

Assessing the entrepreneurial intention of female students in South Africa: The case of postgraduate certificate in education students

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Abstract

Globally, female entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a major force behind innovation, social progress, and economic success. But to launch and expand successful businesses, women in South Africa face many obstacles. Considering the significance of inclusive participation in the mainstream economy, it is necessary to understand the factors that may inspire or impede the intention of women in becoming entrepreneurial. The population consisted of students of a private higher education institution. Data was collected from female students of postgraduate certificate in education. An online system was designed for data collection using a questionnaire. This allowed for a wider audience to participate, but it also prevented the participants' identities from being revealed because they were not in contact with the researchers. IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to analyze the data. Every student's response was examined, and the analysis was used to categorize the responses. Results reveal intriguing patterns in the participants' perceptions of entrepreneurship. Doubt about oneself when starting a business is strongly correlated with pessimism about success, which implies a lack of faith in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, although there is a desire for entrepreneurial fulfilment, developing business concepts is difficult and presents a significant barrier. A major contribution of this paper is that it responds to the call by National Development Plan (NDP) (2030) of South Africa, which seeks ways to increase inclusivity, improve equity, and diversity in mainstream economy.

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Introduction

Starting a business is often considered a function of entrepreneurial aptness. This means that it requires some sense of innovativeness and creativity. Small businesses are good for an economy because it creates

jobs, builds community networks, improves the tax contributions, and promotes entrepreneurial behavior (De Wit, & De Kok, 2014; Juraev, & Xolmirzayev, 2020; Coles, Ritchie, & Wang, 2021).

While small businesses are beneficial to society, it is encouraged that students in higher education start to think about engaging in some business activity either during or after graduation. This call is made on the grounds that fewer job opportunities exist nowadays meaning that graduates are not likely to find jobs (Juraev, & Xolmirzayev, 2020). This is even more critical in developing economies where women face the brunt of patriarchy. In such economies, it has been documented that women struggle with employment and even starting a business. On this basis, researchers have begun to examine what it is that may persuade female students to become entrepreneurial (Coles, Ritchie, & Wang, 2021).

Female entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a significant driver of economic growth, social improvement, and innovation on a global scale. However, there are numerous challenges facing female entrepreneurs in South Africa in starting and growing successful businesses (Ogunnubi, 2018) with some of these challenges linked to the apartheid system which entrenched gender and racial inequalities (Malinga, 2016). Although apartheid ended in 1994, women are still affected by the consequences of bias, particularly those who want to venture into business or take up entrepreneurship. Cultural norms and historical gender roles often limit women's positions in the workforce, which affects their participation in entrepreneurship (Phaswana, 2021).

There are other barriers to women in South Africa launching their own enterprises. Growing inequality in economic status which limit women from accessing financial resources, especially those from disadvantaged origins is considered a major barrier. Limited access to credit and finance options hinder their ability to start and expand businesses. Scott et al (2012) are of the view that discriminatory lending policies of financial institutions including strict requirements for collateral, and prejudices against women enable these inequalities. It is equally suggested by Byrne et al (2019) that the society's perception of the role of women are obstacles to their achievement of top roles in the workplace. In South Africa, apartheid made it difficult for women of color to access quality education (Bank, 2020; Phaswana, 2021; Dawood & Seedat-Khan, 2023). Essentially, social and cultural norms delimit women in their conduct of business. Exposure to entrepreneurship education may well be the panacea to fixing these difficulties (Elliott, Mavriplis, & Anis, 2020).

Limited educational opportunities lead to a skills gap that hinders women's ability to compete in a range of fields. These educational barriers that provide insights into entrepreneurship must be overcome in order to fully realize women's entrepreneurial potential (Phala & Mukonza, 2021).

Entrepreneurship success is reliant on mentoring and networking. However, networks and mentorship programs that could offer counsel and support are frequently inaccessible to women business owners in South Africa. Inadequate mentors and role models may hinder their ability to grow professionally and successfully traverse the challenges of entrepreneurship (Byrne, et al., 2019). Legal, political, and regulatory barriers still face South African women entrepreneurs, despite legislative progress made in the direction of gender equality. It could be challenging for them to launch and successfully run businesses due to discriminatory laws and institutional biases (Hills, 2015).

It might be daunting for female entrepreneurs to enter new areas and take on more established businesses. Gender bias in customer preferences and limited market prospects could be obstacles to the growth of women-led businesses. The primary objective of solutions to these problems should be to establish a fair and inclusive business environment for women entrepreneurs (Phala & Mukonza, 2021). Hills (2015) asserts that the South African government, realizing the need to promote women's entrepreneurship, has initiated several programs through cooperatives and other organizations to address these concerns.

Enhancing exposure to entrepreneurship is crucial for student educators for several reasons. Fayolle, and Gailly, (2015) decries the low number of women in entrepreneurial ventures. Having more women in the mainstream economy favors the discourse of inclusivity and diversity (Oswick, & Noon, 2014). We therefore argue that teachers who possess an entrepreneurial mindset are inclined to implement novel teaching techniques, skillfully incorporate technology, and tailor educational programs to cater to the unique requirements of their students (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). We further posit that whether they create alternative educational models, apply progressive curriculum designs, or create new teaching materials, teacher entrepreneurs are essential to the advancement of educational innovation. With the use of community collaborations and entrepreneurial solutions, educators with an entrepreneurial mindset may effectively tackle urgent social issues related to education, including equity gaps, the digital divide, and access to high-quality education. Accepting entrepreneurship as a career option provides chances for professional development and fulfillment outside of traditional teaching responsibilities, enabling educators to have a greater influence both inside and outside of the classroom.

We therefore make a strong case here that supports South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) (2030) which calls for the improvement in diversity, equity, and inclusivity. The NDP pursues the agenda to increase access to economic opportunities and employment through inclusion, education, and skills development, thereby fostering diversity and inclusivity that is enshrined in the constitution. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to create broad-based, sustainable economic growth by encouraging policies that support entrepreneurship and, as a result, employment creation, provide yet another argument. Equally, the Africa Union Agenda 2063 argues that job creation is possible through well-educated citizens who focus on transforming the economy.

The focus of this study is on female student educators pursuing the postgraduate certificate in education in a private higher education institution.

Research objectives

Considering the goal of the study, which included the understanding of (1) how prospective female teachers perceive entrepreneurship; (2) their level of interest in entrepreneurship; and (3) how their attitude to entrepreneurship may encourage or discourage the interest in pursuing entrepreneurship, the main question we posed was:

1. What factors may influence the uptake of an entrepreneurial venture among prospective female teachers?

Answer(s) to the main question, in our view may lead to the uncovering of the factors that hinder women from starting and successfully running their own business ventures in South Africa.

Literature review on female entrepreneurship in South Africa

A female entrepreneur has been variously defined as a woman who leads a business venture, taking the initiative to start a new project irrespective of the risks involved, and handling its day-to-day operations in an efficient and responsible manner" (Lavoie, 1985; Rutashobya & Nchimbi, 1999). A woman-owned business is defined by McClelland et al. (2005) as any business that has at least 51% of its stock held by one or more women, or any publicly owned business with at least 51% of its stock owned by women. According to Green and Cohen (1995) and Chell and Baines (1998), women are considered innovators not because they are launching new products but rather because they are breaking out of fields that have historically been dominated by men. Similarly, Forxcroft et al. (2005) and Nkai (2005) have noted that South African women are gradually catching up to men in terms of launching and operating their firms. Prior to that, though, Hendricks (2001) makes the argument that industry and government in South Africa are failing to properly utilize the economic potential of women entrepreneurs due to the myriad of obstacles they

confront. Numerous studies, including a report written by the Africa Project Development Facility, have detailed these difficulties. This highlights issues like market accessibility, financial accessibility and associated costs, information availability about relevant support services, and training accessibility (Dlamini & Motsepe 2004).

Mallane (2001) argues that it is critical to view gender equality in its correct context, noting that advancements for women do not always equate to disadvantages for men. Conversely, societies that have allowed women and men the same access to the economic arena have advanced far more quickly than those that have not (Hisrich, 1986). While women's capabilities have generally increased, they have, on the other hand, only had limited chances. Women entrepreneurs continue to face gender-specific barriers at practically every stage of their business operation (Alam et al., 2009). To just a few of these limitations, there are role obstacles, inadequate training and market access, and a lack of financial literacy. In order to maintain equity in the distribution of financial resources, O'Neill and Viljoen (2001) emphasize the significance of fostering female entrepreneurs on the development of SMMEs. Affirmative action programs have been implemented by the South African government in response to gender imbalances, acknowledging that women have been marginalized in the development process. A component of South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) plan, which aims to empower historically marginalized populations, is the involvement of women, particularly black women, in the national economy. For instance, women "are... central to the economic as well as the social well-being of societies," according to Snyder and Tadesse (1991). Thus, without their involvement, development goals cannot be fully achieved.

The body of research indicates that expectations about the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship influence people's attitudes toward it (Douglas & Shepherd 2000). Heterogeneity in risk aversion may play a major role in understanding an individual's transition into entrepreneurship if taking on risk is one of the essential elements of entrepreneurship (Brush 2006). According to this hypothesis, those who are risk averse might want to work as employees, whereas others who are risk tolerant might decide to start their own business. Yet, other academics contend that there is conflicting evidence about the link between risk aversion and entrepreneurship (Parker 2009; Cramer et al. 2002; Blanch-flower & Oswald 1998).

Several reasons are presented in the literature regarding how risk aversion restricts participation in entrepreneurial activity, and these arguments apply to both men and women. In a variety of contexts, it recognizes that women show higher degrees of risk avoidance, and men are more risk tolerant (Croson & Gneezy 2009; Dawson & Henley 2015). Research has shown that entrepreneurship and risk aversion are negatively correlated (see Verheul et al. 2012; Bonte & Piegeler 2013; Caliendo, Fossen, & Kritikos 2014).

Student uptake of entrepreneurship

Innovation, job creation, and economic growth are all aided by entrepreneurship. Like many other nations, South Africa has seen an increase in the focus placed on encouraging an entrepreneurial culture, especially among students. The socioeconomic environment of South Africa, which is marked by high rates of unemployment and income inequality, emphasizes the significance of entrepreneurship as a means of achieving social inclusion and economic empowerment. Students are important players in promoting the nation's entrepreneurial growth since they are the nation's future leaders and innovators (Pathak, & Muralidharan, 2018).

The goal of government regulations and educational programs has been to encourage and facilitate student entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Initiatives like the Entrepreneurship Development Program and the National Development Plan are designed to support student entrepreneurs by giving them access to resources and training (Shaddiq & Wanidison, 2021).

Universities in South Africa are essential for developing innovative cultures and nurturing entrepreneurial talent. Numerous universities have set up entrepreneurship centers, incubators, and

accelerators to give students access to finance, networking opportunities, and coaching (Iwara & Kilonzo, 2022).

Despite the increased focus on entrepreneurship in South Africa, funding is still a significant obstacle for student entrepreneurs, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds who might need formal credit histories or collateral (Danns & Danns, 2019). Many students need more real-world experience and expertise to start and grow a successful company. The efficiency of entrepreneurship education is hampered by the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and real-world application (Lackéus, 2016). Social conventions and cultural influences may discourage students from trying new things and taking risks, which may cause them to choose established job paths over entrepreneurship. Red tape, complex regulations, and bureaucratic barriers may discourage students from launching enterprises and learning the ins and outs of entrepreneurship (Lindstrom, 2021).

There is enormous potential for student entrepreneurship in South Africa despite the challenges. As technology advances, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial innovations begin to make sense and almost accessible to many more people. Owing to the larger access to technology, students are empowered to leverage technology to launch, expand, and attract clients for their ventures (Hall, 2021). Interestingly, more and more people are finding opportunities within the social entrepreneurship realm suggesting a clearer appreciation of the environment and social issues (Fox, Muldoon, & Davis, 2023). These initiatives, aimed at addressing pressing problems, strive to establish sustainable businesses. Through networking events, competitions, and co-working spaces, students can engage with mentors, investors, and fellow entrepreneurs in South Africa's vibrant and collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem (Iwu, et. al 2024).

It is crucial for stakeholders in South Africa's student entrepreneurship sector to unite their efforts to address current challenges and seize new opportunities. This collaborative approach should encompass practical learning experiences in real-world entrepreneurship programs, equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary for entrepreneurial success. Additionally, enhancing funding accessibility through innovative channels, such as angel investor networks and venture capital funds, can provide crucial support to student entrepreneurs, particularly those from marginalized communities.

Research methodology

The primary goal of this study is to determine the factors that drive a student to pursue an entrepreneurial activity either during or after the student has graduated. We believe this goal benefits from an empiricist and positivist philosophy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) permitting the utility of a Likert-type questionnaire. Data was collected using a Likert-type questionnaire developed and tested by Liñán and Chen (2009) and Liñán, Urbano, and Guerrero (2011) because it has been referred to by several studies (such as Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Badi & Khan, 2020; Shah et al., 2020; Esfandiar et al., 2019; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020; Iwu et al., 2019; Meoli et al., 2020;). Questionnaires are better for reaching out to large groups of people. In this study, we set up an online system where the questionnaire was accessed by the sample thereby facilitating access to many but also concealing the identity of participants as they had no contact with the researchers.

Analysis of collected data was done using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 (IBM Corporation, 2020).

Population and sampling

The persons who qualify to be included in the sample of a certain study are referred to as the target population in research studies with human participants (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The population consisted of all students of Postgraduate Certificate in Education in a private higher education facility. These are graduate students who are studying to become high school or primary school teachers. At the time this data was collected 80 students were registered for the PGCE and demographically women formed over 80% of

this group according to the registrar. Due to the complexity of the issues that are being studied and the stated objectives, an exploratory yet descriptive research strategy was selected for this study (Iwu et al., 2019). According to Shah et al. (2020) and Soomro et al. (2019), qualitative study facilitates the formulation of hypotheses, problem identification, and deeper subject matter understanding all of which are necessary for drawing insightful conclusions and making suggestions. Because the concepts being examined are quantitative in nature, using numerical data makes it easier to create and understand correlations between the research topics. Thus, the researchers decided that the positivist paradigm-based quantitative research approach was best suited for this investigation due to its focus on objective, measurable data. A questionnaire survey is the best way to acquire quantitative data, as Veal (2011) suggested. Questionnaires enable systematic data collection and evaluation. Additionally, the researchers used the probability sampling method for this research. The RAOSOFT sample size calculator, a statistical program known for its precision in sample size computations, was used to determine the sample size. When calculating the sample size, RAOSOFT considers four critical factors: reaction dissemination, the size of the population, the confidence interval, and the margin of error. The RAOSOFT size of sample estimator suggested a minimum sample size of fifty and forty based on these parameters. Forty of the sixty questionnaires that were eventually returned were fully completed.

Data collection

Data was collected online, and the sample downloaded the questionnaire, allowing for confidentiality and anonymity. It was determined that the 40-student sample size was adequate to make inferences about the study's goals. As a result, over half of the enrolled PGCE students at that time answered the survey. The utility of previous studies (see Ahmad et al., 2018; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020; Iwu et al., 2019; Meoli et al., 2020; Ncanywa, 2019; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Shah et al., 2020) for providing the entrepreneurial education constructs is acknowledged.

These constructs fall into one of two categories: ordinal or categorical. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 being strongly agree, and 5 being strongly disagree), students' opinions of ordinal variables, such as "entrepreneurship," "entrepreneurial desirability and feasibility," and "measurement of entrepreneurial attributes," were evaluated.

Data analyses

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 (IBM Corporation, 2020). Initially, descriptive analysis, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation, was conducted for the relevant questionnaire variables. To assess the internal consistency of ordinal questions measuring various study dimensions such as "entrepreneurial activity," "values society puts on entrepreneurship," "entrepreneurial success," and "measurement of women's intent in running a business," a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1, with a threshold of 0.5 to 0.7 commonly accepted by researchers to indicate good internal consistency or reliability of variables measuring a specific dimension or study construct. Bivariate analysis, comparing two variables, utilized Spearman's Correlation (two-tailed) and Pearson's correlation (two-tailed), a non-parametric test suitable for data not normally distributed, as is common in social science. Spearman's Correlation (two-tailed) assessed relationships between ranked or ordinal variables to determine positive or negative correlations between the variables. Specifically, Spearman's Rank correlation (two-tailed) measured the relationships between the aforementioned dimensions and respondents' satisfaction with module content and self-assurance levels. Each variable was individually tested for relationships, allowing for more specific findings, at a 95% confidence interval.

Measurement

The questionnaire mostly included questions of Likert scale to assess graduate entrepreneurship motives and barriers, as well as entrepreneurial ambition. Demographic characteristics items used closed-ended questions. The items in the instrument were drawn from previous related studies, including Peterman and Kennedy, (2003); Badi & Khan, 2020; Esfandiar et al. (2019); Shah et al., (2020); Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2020); Iwu et al. (2019); Meoli et al., (2020). A seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (complete agreement), was employed to gauge entrepreneurial activity and societal perspectives. The entrepreneurship ability/skill constructs were also measured using a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning not aptitude at all and 7 very high aptitude. For entrepreneurial success, a seven-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating not at all important and 7 indicating extremely important. For the business strategy variable, a seven-point Likert scale was used with 1 indicating not at all likely and 7 indicating extremely likely. The questionnaires were pre-tested using 20 postgraduate students at the same college and a few errors were detected and corrected.

Ethics

Every research must be based on sound ethical practices. In this regard, we first sought permission from the institution where data for this study was collected from. The permission allowed us to contact the students who were thoroughly briefed about the study. To guarantee anonymity, we did not request their names. Setting up an online platform where they will be required to access the questionnaire was suitable for this purpose. On completing the questionnaire, a single click on a 'submit' button delivered the questionnaire to the researchers without disclosing the identity of the participant.

As suggested by Roshaidai and Arifin (2018), in all research studies, the protection of human participants through the administration of suitable ethical norms and principles is critical. We pledged to take the following steps in this study.

Informed consent should be freely granted (voluntarily). With this in mind, respondents were made aware of what was expected from them, while all parties involved should be qualified to give consent (Arifin, 2018). Having taken this into consideration, respondents were equally informed of their choice in accepting or declining to participate and this will be done after adequately explaining to them what the study is all about. A request for participants to consent to the study was contained in the questionnaire.

Anonymity is "the degree to which the identity of a message source is unknown and unspecified; thus, the less knowledge one has about the source and the harder it is to specify who the source is among possible options, the more anonymity exists" (Mirzayanset et al., 2005). Respondents were guaranteed their anonymity and were assured of the confidentiality of their personal details. To effect this, the personal details of participants were not required.

Result Analysis

The study evaluates the entrepreneurial aspirations of female graduates in South Africa. Every student's response was examined, and the responses were categorized based on the analysis.

First, we looked at the relationship between their involvement in entrepreneurship, and then we examined the relationship between respondents' interest in entrepreneurship. Thirdly, an analysis was conducted on the relationship between their characteristics and attitudes on entrepreneurship. The analysis concludes by displaying the proportion of respondents who have knowledge or experience with entrepreneurship.

Correlation between respondents perception toward entrepreneurship

| Spearman's rho | | Correlations | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | I believe I would be completely unable to start a business | I have serious doubts about ever starting my own business | If I tried to start a business I would have a high chance of being successful | Being an entrepreneur would give me great satisfaction | It would be very difficult for me to develop a business idea | My career goal is to be an entrepreneur | Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me | My immediate family values entrepreneurial activities above other activities and careers | The culture in my community is highly favourable towards entrepreneurial activity | My colleagues value entrepreneurial activity above other activities and careers | It is commonly thought in my community that entrepreneurs take advantage of others |
| Correlation Coefficient | 1,000 | ,879** | ,879** | -.973** | -.430** | ,758** | -.074 | ,345** | ,768** | ,269 | -.050 | -.258 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | ,004 | <.001 | ,636 | ,024 | <.001 | ,081 | ,751 | ,095 |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,879** | 1,000 | -.897** | -.371** | ,814** | -.115 | ,345** | ,774** | ,280 | -.128 | -.235 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | ,014 | <.001 | ,462 | ,023 | <.001 | ,069 | ,412 | ,129 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | -.973** | -.897** | 1,000 | ,470** | -.754** | ,087 | -.346** | -.810** | -.326** | ,109 | ,309 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | ,001 | <.001 | ,580 | ,023 | <.001 | ,033 | ,485 | ,044 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | -.430** | -.371** | ,470** | 1,000 | -.095 | -.432** | ,069 | -.635** | -.841** | ,268 | ,729** | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,004 | ,014 | ,001 | ,001 | ,543 | ,004 | ,661 | <.001 | <.001 | ,083 | <.001 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,758** | ,814** | -.754** | -.095 | 1,000 | -.199 | ,532** | ,685** | ,000 | -.087 | -.052 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | ,543 | ,001 | ,200 | <.001 | <.001 | ,998 | ,536 | ,740 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | -.074 | -.115 | ,087 | -.432** | -.199 | 1,000 | -.626** | ,127 | ,636** | ,380 | -.143 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,636 | ,462 | ,580 | ,004 | ,200 | ,001 | <.001 | ,417 | <.001 | ,012 | ,361 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,345** | ,345** | -.346** | ,069 | ,532** | -.626** | 1,000 | ,317** | -.469** | -.612** | -.220 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,024 | ,023 | ,023 | ,661 | <.001 | <.001 | ,038 | ,002 | ,001 | <.001 | ,156 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,768** | ,774** | -.810** | -.635** | ,685** | ,127 | ,317** | 1,000 | ,529** | -.254 | -.603** | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | ,417 | ,038 | ,001 | <.001 | ,100 | <.001 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,269 | ,280 | -.326** | -.841** | ,000 | ,636** | -.469** | ,529** | 1,000 | ,081 | 1,000 | ,537** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,751 | ,412 | ,485 | ,083 | ,636 | ,012 | <.001 | ,100 | ,605 | <.001 | <.001 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | -.050 | -.128 | ,109 | ,268 | -.097 | ,380** | -.612** | -.254 | ,081 | 1,000 | ,537** | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,751 | ,412 | ,485 | ,083 | ,636 | ,012 | <.001 | ,100 | ,605 | <.001 | <.001 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |
| Correlation Coefficient | -.258 | -.235 | ,309** | ,729** | -.052 | -.143 | -.220 | -.603** | -.519** | ,537** | 1,000 | |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | ,095 | ,129 | ,044 | <.001 | ,740 | ,361 | ,156 | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | <.001 | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A correlation test (Spearman's Rank correlation, two-tailed) was conducted in Table 1 which shows the perception of the individuals towards entrepreneurship. Several notable results that describe the individuals' perception towards entrepreneurship can be seen in the above table; firstly, there's a positive correlation (.879) between the inability to start a business (I believe I would be completely unable to start a business) and the doubts of having to start one (I have serious doubts about ever starting my own business). This shows that as the belief of being unable to start a business increases the doubt of ever having one also increases. Another notable result is a negative correlation (-.973) between the inability to start a business (I believe I would be completely unable to start a business) and the perception of being successful as an entrepreneur (If I tried to start a business, I would have a high chance of being successful), this shows that the higher the inability to start a business the lesser the chances of being successful. In simple terms, there's a lack of belief in becoming an entrepreneur in this case. Secondly, there is a negative correlation (-.095) between the satisfaction of being an entrepreneur (Being an entrepreneur would give me great satisfaction) and developing a business idea (It would be very difficult for me to develop a business idea), the negative correlation in this case as compared to others is insignificant, it shows that there might be a desire in these individuals to be entrepreneurs but developing a business idea would be a hindering factor. Furthermore, we see the community playing a role in their perception where there seems to be a positive correlation (.729) between how the community sees entrepreneurs (It is commonly thought in my community that entrepreneurs take advantage of others) and the satisfaction they might gain from being entrepreneurs (Being an entrepreneur would give me great satisfaction), this shows how high communities around south Africa see entrepreneurs.

Correlation between respondents interest towards entrepreneurship

| | A career as an entrepreneur is totally unattractive to me | I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur | I will make every effort to start and run my own business | If I had the opportunity and resources I would love to start a business | Amongst various options, I would rather be anything but an entrepreneur | I am determined to create a business venture in the future | I know all about the practical details needed to start a business | I have a very low intention of ever starting a business | The entrepreneur's role in the economy is generally undervalued in my country | In my community, entrepreneurial activity is considered to be worthwhile, despite the risks |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | 1,000 | ,502** | ,231 | ,871** | ,917** | -,920** | -,660** | ,921** | ,724** | -,354** |
| Correlation Coefficient | | <,001 | ,137 | <,001 | <,001 | <,001 | <,001 | <,001 | <,001 | ,020 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,502** | 1,000 | ,228 | ,490** | ,460** | -,449** | -,829** | ,450** | ,148 | ,230 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,137 | ,142 | 1,000 | ,496** | ,418** | -,420** | -,394** | ,387** | ,529** | -,167 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,871** | ,490** | ,496** | 1,000 | ,947** | -,965** | -,695** | ,952** | ,716** | -,590** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,917** | ,460** | ,418** | ,947** | 1,000 | -,970** | -,613** | ,966** | ,769** | -,493** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | -,920** | -,449** | -,420** | -,965** | -,970** | 1,000 | ,646** | -,978** | -,791** | ,503** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | -,660** | -,829** | -,394** | -,695** | -,613** | ,646** | 1,000 | -,618** | -,371** | -,065** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,921** | ,450** | ,387** | ,952** | ,966** | -,978** | -,618** | 1,000 | ,757** | -,525** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,724** | ,148 | ,529** | ,716** | ,769** | -,791** | -,371** | ,757** | 1,000 | -,266** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | -,354** | -,230 | -,167 | -,590** | -,493** | ,503** | -,065** | -,525** | -,266** | 1,000 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| Correlation Coefficient | ,020 | ,137 | ,284 | -,980** | -,493** | -,965** | -,065** | -,525** | -,266** | 1,000 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

A correlation test (Spearman's Rank correlation, two-tailed) was conducted in Table 2 which shows the interest of the individuals towards entrepreneurship. There are several notable results shown in the above table. Firstly, there is lack of interest in entrepreneurship, if individuals agree that being an entrepreneur is totally unattractive to them. This lack of interest (with negative coefficients of -,920, -,660, -,354 respectively) is seen between individuals finding entrepreneurship unattractive (A career as an entrepreneur is totally unattractive to me) in correlation with being determined to start a venture (I am determined to create a business venture in the), knowing much about practicing entrepreneurship (I know all about the practical details needed to start a business) and the community interest and attitude towards entrepreneurship (In my community, entrepreneurial activity is considered to be worthwhile, despite the risks). This outcome shows that there are factors that have led to entrepreneurship being unattractive to certain individuals, one

notable factor may be the risk involved, which includes money and time, and secondly, the lack of practical knowledge in starting up a venture is also a risk that makes being an entrepreneur unattractive. Another notable result is between the readiness to start a business (I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur). The determination to start a business (I am determined to create a business venture in the future) likewise practicing entrepreneurship (I know all about the practical details needed to start a business) shows why there is a lack of interest from individuals, the negative correlation between these responses (-,449 and -,829 respectively) explains the lack of interest in becoming entrepreneurs, individuals lack the practical knowledge, the determination won't be there without practice, this will lead to the lack of interest and further shows why individuals are not ready to be entrepreneurs.

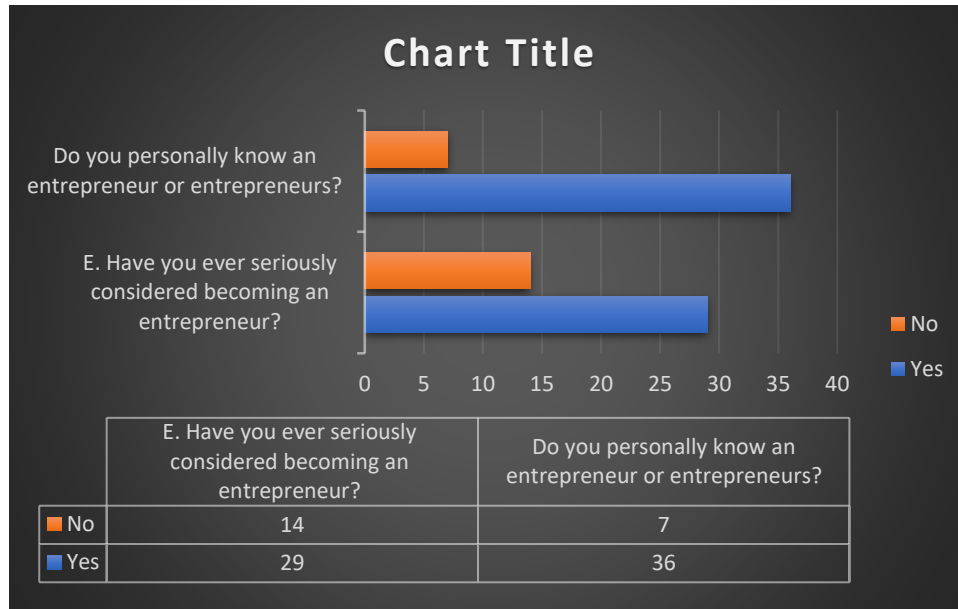
Correlation between respondents' attributes/attitudes towards entrepreneurship

| | | | Correlations | | | | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | | Starting a firm and keeping it viable would be easy for me | My friends would approve of my decision to start a business | My immediate family would approve of my decision to start a business | My colleagues/peers would approve of my decision to start a business | My friends value entrepreneurial activity above other activities and careers | Most people in my community consider it unacceptable to be an entrepreneur |
| Spearman's rho | Starting a firm and keeping it viable would be easy for me | Correlation Coefficient | 1,000 | ,901** | ,032 | -,632** | ,446** | ,876** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | <,001 | ,838 | <,001 | ,003 | <,001 |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| | My friends would approve of my decision to start a business | Correlation Coefficient | ,901** | 1,000 | ,147 | -,462** | ,465** | ,844** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | <,001 | . | ,348 | ,002 | ,002 | <,001 |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| | My immediate family would approve of my decision to start a business | Correlation Coefficient | ,032 | ,147 | 1,000 | ,437** | ,460** | -,180 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | ,838 | ,348 | . | ,003 | ,002 | ,248 |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| | My colleagues/peers would approve of my decision to start a business | Correlation Coefficient | -,632** | -,462** | ,437** | 1,000 | ,055 | -,723** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | <,001 | ,002 | ,003 | . | ,724 | <,001 |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| | My friends value entrepreneurial activity above other activities and careers | Correlation Coefficient | ,446** | ,465** | ,460** | ,055 | 1,000 | ,245 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | ,003 | ,002 | ,002 | ,724 | . | ,113 |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |
| | Most people in my community consider it unacceptable to be an entrepreneur | Correlation Coefficient | ,876** | ,844** | -,180 | -,723** | ,245 | 1,000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | <,001 | <,001 | ,248 | <,001 | ,113 | . |
| | | N | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 43 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A correlation test (Spearman's Rank correlation, two-tailed) was conducted in Table 3 which shows respondents' attributes/attitudes toward entrepreneurship. As compared to table 2 and 3 the attitude towards entrepreneurship is mostly positive. Firstly, we see a significant positive relationship (.901) in the approval from friends (My friends would approve of my decision to start a business) making it easier to think that it would be easy to start a firm and keep it viable (Starting a firm and keeping it viable would be easy for me). This shows how support from the closest people or friends will aid in creating a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship. There are also positive correlations between starting and keeping a firm viable with the families' approval towards entrepreneurship. Another notable result here is the negative correlation between starting and keeping a firm viable with colleagues accepting each other as entrepreneurs. This might be because most of the respondents are already employed or were employed, and colleagues might assume that being employees might just be enough. Further, there is a negative correlation between friend approval and colleagues' approval, it portrays that as friends might approve the idea of being an entrepreneur or starting a business colleagues might not see it as a viable option.

Respondents knowing or practicing entrepreneurship



Source: Author

The above graph shows two general questions that all participants had to answer, the first was about their knowledge of entrepreneurs or business owners and 83,7% said they know a friend or a family member who an entrepreneur is while 16.3 said no. The second question is about individuals aspiring to be entrepreneurs despite knowing someone who an entrepreneur is, 67,4% considered it and the other 32,6% did not consider it. This result in our opinion expands on Phala and Mukonza, (2021), who stated that entrepreneurial education will go a long way in encouraging women to seek entrepreneurship.

Conclusion and recommendations

In summary, the correlation analyses show interesting trends in people's opinions about entrepreneurship in South Africa. There is a strong correlation between doubting oneself when launching a firm and pessimism about success, which suggests a lack of faith in entrepreneurship. In addition, although there is a desire for entrepreneurial fulfilment, coming up with company concepts is challenging and poses a big obstacle. Furthermore, the way the community views entrepreneurs affects people's chances of being satisfied, underscoring the effect of society on entrepreneurial mindsets. Second, the investigation clarifies the variables affecting people's inclination toward entrepreneurship in South Africa

The belief that launching a business is undesirable and not being prepared to do so are closely linked to a lack of desire. Equally the absence of the knowledge of setting up a business venture including the lack of resources such as time and money are two key impediments. The lack of experience in creating ventures in the actual world and perceived dangers, such as time and money investment, are the two key obstacles.

In conclusion, the views on entrepreneurship and the responses from respondents in South Africa seem to be positively correlated. Family members perceptions including those of friends regarding the setting up of and successfully running a business can either a source of support or discouragement. These findings highlight the necessity of focused initiatives to mitigate barriers to entrepreneurship and enhance the atmosphere for prospective South African business owners. Enhancing entrepreneurship education is one

recommendation for enabling women to gain information and skills that are applicable in the real world. Another is to change public opinion of the sector by promoting an atmosphere that encourages entrepreneurship and by providing resources like finance and coaching to allay fears of perceived risks. Creating networks of support through mentoring and entrepreneurship education to increase the resiliency and confidence of prospective women entrepreneurs. Moreover, initiatives to modify business atmospheres to encourage entrepreneurial pursuits can minimize unfavorable opinions among colleagues. The environment that supports entrepreneurship in South Africa can be improved by highlighting the importance of teamwork and a diversity of perspectives in entrepreneurial ventures.

Practical implications

The importance of entrepreneurship in South Africa cannot be understated. Promoting entrepreneurial abilities among student teachers enables them to develop innovative lesson plans, encourage students' critical thinking, and adapt to changing classroom dynamics. Additionally, as several empirical papers have established, entrepreneurship education significantly promotes the development of initiative, creativity, resilience, and problem-solving abilities while also making it simpler to traverse the intricate business environment.

The environment of higher education in South Africa is evolving, with an increasing emphasis on fostering student entrepreneurship. While students studying business and management are often the intended audience, there is a growing recognition of the importance of teaching entrepreneurial skills that encourage entrepreneurship in all fields. Teacher education is one of these areas that is crucial for encouraging entrepreneurship. Encouraging student teachers to embrace entrepreneurship not only benefits them personally but also contributes to educational innovation and societal development. Therefore, encouraging student teachers to take up entrepreneurship requires the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset, exposing them to entrepreneurial role models through entrepreneurship education. In this regard, a call is made for the embedment of entrepreneurship into teacher education curriculum. This can be made effective by encouraging inter/multidisciplinary engagements in modules that emphasise idea generation, opportunity recognition, business planning, and social entrepreneurship. The link to social entrepreneurship is supported by the social necessity of teaching. The above approaches support the intentional pursuit of the agenda to realise the South Africa's National Development Plan (2030), the UN's Sustainable Development Goals of creating a broad-based, sustainable economic growth by encouraging policies that support entrepreneurship and, as a result, employment creation. Equally, the Africa Union Agenda 2063 argues that job creation is possible through well-educated citizens who focus on transforming the economy.

An important policy achievement of the introduction of entrepreneurship into the curriculum of student educators is that the next generation of educators can be empowered by institutions to drive positive change and meaningfully contribute to societal development and educational advancement. This, as stated above, is realizable by exposing student teachers to entrepreneurial role models, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, integrating entrepreneurship into teacher education curricula, and providing essential resources and support.

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