explanations required to collect significant information about the factors that influence a potential entrepreneur's behaviour. Ajzen (1991) claimed that we can discover the specific elements that influence one person to act in a way that piques their interest in a particular venture, and which can influence another to choose a different course of action at the level of beliefs.

Perceived behavioural control

TPB's third factor, "perceived behavioural control", refers to an individual's subjective assessment of their ability to perform a specific behaviour (Ajzen and Klobas 2013). Control

beliefs are related to the presence of features that can influence a person's ability, as perceived by them, to perform the behaviour. Along with these elements, the apparent ability to help or hinder behavioural performance, together with easily accessible control belief, produce a certain level of perceived behavioural control or self-efficacy (Ajzen 2015).

In the context of an individual's forming entrepreneurial intentions and performing subsequent actions, perceived behavioural control refers to the individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of carrying out the intention to start a new business (Mei et al. 2015). A South African study conducted by Malebane and Swanepoel (2015) found evidence of participants' intention to start a business to stem from a positive or negative evaluation of realizing this intention, together with a perceived personal competence, and personal pressure felt by an individual to perform or not perform a behaviour.

In summary, perceived behavioural control is a function of control beliefs, such as an individual's beliefs about the presence of features that can enable or inhibit behaviour performance, multiplied by the perceived power of these features. In a 2019 interview with Tornikoski and Maalaoui (2019), Ajzen clarified the three considerations guiding human behaviour: beliefs about the likely consequences of the behaviour (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or hinder behaviour performance.

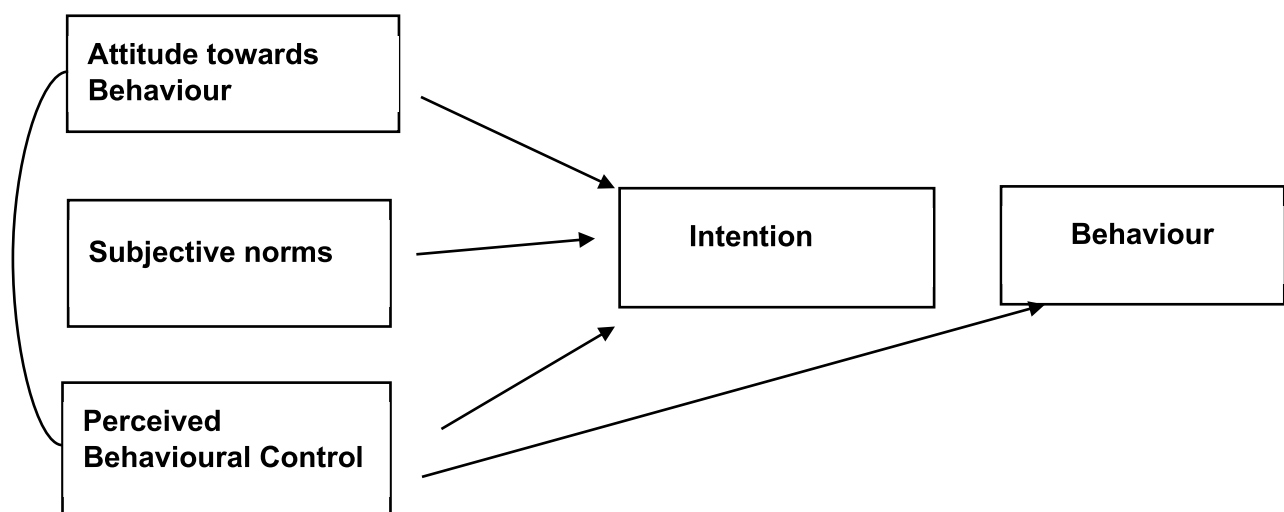


Figure 1: Theory of planned behaviour. Adapted from Ajzen (1991)

METHODOLOGY

We used a qualitative approach to gain a thorough understanding of a social phenomenon (De Vos et al. 2012), an approach researchers use to examine people's behaviour in depth and to

describe the various ways in which they perceive a social phenomenon (Duck and McMahan 2016). We wanted to investigate how sampled students' entrepreneurial intentions were or were not being developed/encouraged in entrepreneurship education programs at a TVET college in Cape Town.

Given that the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to use a variety of data collection methods, including case studies (Bakkabulindi 2015), a case study design was deemed appropriate to investigate a single case as a data collection method. One of the benefits of using this research design and method was the flexibility and adaptability it provided for using single or multiple data collection methods, including interviews and focus groups (Ponelis 2015). Case studies are researchers' preferred strategy when asking how and why questions and focusing on a phenomenon occurring in a real-life context (Yin 2009).

Participants were selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique which entails carefully selecting people based on their characteristics (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016). We had previously observed lecturers who were generally comfortable with sharing their ideas during departmental meetings and informal discussions, and similarly identified students amenable to this sharing, basing our sample selection of thirty students ($n=30$) on these criteria. This constituted half of the total number of students completing their final semester of the entrepreneurial education program. The study was limited to students enrolled in the N6 module who were in their final semester of the entrepreneurship module. We identified five ($n=5$) lecturers out of the eight ($n=8$) lecturers employed to teach entrepreneurship and business management across different courses. The sampled lecturers included all lecturers who taught the entrepreneurship module across all courses: they rotated in the teaching of this module at different levels as needed.

We wanted to explore the current pedagogical approaches these lecturers were using in teaching the entrepreneurship module, and attempt to gauge which approaches were, or were considered by participants to be, effective, and to what extent. We chose semi-structured interviews to keep the interviews focused and to explore new and relevant issues arising. Five focus group interviews with students were conducted, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the five ($n=5$) lecturers.

The audio recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and saved in an electronic file. ATLAS.ti, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, was used to analyse the data. We used the prominent themes that emerged from the data analysis informed by the TPB framework to present the study's findings. We sought ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and from the Department of Higher Education, which oversees the TVET

college.

Table 1 summarises each lecturer's age, gender, subjects taught, and their years of lecturing experience, as well as the subjects they offer. They are identified as lecturer A, B, C, D, and E for anonymity.

Table 1: Lecturer's profile

Lecturer	Age	Lecturing Level	Course	Subject	Lecturing experience
Lecturer A	58	N6	Business Management	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM)	30 years teaching experience. 10 years teaching EBM
Lecturer B	44	N6	Business Management	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM)	8 years teaching experience. 5 years teaching EBM
Lecturer C	30	N5&6	Hospitality	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM)	3 years teaching experience. 2 years teaching EBM.
Lecturer D	35	N6	Business Management	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM)	15 years teaching experience. 7 years teaching EBM.
Lecturer	40	N4	Art and Design	Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM)	20 years teaching experience. 10 years teaching EBM.

Table 2 provides a profile of each sampled student, together with the module they were studying and the course for which they were registered. Students are identified as AM, EN, MZ, and so on, for confidentiality reasons.

Table 2: Student profile

Students	Age	Gender	Module	Course
Student 1–6	20–24 years	Male	Entrepreneurship	Business Management
Student 7–13	22–25 years	Male	Entrepreneurship	Business Management
Student 14–19	20–26 years	Female	Entrepreneurship	Business Management
Student 20–25	22–27 years	Female	Entrepreneurship	Business Management
Student 26–31	23–28 years	Female	Entrepreneurship	Business Management

FINDINGS

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present the data from responses to the research questions. With reference to the first research question: what are the attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship at a TVET college? Table 3 displays the number of instances of attitudes toward behaviour (in this case, attitudes toward entrepreneurship) identified from five focus groups (n=5) facilitated with students from a sample of thirty (n=30). After coding the comments from the focus group interviews, we discovered the focus group interviews contained a total of 29 instances of attitudes toward entrepreneurship, 23 of which were positive, and 6 negative.

Table 3: Students' attitudes towards behaviour (entrepreneurship) (adapted from the Ajzen 1991 TPB Framework)

Constituents of TPB	Types	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	Totals
Attitude towards behaviour	Positive attitude	6	6	4	4	3	23
							23
	Negative attitude			2	1	3	6

With reference to the second research question: what according to these students and lecturers are the challenges students face in participating effectively in local entrepreneurial activities? Table 4 shows the findings related to the identified subjective norms and perceived behavioural control that affect and hinder students' ability to participate effectively in local entrepreneurial activities. We discovered three instances of subjective norms (see Table 4) and 23 instances of perceived behavioural control in the focus groups. The latter was later subdivided as follows: instances of a lack of capital (n=21) and instances of a lack of knowledge and (n=2).

Table 4: Identified subjective norms and perceived behavioural control prohibiting students from engaging in entrepreneurship

TPB Constituents	Types	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4	Focus Group 5	Totals
Subjective norms	Society stereotypes			3			3
Perceived behavioural control							
	Lack of Capital	5	4	3	5	4	21
	Lack of knowledge		1		1		2

With reference to the third research question: In what ways are the lecturers teaching approaches enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of their students?, Table 5 shows the results from the subjective norms positively identified by participating students as influencing them to aspire to be entrepreneurs at some future date. After coding the comments from the five focus groups we determined 26 instances of subjective norms (see Table 3) identified as the teaching influence.

Table 5: Identified subjective norms positively influencing the students to aspire to be entrepreneurs

TPB Constituents	Types	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4	Focus Group 5	Totals
Subjective norms	Teaching influence	5	5	6	6	4	26

The themes emerging from the data are presented in detail below:

Societal stereotypes

When students were asked: "What do you think is standing in your way of becoming an

entrepreneur?" three (n = 3) female students from focus group 3 mentioned the challenge of obtaining financing due to societal preconceptions that act against women and favour males. PV felt, while gendered societal stereotypes and gender roles meant financial institutions preferred to lending money to their male counterparts:

"I would say for example, if I approach the bank with a business plan and a man also goes with the same business plan, he would get the loan, not me. Because they think that I would become pregnant and stop working on the business."

PV saw the business world as patriarchal, a finding consistent with that of Bobrowska and Conrad (2017), who analysed the social stereotype discourse that labels women as "inferior" and better suited to home and child care, findings also aligning with those of Iwu and Nxopo (2015), who found the pressures of balancing job and family life might impede women's aspirations of independence through entrepreneurship. Therefore, it may be argued that female students' entrepreneurial intentions may be impeded by such perceptions (Ajzen 1991), and if they accept such unfavourable subjective norms as defining women's social roles, may eventually restrict them from venturing into entrepreneurship.

Student ZM, from focus group 3, confirmed gender role stereotype as the main barrier to women entering the business world: "Woman are not supposed to do business, are not supposed to be entrepreneurs, she is not supposed to start it by herself. Because she is supposed to look after the family. So this are the things that can be barriers."

These findings corroborate those of Bobrowska and Conrad (2017), who found conventional gendered language continues to position women as inferior to males in the entrepreneurial discourse, despite relatively greater diversity in the portrayal of female entrepreneurs. Thus, it may be argued from these responses that women students' intentions to enter into entrepreneurship may be discouraged (Ajzen 1991) because they consider unfavourable subjective norms regarding women's roles in society to be prominent.

Lack of capital

The majority of the students (n=21) from focus groups 1 to 5, mentioned lack of capital and support as the major prohibiting factor to their participating effectively in local entrepreneurship activities:

"Capital is a problem." (Student EN, focus group 1).

"Reality of realising that I do not have capital of starting the business. Lack of knowledge about

organisation that can assist your business.” (Student AM, focus group 2).

“No Capital to start the business and we don't know organisations that assist with funding.” (Student AJ, focus group 4).

These results align with those of Gwija, Eresia-Eke, and Iwu (2014), that a lack of finance and support mechanisms like the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in South Africa are an impediment to starting a business. Lack of access to capital, extensive red tape and costly laws, the high cost of recruiting personnel, and the current business culture prevent youth from engaging successfully in, and sustaining, local entrepreneurship activities. Based on previous research and the findings of the current study, one may submit that, despite forming positive entrepreneurial intentions, these students are unlikely to become entrepreneurs owing to both to perceptions and the reality of such impediments (Ajzen 2015; Ajzen 1991).

Most lecturers (n=4) during the semi-structured interviews corroborated the students' perceptions and were unanimous regarding the lack of capital as the main obstacle to students' effective participation in local entrepreneurial activities.

Lecturer B also expressed his lack of confidence in structures such as NYDA, Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA,) and Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). “I think that the capital is their main problem and I am not sure how much of assistance are the organisations like NYDA, SEDA and IDC. Because, honestly, I do not know anyone that was assisted by them.”

He felt that, although capital is a problem, also mentioned the lack of availability of the above organisations to assist young people with financing and information on how to start and expand a firm. These results align with Nxozzi, Tengeh, and Mkubukeli's (2019) analysis of the lack of funding and help from the NYDA and DTI.

Lecturer C cited students' unrealistic and lofty expectations of starting a business in the formal economy, and lack of awareness of the possibilities of starting in the informal economy and gradually expanding. He had tried to encourage them to do so:

“I think their problem is that when they think of starting a business they always think of starting it in a fancy building. But you can start a business from home. For instance, I know of a guy who started his business from his garage and right now he has employed 300 people. So basically it's also their attitude towards informal sector economy [that] is negative. Also capital obviously is a big problem, but I tell not to let the lack of money discuss [discourage] them.”

These results are consistent with those of Fourie (2018), who found that young, ambitious entrepreneurs may be dissuaded from pursuing business opportunities in the informal sector

because of perceived challenging working conditions.

Inadequate entrepreneurial skills due to the limitations of the TVET curriculum

These findings ascribe students' lack of entrepreneurial skills to the limitations of the current TVET entrepreneurship curriculum. Lecturer A, in reporting his particular experience of the unnecessary complications of starting a business, linked these to the absence in the curriculum of basic practical entrepreneurial skills: "Remember those little skills I told about that students need, like to approach investors, networking, etc. it's not in the curriculum".

He reported students' failure to learn to network effectively and to offer/sell their business ideas to investors as due to the existing curriculum, findings consistent with a South African study by Radebe (2019), which ascribed the failure of entrepreneurship education to the lack of fostering of youth entrepreneurship.

Lecturer D felt students' lacked courage to attempt entrepreneurship due to their fear of rejection. She took into account most students preferring to work for a business than venture independently. She disagreed with the other lecturers' assessment that students lack the knowledge to locate or approach potential funders:

"... the only thing that is prohibiting them is that they want to be intrapreneurs ..not entrepreneurs: they want to work for someone; they don't want to be independent because they are scared, what if the business fail, what will I do? So they fear failing or taking up risk. They do know where to go to look for funding. For instance, here at the Golden Acre there are offices of the NYDA and the banks and they know all these things."

Lecturer D also argued that students' lack interest in independence as entrepreneurs and their prefer to work within established organisations, preferring the idea of a steady income because they lack the confidence to attempt something new. These findings align with those of Radebe (2019), that the lack of adequate entrepreneurship education supplied to young people in South Africa favours white-collar employment over entrepreneurship. The findings are in line with Forcher-Mayr and Mahlkecht's (2020) study on the flaws in the justification for entrepreneurship instruction in schools and TVET colleges; it ignores the complex, interrelated reasons for youth unemployment, failing to take a comprehensive approach to social inclusion in South Africa.

Student-centered learning develops students' entrepreneurial intentions

In response to the interview question, "Can you describe the types of pedagogies employed in your class to teach entrepreneurship?", Lecturer A reported using both teacher- and student-centered approaches, mentioning the hands-on student-centered approach appears to be the more effective:

“I find myself using both, because when they are tested in the exams they are tested in theory. But I think the student-centered approach works better with them. For instance, if you give them business plan to do, and you give them a template, they understand it better. All those calculations, concepts, and everything they can relate to because they actually worked on it practically.”

Lecturer B reported using this combined approach:

“In our curriculum we have the practical and theory. For instance, in N4 they do business plan, they do the assignment on business plan and in N6 we have franchising. So they must go out and do research I encourage them, they must go to the franchise get the information and they submit the assignment. So they gain lot of knowledge about the business.”

Lecturers A and B saw teaching students about real-life business contexts using a student-centred approach as an effective strategy for enhancing their students' entrepreneurial mind-set, similar to the findings of studies done by Colombelli (2022) and Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006), both finding Challenge-Based Learning programmes to improve entrepreneurial skills and mind-set.

Lecturer A described the success of her pedagogical practice which connected his students' “artwork” with their entrepreneurship in a practical way, and increased their interest and motivation: “When I say do your artwork and sell it to me, that really works. It does, exactly because I tell them doing artwork is not going to end here; you cannot employ someone to sell your artwork, you have to understand how to sell it yourself.”

She described a pedagogical approach she believed positively encouraged her students' entrepreneurial intentions:

“As part of Entrepreneurship they need to do a business plan for the assignment. It helped some of them because they had an idea but could not do business plan. So now they are able to do business plan for their businesses and I think they intend to open businesses.”

These findings support Ngah, Junid, and Osman's (2019) argument that educators play an important role in students' self-directed learning, one that contributes to the constructivist learning environment and strengthens their students' attempts to start a business in the real life context. Lecturer C's teaching within a constructivist learning environment can be said to instil their confidence and interest in starting their own businesses, thus increasing the likelihood of them venturing to start a future business.

Developing the essential skills for entrepreneurship

Certain findings emerged when three (n=3) lecturers described the combination of

entrepreneurial skills they hoped to instil in their students. In response to: “Can you describe some of the essential skills for entrepreneurship that you try to develop in your students?”, Lecturer A mentioned four key skills: “Creativity, networking; they also need to understand the financial part, ability to design business plan. I tell them it's very important to understand the numbers.”

Lecturer B discussed the business skills and values he was attempting to instil, and/or was advising them to be aware of:

“I always advise them to keep their profit margins as low as possible, business ethics, brand loyalty, also important hard work never killed anybody. For instance, I tell them about myself; I wake up at 4 am and go drop people at the Airport. Hard work pays off.”

Lecturer C agreed, while emphasising the characteristics required for successful entrepreneurship:

“Independence is very important, confidence: if you are not confident you won't open a business. So number one is independence, two is confidence, and three is knowledge base of the product that you want to sell or of the service you want to sell to your potential customers.”

Their responses suggest that they care about passing on the entrepreneurial knowledge and mindset that they themselves value. It may be argued, however, that their efforts to instil these skills amounted to a one-size-fits-all strategy, in which all students were taught the same skills without consideration of their unique strengths and weaknesses as individuals, consistent with the findings of Forcher-Mayr and Mahlknecht (2020), who discovered entrepreneurship education in South Africa is taught from a “skills perspective” with a focus on the formal sector and guidance from a formulaic human capital- and productivity-based approach to education.

Another key finding came from four (n=4) lecturers who claimed their pedagogical approaches significantly improved students' entrepreneurial skills and had led to some students already starting their own businesses. When asked, “In what ways do you feel that your pedagogical approaches enhance your students' entrepreneurial skills?”, Lecturer A appeared to claim his pedagogical approaches had resulted in half of his students being motivated to enter the business world: “Most of them, I will say about 50 per cent, want to go into business. They tell me, Sir ‘We are artist, we don't want to work for that people’.”

This claim was echoed by Lecturer B, citing an example of a student having enjoyed his teaching:

“The fact that some of them come to me for advice to start their own business is proof that it's working. Also Ms C came to me the other day and asked me ‘Do you remember this girl? She says she enjoys your subject.’ Also when I changed the teaching approach from a teacher-centered to a student-centered one my pass rate improved.”

Lecturer C also cited one of her students' starting a business as an example of the success of her pedagogical approaches: “Currently last semester there is a guy who used to make watches; after I introduced the business plan he opened his business; so he developed the confidence even though at first he was not confident to sell his product”.

Lecturer D cited another example of one of their students starting his own business as proof of the success of their pedagogical approaches, in this case, nurturing this student's creativity:

“To answer that question let me remind you that we already have students that have opened small businesses. For instance, the guy who owns an ice cream business is one of our products; we taught him entrepreneurship module at different level (N4 –N6). The guy is creative as well, as his ice cream are named after Mitchells Plain, where he lives. He has an ice cream business called Vanilla plain.”

These findings are similar to those of Anjum et al. (2020), who found that students' attitudes were key to their developing their creative propensity toward entrepreneurial intentions. The above findings are also congruent with those of Forcher-Mayr and Mahlknecht (2020), that, when teaching and learning are concentrated on real-life challenges, students' learning connects to their own life experience, challenging the premise that simply attending school, obtaining a degree, and working hard guarantees one a job.

Students favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship

Twenty-six (n=26) students from focus groups 1–5 felt their lecturers' teaching approaches motivated them to become entrepreneurs. Their lecturers gave them clear examples of businesses they might realistically enter into, or start themselves, and taught them about the business morals and attitudes novice entrepreneurs should embrace. EN, TG, and LM from focus groups 1, 3, and 4 were enthusiastic about how they were taught and its effects on their learning:

“Yes, it does make me want to be an entrepreneur one day. It also teaches us how to behave as a business person, like the attitude you must have and how you should handle certain business principles.” (EN, Focus group 1).

“Yes Ms because it's encouraging and it's not a boring subject.” (Student TG, Focus group 3).

“Yes, it motivates me to want to become a business man one day.” (Student LM, Focus group 4).

These findings are consistent with Ismail's (2017), which showed how some teaching approaches enhanced students' entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. We argue that the majority of the selected students having acquired positive subjective norms due to how their lecturer taught them, the likelihood of their pursuing entrepreneurship on completion of their studies would be high.

Two students from Focus group 3 considered the lecturer's practical examples of businesses they might realistically establish and maintain stimulated the development of their entrepreneurial motivations, skills, and attitudes and served to situate them in the business context:

Student DN appreciated this practical pedagogical approach: “Like he applies everything that you will have to go through. Like he has examples of businesses that we can open in different branches. He makes it easier for us to go into that venture.”

This point of view was enthusiastically shared by student DJ from Focus group 4, appearing to strengthen her entrepreneurial intent: “Of course yes, Sir also gives examples about types of businesses we can open. So I am thinking of trying a small business when I finish my studies.”

These responses align with Ikebuaku and Dinbabo's (2019) research, cited in Prasetyo (2019), creative and practical entrepreneurship education may positively impact a person's capacity for translating ideas and capital into new ventures. The findings align with those of Chanin et al. (2018) that educating students about real-life business scenarios can improve and ground their entrepreneurial mind-set and abilities. and boost their desire to be entrepreneurs and their ability to envisage themselves in a real business setting.

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to ascertain the challenges faced by a group of TVET college students in establishing their own ventures, and to explore how lecturers' current pedagogical approaches were or were not cultivating the entrepreneurial intentions of these students. The findings appear to confirm the sampled students' generally positive attitude toward entrepreneurship could to a significant extent be attributed to those pedagogical approaches which sought to create a conducive teaching and learning environment, and to impart knowledge of real-life entrepreneurial challenges.

Individual pedagogical approaches were claimed or perceived by lecturers and students to aid students' development of both entrepreneurial mind-sets and positive attitudes toward

entrepreneurship. We see the fostering of positive attitudes as leading to the development of an entrepreneurial imagination, in turn to the development of entrepreneurial intentions. We argue for entrepreneurial tendencies, encouraged by lecturers, to lead to student graduates being confident and strongly equipped for starting their own businesses.

Responses from the majority of participants indicate their view that the entrepreneurship education provided at their TVET college fosters the development of financial literacy, and a desire to be self-sufficient as well as the kind of critical thinking, and decision-making, that moves a venture forward and ensures its sustainability. Responses revealed a general perception that the pedagogical approaches improved and extended students' knowledge and awareness of various business ventures, fostered their ability to imagine themselves firmly situated in the real business world, and gave students a clear vision of their future business, thus strengthening their intention.

Lecturers considered – or claimed – their individual approaches enhanced their students' informed decision-making abilities, and their ability to envision a future professional path, smoothing the way for mentors to provide appropriate guidance and practical assistance. Participating students considered they had benefited from those approaches which developed clear entrepreneurial goals, and appropriate knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. The current study and other reviewed studies suggest these entrepreneurial goals, combined with appropriate knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes, translate to a developed entrepreneurial intention in students, one which may strongly motivate a student to start and sustain a business.

Based on both students' and lecturers' responses, we propose the incorporation and extension of the practical, experiential, "real life/world" pedagogical approach, currently used in varying degrees by lecturers at the TVET college, into the delivery of entrepreneurship education at these colleges, to include a balanced combination of teacher and practical, experiential student-centered pedagogical approaches.

Our data analysis revealed favourable subjective norms to be operating, manifested in the encouraging manner lecturers adopted when teaching as reported by students, and motivating them to aspire to be entrepreneurs. We believe that a teacher- and student-centered approach, combined with positive subjective norms, can be effective in developing students' entrepreneurial intentions. The findings appear to align with the study's theoretical framework, based on the assumption that positive attitudes and subjective norms can lead to the formation in an individual of an intention to engage in a certain behaviour to the extent that they believe they are capable of performing the behaviour. This is based on the previously mentioned basic assumption of the TBP: the higher the subjective norm for the behaviour, the stronger the individual's intention to perform the behaviour.

We now explore the study's implications for practice and policy in delivering entrepreneurship education at a TVET College. Based on our data analysis, we urge for the teaching of entrepreneurship education to be better aligned with the perspectives of Colombelli et al. (2022) and Chanin et al. (2018) about Challenged-Based Learning programmes. In this sense, the students in this current study obtained knowledge of real-world situations by overcoming obstacles and issues posed by existing firms. This approach has been found to improve the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and essential skills such as financing, planning, and creativity (Colombelli et al. 2022; Chanin et al. 2018).

Concerning relevance and responsiveness to the African setting, the pedagogy should be properly interwoven with traditional South African entrepreneurial activities and practices. As a result, entrepreneurship education should always take into account the entrepreneurial realities unique to the African setting. By doing so, we begin the process of decolonising and making entrepreneurship education instruction relevant to African students.

Second, to nurture students' entrepreneurial ambitions, entrepreneurship education that utilises teacher- and student-centred techniques remains crucial. This viewpoint is consistent with the findings of Ismail's (2017) research, which found that entrepreneurship courses improved the entrepreneurial abilities of students who studied in both teacher- and student-centred settings. Similarly, this hybrid approach was shown to have a considerable beneficial influence on the entrepreneurial abilities and mentality of the students at the South African TVET institution studied in this research.

Thirdly, we contend that giving students access to up-to-date, trustworthy information about starting a business and current support systems, including application processes and protocols, would encourage students to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities. Lastly, we advocate for the establishment of strong support networks for female company entrepreneurs because, as Bobrowska and Conrad (2017) discovered, the corporate climate is primarily patriarchal, which inhibits women from pursuing entrepreneurship.

There were two limitations. First, the sample size of thirty participants and five lecturers from a single TVET college. A larger sample size would be required for a more in-depth, more generalisable study. Second this study, although making brief mention of a lack of practical components, did not include an in-depth analysis and/or critique of the TVET entrepreneurship curriculum. Future studies that include curriculum interrogation as well as an assessment of appropriate pedagogical approaches and strategies conducted at other TVET colleges would explore the issue more holistically.

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