

Examining the Views of Unemployed Commercial Subject Educators on Their Preparedness to Become Entrepreneurs.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish the views of unemployed commercial subject educators on their preparedness to become entrepreneurs. The study was motivated by the fact that some of these educators have been exposed to entrepreneurship since they were in grade 7 through a subject such as Economic and Management Sciences. It is assumed that after graduation they have a good understanding of entrepreneurship, and they would be able to start their businesses instead of remaining at home unemployed. Only unemployed commercial subject educators were interviewed. Snowballing sampling was used to locate prospective participants since they were scattered all over South Africa. All the study participants were based in KwaZulu Natal Province. The study found that educators of commercial subjects have sufficient theoretical knowledge to become entrepreneurs, but they are afraid to venture into businesses because they feel that theoretical knowledge without practical experience will adversely impact their ability to become successful entrepreneurs. They are doubtful regarding their ability to use their theoretical knowledge to solve problems in real-life situations. The contribution of this study provides insight on the importance of students' practical exposure to real life entrepreneurship for boosting their confidence to start businesses. The study ascertains that an entrepreneurial mindset, attitude, spirit and self-efficacy, without exposure to practical entrepreneurship, does not provide sufficient incentive for a person to start a business.

KEYWORDS

Commercial subjects; entrepreneurship education; practical exposure; unemployed educators.

INTRODUCTION

There is a significant number of entrepreneurship graduates who are neither employed as teachers nor engaged in business. Some of those graduates had their first encounter with entrepreneurship education when they were introduced to commercial subjects in secondary schools. These subjects occur within the field of Business, Commerce and Management Studies as per Classification of Educational Subject Matter (SA-CESM) (Department of Education, 2008). One would expect that entrepreneurship education programme graduates possess all the necessary skills to establish and run successful businesses that are able to provide and sustain employment.

The policy pertaining to entrepreneurship education in South Africa seeks to encourage educators across disciplinary programmes to become entrepreneurs (The Trade and Development Board Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, 2011). The engagement of practitioners in the classroom is seen as one of the key areas in instilling the love of entrepreneurship amongst learners. Educators who are entrepreneurs are supposed to be produced by the very same tertiary institutions that, according to Radipere (2012), are still using the traditional ways of teaching and not exploring a wide range of life-changing experiences as suggested by Omotosho et al. (2022). The desired outcome of employing practising entrepreneurs with their own companies as educators in classrooms, as suggested by Westerholm and Takanen-Körperich (2018), has still not been achieved mainly because the majority of qualified entrepreneurship education educators are not engaged in any kind of practical entrepreneurship activity.

Tertiary institutions are major players within the above situation since they are the ones that develop and implement the curriculum across disciplines. The expectations of such curriculum are that all students who receive entrepreneurship education will enter the workplace possessing a high level of economic literacy, North (2002) believes that graduates without such knowledge are sent into the working world as "economic illiterates". If the quality of such graduates is poor, it will be difficult to tell the difference between those who are supposed to be 'economic literates' and those who are not.

This situation suggests that a gap still exists between what South Africa's entrepreneurship education policy desires and the actual results. A major question rising from this situation is why are entrepreneurial graduates not producing what the policy desires? Could the cause of this mismatch between the desired outcomes and the actual results be the traditional ways of teaching, ineffective curriculum and/or any other unknown factor (variable)?

This research article seeks to explore different possibilities as to why entrepreneurship education graduates are unemployed despite their possession of entrepreneurship knowledge.

Objectives of the study

1. To establish the willingness of entrepreneurship education graduates to become entrepreneurs.

2. To establish if they consider themselves as possessing sufficient theoretical knowledge to become successful entrepreneurs.
3. To establish if they consider themselves as possessing sufficient practical skills/experience to become successful entrepreneurs.

Research Questions

1. Are you willing to become an entrepreneur?
2. Do you have sufficient theoretical knowledge to become a successful entrepreneur?
3. Do you have sufficient practical skills/experience to become a successful entrepreneur?

Problem statement

The South African statistical results of the third quarter of 2022 shows that unemployment in South Africa is currently above 32%, of which 3% of the total unemployed persons are university graduates from different fields of study (Stats SA, 2022). Some of these unemployed graduates are qualified educators of commercial subjects who have been exposed to entrepreneurship education from Senior Phase (grades 7-9) and Further Education and Training (FET) phase (grades 10-12). Entrepreneurship is part of the commercial subjects' syllabus from grade 7 to grade 12.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

If the assumption that commercial subject educators have entrepreneurial skills, then the use of Dispositional theory, that is part of the Job Satisfaction theory is appropriate in this study. This theory will help to explain why a person with entrepreneurial skills would rather be unemployed than start-up a business. This theory maintains that individuals have a cluster of dispositional variables that propel them to act or not to act (Ziegler et al., 2006), thus, one's actions therefore are channelled by dispositions. What individuals do or do not do is informed by their state of mind, beliefs, character, state of readiness and any other dispositional variables that are at play (Low, 2017; Ziegler et al., 2006).

Obschonka et al. (2012), and Chiesi et al. (2013) divide dispositions into dispositional optimism and dispositional pessimism. When people are optimistic about a particular phenomenon, they might be motivated to engage in such an event and when they are pessimistic, they might avoid such an action. Positive and negative thoughts about an entity are a deciding factor regarding what a person must do or not do. There is a probability that positive or negative dispositional traits can be developed over time (Garland et al., 2017) or wiped away from one's mind by the situations to which a person is exposed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Responding to unemployment, inequality and poverty is inevitable. Different countries are encouraging their citizens to become entrepreneurs and, thus, self-employed (Westerholm & Takanen-Körperich, 2018). Entrepreneurship is a process of initiating and starting a new enterprise or a process of actioning opportunities and ideas to obtain monetary gain and

personal satisfaction (Rahman et al., 2017; Rankhumise et al., 2020). It, therefore, is important to introduce entrepreneurship programmes into all levels of education if the South African government's intention is to increase the pool of entrepreneurs in the country.

Mason (2011) argues that the term entrepreneurship education implies that entrepreneurship can be taught, hence, it can be taught to people in different ways (Ergün, 2019) probably through exposing people to real life situations or teaching them about entrepreneurship in the classroom even though, according to Price and Ronnie (2021), it is still unclear what exactly constitutes entrepreneurship education.

This educational approach will call for a partnership amongst all stakeholders. It is unfortunate that the job market continues to shrink on a daily basis (Deveci & Seikkula-Leino, 2018) both globally and in South Africa. If the economy is not growing fast enough to provide sufficient job opportunities, the competition for jobs will be fierce and many people will remain jobless. Universities are expected to intervene and produce graduates who can establish sustainable businesses. Demirbatır (2021) believes that raising people who can create new job opportunities in countries can help to reduce the levels of unemployment.

Entrepreneurship education

It has been suggested that entrepreneurship education is a vehicle for introducing people to job creation (Demirbatır, 2021; Ergün, 2019). South Africa, like many other countries, has also introduced entrepreneurship education in the hope that it will help reduce unemployment (Robinson, 2004). It must be understood that entrepreneurship education exposes students to different entrepreneurial activities such as analysing business feasibility, writing a business plan, performing their business plan (Wardana et al., 2020). Topics such as innovation, uncertainties, risk-taking, creativity, identification of opportunities, crafting a vision for growth, interpretation of entrepreneurial role models, are also covered in the entrepreneurial education curriculum (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002).

Entrepreneurship education today exists either as a 'standalone' course or is incorporated in other courses such as business management and business administration (Özçetin & Gök, 2021). If entrepreneurship education is fused with a business management course, it suggests that the focus is shared between business and entrepreneurial skills. Researchers believe that entrepreneurship education must be given greater focus than business education (Isaacs et al., 2007) because of the belief that entrepreneurship education:

1. will reduce the number of businesses that fail at their infancy stage or fail within a few years after start-up (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002);
2. will help to create jobs and encourage growth (Isaacs et al., 2007);
3. will help to increase job-creators instead of job-seekers (Jesselyn & Mitchell, 2006);
4. will help to boost people's confidence about entrepreneurship (Rankhumise, 2014) and
5. will help to improve economic status of people and their social and cultural standing in their communities (Demirbatır, 2021).

It is important that entrepreneurial education programmes have a curriculum that will equip learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to start and run their businesses. It, however, must be noted that Lackeus (2015) believes that becoming an entrepreneur is consciously planned behaviour which does not necessarily come as a result of entrepreneurship education. There are various factors that influence a decision to start or not start a business, such as, entrepreneurial attitude, mindset and self-efficacy as suggested above by Wardana et al. (2020).

As the need for entrepreneurship education grows daily (Jesselyn & Mitchell, 2006; Özçetin & Gök, 2021; Rankhumise et al., 2020), it is now important to secure suitably qualified and experienced educators to teach entrepreneurial education in schools and tertiary institutions. The ideal situation will be to use educators who have their own businesses (Westerholm & Takanen-Körperich, 2018). Such teachers should be capable of preparing learners to become entrepreneurs (Ergün, 2019). The development of educators' competencies is important if maximum results are to be achieved. Such an outcome is only possible if these teachers have the potential to influence their learners to become entrepreneurs (Eroğlu & Eroğlu, 2020). Educators' competencies and understanding of entrepreneurship is key to learners' success. Korhonen et al. (2012) believe that entrepreneurial education educators are not adequately prepared to put theory into practice either inside or outside the classroom. This deficiency may be because of the nature of the entrepreneurship programmes that are offered at South African Universities which, according to Radipere (2012), do not appear to achieve the desired outcomes. Omotosho et al. (2022) also share the same sentiments when they state that the quality of graduates produced by the current entrepreneurship education programmes is poor.

Entrepreneurship graduates mindset [attitude]

It is difficult to explain why entrepreneurial graduates are unable to participate in entrepreneurial activities if, according to Robinson (2004), entrepreneurial ventures in South Africa take many forms. Some of the current successful entrepreneurs do not even have formal education. What really makes a person an entrepreneur might remain a mystery if people with skills, knowledge, the correct mindset and a strong desire to succeed are not involved in any form of business activity and some even remain unemployed. It is possible that Jiatong et al.'s (2021) belief that most entrepreneurial graduates prefer to be employed rather than to start their businesses is true and, if so, why?

It has been established that there are variables that influence a person to become an entrepreneur. According to Jiatong et al. (2021) and Rahman et al. (2017) entrepreneurial attitude (spirit) is one such variable. Entrepreneurial attitude is defined as an individual's response to information, events and critics towards the existing opportunities (Rahman et al., 2017). People's abilities to establish businesses will be favourably influenced by their positive attitude towards entrepreneurship (Lackeus, 2015). The entrepreneurial mindset is enhanced

by factors such as the level of entrepreneurship education and exposure to business operations (Jiatong et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy is also mooted as another important variable that helps people to decide to do or not to do something. Rankhumise (2014) defines self-efficacy as a psychological self-confidence in carrying out specific tasks and Ziegler et al. (2006) define self-efficacy as the belief about one's effectiveness in performing a given task. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy in this case refers to one's belief in his or her confidence or readiness to tackle entrepreneurship with ease. Thus, self-efficacy can be used to explain why some individuals are motivated to become entrepreneurs whilst others are not (Rankhumise, 2014). It is possible that entrepreneurial efficacy can be enhanced by entrepreneurial education. High self-efficacy, therefore, will lead to high performance and low self-efficacy will lead to poor performance.

Entrepreneurial attitude, mindset and self-efficacy alone are not sufficient motivation for an individual to consider engaging in entrepreneurship. Özçetin and Gök, (2021) believe that a sense of entrepreneurship is also important for giving individuals the ability to turn their ideas into actions, thus, without a sense of entrepreneurship, becoming an entrepreneur will be difficult.

METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative in nature and seeks to explore and understand why unemployed entrepreneurship education graduates are not venturing into business rather than remaining unemployed. The qualitative nature of a research study helps the researcher to understand the problem and research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this case it helped the researcher to understand the experiences and views of participants with regard to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Ravitch and Carl (2021) mentioned that qualitative research is interpretive research. All the participants' responses were taken as a true reflection of their experiences. Fouche and Schurink (2011) believe that it is important for researchers to understand the situation they are investigating, thus, understanding the participants' recollection of their experiences was key in this study.

Study population and sampling strategy.

Purposive sampling was used to identify people who were to be included in the sample. The required characteristics were listed before the sample was selected. The total population of the study consisted of unemployed qualified educators of commercial subjects. These educators are qualified to teach at Senior and FET phases. The chosen educators had studied commercial subjects throughout their secondary education. In their undergraduate degrees they studied either Accounting, Economics or Business Management. Some of these graduates completed a Bachelor of Education Senior, some a Bachelor of Education Further Education and Training degree and others a Bachelor of Commerce or Bachelor of Administration and Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

Non-probability sampling was used to select participants. This method according to Pascoe (2014) should be used if researchers are unable to determine who or what comprises the entire population. The population for this research was distributed throughout South Africa and, thus, was unknown, consequently not all members of the selected population had a chance to participate. The first participants were selected through convenience sampling because they were known to the researcher. From then on, the snowballing sampling technique was used to find other participants whereby an identified participant would then refer the researcher to the next prospective participant. The sample size increased through such referrals (Pascoe, 2014).

Data collection

Telephone communication or WhatsApp was used to track and secure an appointment with the prospective participant. It was also discovered that these unemployed graduates utilise social media groups for communication purposes (WhatsApp and Facebook). These WhatsApp groups were used by the researcher to help identify prospective participants within a 50km radius. The 50km radius was chosen by the researcher because of cost factor of travelling expenses. All the participants refused to engage in online interviews, citing the high cost of data and poor connectivity during loadshedding as their reason. Once a prospective participant was identified, a WhatsApp conversation was initiated. The researcher would introduce himself and explain the nature of the study being conducted to the prospective participant. An appointment was set with all those graduates who were available to engage in face-to-face interviews.

A total of 10 participants who had majored in at least two of the following subjects – Accounting, Business Management and Economics – were interviewed. Six of the participants were Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) graduates and four of them were Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) graduates. Both males and females participated in this study. There were three males and one female PGCE graduates with ages ranging from 25 to 27 years and five females and one male B. Ed graduates with ages ranging between 23 to 28 years. The number of years that participants had been unemployed and looking for employment ranged from one to four years.

The study was qualitative in nature and so data was collected using semi-structured interviews. During these interviews participants could talk at length about their experiences (Flick, 2020) and so facilitated the collection of the views and experiences of the participating unemployed educators. The interviews were scheduled to be one hour in length but some of them continued for a longer period until saturation of information occurred.

In preparation for the interviews an interview schedule was compiled (Flick, 2020) and sent to prospective participants prior to the interview so that they could familiarise themselves with the questions. On the day of the interview a pre-interview meeting was held to discuss the process of the interview and to outline some important ethical issues. Permission to voice record the interviews was requested and, subsequently, granted by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These voice recordings were used to supplement the handwritten notes made during the interviews. Questions listed in the interview schedule were asked and, when

necessary, the researcher posed clarifying questions to the participants. All interviews were conducted in English and there was no need for translation since all participants went to English medium schools.

Data analysis

Data generated from the audio recordings was then transcribed verbatim (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). This practice ensured that the collected data was not in any way manipulated or distorted. Transcripts generated from the voice recordings were then compared with the hand-written notes made during the interviews. When all the recordings were transcribed and compared with the handwritten notes, this information was consolidated and returned to the relevant participants through WhatsApp so that they could confirm the accuracy of the information (Koonin, 2014) before it was analysed. After the participants' confirmation of the accuracy of information the data was then categorised into different themes based on the research objectives and/or research questions. This practice ensured that responses corresponded with the questions asked.

The findings of the study were also sent to participants to verify their credibility since the participants approval increases the trustworthiness of the results (Koonin, 2014). This process was undertaken on the understanding that measuring validity and reliability is difficult in qualitative research since the repeated interviews might not produce the same responses (Koonin, 2014).

Ethical considerations

Issues of ethical consideration were discussed with the participants before the start of each interview. Prospective participants were again informed of the interview's purpose plus the fact that participation was voluntary and, as a result, nothing was promised to participants in exchange for participating in the interview. They were also informed that they could choose not to participate in the study or withdraw their participation at any time if they so wished. Informed consent was solicited from participants before the start of the interviews (Marshall et al., 2022).

While the solicited information was not in any way harmful or sensitive, participants were given guarantees that their identities would remain anonymous (Louw, 2014) and, thus, to protect their identity pseudonyms were used for recording their responses. Participants were also informed that the findings would be used only for the purpose of the study and that their identity would not be disclosed in the final research document.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Inductive reasoning was used in this study. According to Delpont and De Vos. (2011) inductive reasoning begins with an observation of a phenomenon and not with a pre-established truth or assumption. It was observed that some newly qualified graduates who had studied entrepreneurship education are unemployed but are not venturing into business as an alternative option to employment. It would be expected that such graduates would simply engage in entrepreneurship if they failed to find employment as educators. The findings of this

study are aligned to research questions provided earlier that aimed to establish the reasons why entrepreneurship education graduates would decide not to start a business if they could not find work as teachers or other forms of employment. The following themes emerged from the findings: Willingness to become entrepreneurs; Theoretical or subject knowledge of entrepreneurship and Practical experience in Business.

Theme 1: Willingness to become entrepreneurs.

All participants showed a strong willingness to become entrepreneurs. They all acknowledged the perceived benefits attached to running one's own business. It emerged in this study that they will all grasp the opportunity of becoming an entrepreneur if it presents itself to them. To them the prospect of becoming entrepreneurs is most desirable.

Participant B said:

"being an entrepreneur has benefits, so I would love to be an entrepreneur one day and enjoy financial freedom".

Participant E feels that becoming an entrepreneur provides total control of what one wants to do.

"Working for yourself is satisfying. Every effort you put in benefits the owner."

Participant A believes that:

"going [in]to business guarantees a life time employment to the business owner".

Theme 2: Theoretical or subject knowledge of entrepreneurship

Participants, however, expressed some concerns regarding their preparedness to participate in entrepreneurship. They feel that they do not have adequate theoretical knowledge to become entrepreneurs. With their current acquired skills and knowledge, participants feel that starting a business can be compared to gambling since they are not sure if they have sufficient theoretical knowledge to sustain and grow the business.

Participant C said:

"I think I can draw a business plan, but I have never seen a formal business plan prepared for any business, so I don't know if mine can be accepted for funding".

Participant F said:

"I personally think that I do not have adequate theoretical knowledge on starting and running a business. I wouldn't know where to start. I know that the business must be registered but I don't know how. I don't know if there are fees payable when registering a business or [if] its free".

Participant H said:

"all what I know is theory. I know that from cost price you need to add profit to arrive at the selling price. I know what break-even-point or level is, I know Economic Order Level, but this is theory. I am not sure if I can apply this to real life situation".

Participant A said:

"I am used in preparing financial statements when I am given a trial balance, without a trial balance I think I can experience problems. I don't think I can be able to prepare financial statements of a local spaza shop if the trial balance is not there".

All participants agreed that they have some theoretical knowledge, such as how to draw a business plan, prepare financial statements, make journal entries and posting to the ledger but they feel that they lack practical experience. Their ideas confirm the assertion by Wardana et al., (2020) that entrepreneurship education exposes students to different theoretical educational activities.

Theme 3: Practical experience in business

The main concern of the participants was their lack of practical experience in running a business. Although they are all confident that they possess sufficient content or subject knowledge, they do not believe that it replaces practical experience. Almost all participants in this study have only experienced business from the perspective of a customer but not as a business owner or manager. Hence, all participants were strongly opposed to opening a business without having practical business experience.

Participant G spoke about practical experience and exposure.

"I have theoretical knowledge, but I have never been exposed to any form of business, so I do not think I will be able to establish and run a formal business."

Participant B said:

"I am clueless about how businesses are run. I am sure that going [in]to business at this stage will not be a good idea unless I have someone to help me all the way".

Participant: E said:

"Listening to stories about small businesses failures, is discouraging. It makes one think that surely without practical experience, running a business will always be a journey to self-destruction".

All participants showed a high level of uncertainty about running a business without practical skills. To them practical skills not only involve owning a business but also working in the business.

According to Participant C:

"Working for a retail business can give some basic understanding of how a retail business works".

Their fears about engaging in entrepreneurship is in line with the views expressed by various researchers (Deveci & Seikkula-Leino, 2018; Korhonen et al., 2012) who hold that entrepreneurial education educators are not adequately prepared to put theory into practice either in or outside the classroom.

DISCUSSION

Some people start a business for financial reasons. The current job market in South Africa is unable to provide everyone with a job. Some jobs do not pay employees salaries that will help

them to sustain themselves and their families. This situation in certain instances pushes people to entrepreneurship with the hope that they will be able to create stable employment for themselves and others. The key findings of this study were:

1. Participants showed willingness to become entrepreneurs when the opportunity arises.
2. They wish that they could have mentors if and when they venture into business.
3. They believe that their theoretical knowledge could work in their favour if they are given an opportunity to work with successful entrepreneurs and receive mentoring.

The findings of this study reveal that all participants showed a willingness to become entrepreneurs when the opportunity occurs. Unfortunately, they appear to believe that someone will come and introduce them to entrepreneurship and provide the necessary mentoring support. They do not believe that they could/should/ initiate entrepreneurial activities on their own. This idea is contrary to the belief expressed by Lackeus (2015), i.e., that becoming an entrepreneur is a consciously planned behaviour. The participating graduates perceive that it is only by sheer luck that a person is introduced to entrepreneurship.

The participants believe that when they are introduced to entrepreneurship, they will be given an opportunity to be mentored and, thus, learn to understand how the business world functions. It was established that they believe that their theoretical knowledge could work in their favour if they are given an opportunity to work with entrepreneurs and receive mentoring. They consider that possessing comprehensive theoretical knowledge is a strong foundation that could help them to quickly master the different business processes. However, becoming entrepreneurs is something that they feel is impossible if they are not introduced to this practice by another successful entrepreneur or governmental organisations. This idea of their waiting to be introduced to entrepreneurship can be interpreted as a lack of confidence on their side. Entrepreneurial knowledge, attitude, mindset and self-efficacy will develop from a person's self-confidence in the ability to perform. The possession of theoretical knowledge alone is not sufficient motivation for a person to start a business. This study's findings led to the conclusion that without a practical component in entrepreneurship education programmes, it will be difficult to produce active entrepreneurs who are confident and prepared to take risks.

The fact that all the participants had studied and passed entrepreneurial modules at degree level sparks a debate on the relevance of the content subjects offered in these entrepreneurial modules if the unemployed graduates are not sufficiently confident to consider venturing into business.

It must be noted that none of the study participants mentioned the lack of capital as the reason for not venturing into business. They only commented on their subject knowledge. A gap was highlighted in this study which referred to the fact that as much as entrepreneurial modules offer subject content there is no practical component that will give graduates the necessary confidence to establish and run their own business.

The results of this study were strengthened by the fact that the interviews involved the researcher engaging unemployed and distressed persons in a discussion on a serious issue such

as unemployment. This discussion provoked the participants' emotions and made them think deeply about why they were not venturing into business although they were unemployed. The researcher could have used the focus group to strengthen the deliberations about why graduates are not in business, but unfortunately participants were located across a wide area, thus, it would have been almost impossible for them to come together simultaneously in one place. Online deliberations were also a problem due to factors such as poor internet connectivity in some areas during loadshedding. It is important to note that this study was conducted some years after the participants had graduated from university, all of whom were unemployed and staying at home, thus, there was no way that they could have been found within one place. As much as the population and the sample were large only a few potential participants could be interviewed because of costs constrains due to the researcher having to travel to conduct the interviews.

When interpreting the results the fact that all participants were unemployed and they did not have any previous work experience was taken into consideration because their approach and experiences of unemployment might differ to those graduates who had been previously employed but lost their jobs. However, the issue being investigated was to identify the reason why the participants with entrepreneurship content knowledge continue to remain at home unemployed instead of choosing to engage in entrepreneurship as an alternative option.

Recommendation

This study believes that theoretical knowledge offered in the various university entrepreneurial programmes provides insufficient motivation for graduates to start businesses. The study, therefore, recommends that practical components should be introduced to these courses to improve the morale and attitude of graduates. Situational learning is viewed in this study as the missing link to effective entrepreneurship education programmes because providing students with an opportunity to learn from those in the field will help grow their self-confidence.

The study conducted by HRDC (2014) showed that theory constitutes more than 80% of the total work completed by students which suggests that many programmes pay significant attention to the knowledge aspects but are weak on the skills and attitudinal aspects of entrepreneurship. This practice might be because, according to Price and Ronnie (2021), entrepreneurship education in South Africa has been described as an uncultivated field, hence, less focus is placed on delivery mode. The delivery mode used by the institutions of learning should expose learners to action-based learning since entrepreneurship education, according to HRDC (2014), is best learnt through "doing", including playing games, running mini-businesses, discussing an entrepreneur's story and being exposed to successful local entrepreneurs and given opportunities to learn from them. Pretorius (2008), believes that when learners acquire knowledge in the context of real-world tasks, they are more motivated to learn.

The practical component of entrepreneurship education could be in a form of work-integrated-learning (WIL), simulation of real-life situations, compulsory internship or compulsory entrepreneurship projects. The practical component of the course could be

assessed in the form of a Portfolio of Evidence that should be kept by a student throughout the practical activity assigned by the university. The practical activity would give students an opportunity to put theory into practice. This application of theory would take place in the presence of mentors assigned to give guidance to students.

It must be noted that the participating unemployed graduates are teachers. In teacher education for instance the policy stipulates that students should spend a minimum of 16 weeks and a maximum of 24 weeks on supervised school-based practice over the four years of their degree studies (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010). This policy further prescribes the number of credits that must be allocated to school-based work integrated learning, including supervised and assessed teaching practice. This practice ensures that trainee teachers gain confidence. It is equally important that practical learning should be introduced and regulated in entrepreneurship education programmes. This process calls for curriculum designers to relook at entrepreneurship education curriculum and incorporate the compulsory practical component in the module if the system is to produce graduates who are ready to establish businesses. The inclusion of practical experience in entrepreneurship education programmes will help to eliminate the graduates' fears and uncertainties that are associated with business failure (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2002).

CONCLUSION

This study was able to establish the views of the participating unemployed commercial subject educators on their preparedness to become entrepreneurs. While these graduates feel they have sufficient theoretical education they lack practical experience and, thus, are unsure if their knowledge is applicable in real-life situations. The study was successful in identifying the gap in entrepreneurship education programmes and that practical experience or exposure to real life entrepreneurship can be a confidence booster. Currently, entrepreneurship education is predominantly theoretical and, thus, graduates acquire no practical experience while they are studying, consequently, they are not given an opportunity to learn from their mistakes nor from those who are already involved in entrepreneurship.

The results presented in this paper may facilitate the introduction of a practical component within entrepreneurial education programmes that will reinforce the theoretical knowledge by providing a platform through which graduates can practically apply theory.

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