

Entrepreneurial Support and Entrepreneurial Intention of the Youth in Gauteng

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Abstract: Unemployment is a crisis that the South-African youth cannot avoid. This requires the youth to consider alternative career options such as entrepreneurship. The public and private sector needs to facilitate and support the entrepreneurial intention of the youth in Gauteng. The study aims at determining if a significant relationship exists between the support provided by the public and private sector and the entrepreneurial intention of the youth in Gauteng. The sample consisted of 357 youth in Gauteng, aged between 18-34 years, currently working full-time, part-time, self-employed, unemployed or enrolled as a student. The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which was analysed using a regression analysis. The findings indicated that a significant relationship exists between the public and private sector and the entrepreneurial intention of the youth. Furthermore, the respondents do have the intention to start a business, however the act of becoming an entrepreneur was not evident. The public and private sector needs to develop alternative tools to promote entrepreneurship as a career option and create awareness with regards to these support initiatives. This study adds to the insights of policymakers, the government, private sector, academics and the youth itself to identify the support needed for the development of youth entrepreneurship and promoting the support to the youth.

Keywords: private sector; public sector; youth unemployment

JEL Classification: L26

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become an everyday buzzword discussed amongst researchers, academics, policymakers, economists and even students (Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011, p. 206). Researchers such as Maseko and Manyani (2011, p. 171); Mudavanhu, Bindu, Chingusiwa and Muchabaiwa (2011, p. 87), stated that the solution to unemployment and other socio-economic issues such as poverty can be addressed through entrepreneurship. Youth entrepreneurship is the driving force for innovative thinking, economic growth and job creation and for addressing other social and economic issues at hand (Steenkamp, Van der Merwe & Athayde, 2011, p. 316).

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Youth entrepreneurship also improves the general standard of a nation, which is the driving force for political stability and national security. It can also reduce crime, poverty and income imbalances (Boateng, Boateng & Bampoe, 2014, p. 110; Fatoki, 2011, p. 162).

Solutions for youth employment (SYE) identified four interventions to promote youth employment. These interventions considered both the formal and informal sectors. The four interventions include- entrepreneurship promotion, skills training, employment services, and wage and employment subsidies (Include, 2016, p. 1).

To ensure effective implementation of these interventions, support is needed from various role players such as the public and private sector (Include, 2016, p. 2). Research studies conducted in developed countries will differ compared to emerging and developing economies, due to the differing economic states of these countries. South-Africa's poverty rate is much higher compared to developed economies (Fatoki, 2010, p. 88), thus individuals in South Africa may not have access to higher education compared to individuals in a developed economy (Herrington & Kew, 2015/16, p. 54). This should be considered when finding possible solutions for low entrepreneurial intentions amongst the youth.

Despite the key role that the youth plays in the development of a country, limited research has been done to view entrepreneurship from the eyes of the youth, especially the obstacles that the youth face to start and maintain a business in a developing country (Dzisi, 2014, p. 1). Fatoki and Chindoga (2011, p. 162), noticed that there is a lack of accurate and coherent data on youth, especially youth entrepreneurship. Statistics South Africa (2017, p. 11) indicated that the unemployment rate of the youth remains very high (50.9%). A possible solution to address the high youth unemployment is the development of entrepreneurship amongst the youth. Three main reasons are prevalent to why youth entrepreneurship development is needed within the South-African economy. Firstly, entrepreneurship appears to provide both pathways out of poverty and mitigation against severe poverty for some young people (Chingunta, 2016, p. 1). Secondly, it offers a viable solution to economic growth and job creation. Lastly, it acts as personal fulfilment through increased self-esteem and boosting the confidence of young individuals (Geldhof, Weiner, Bronk, Damon, Porter, Malin, Agans, Muelle & Lerner, 2013, p. 431).

The general household survey of South-Africa in 2015 indicated that, 710 139 youth individuals were enrolled at a higher education institution in 2015 (Statistics South-Africa, 2015, p. 15), leaving approximately two million young people neither employed, nor enrolled at a higher education institution (Young People Fact Sheet, 2013, p. 1). Taking these statistics into account, the research studies of Mbuya and Schachtebeck (2016, p. 233); Malebana (2013, p. 137); Musengi-Ajulu (2010, p. 5); and Muofhe and Du Toit, (2011, p. 345) only focus on students and graduate

students, which only makes up 14% of the South-African youth population, leaving 86% of the youth unattended. Since only 14% of the youth are enrolled at a higher educational institution, entrepreneurship programs and courses will only be available to these individuals. Gauteng is regarded as the hub of South-Africa, providing countless employment opportunities, however the formal employment opportunities in South-Africa will not reduce the high youth unemployment rate, due to it being insufficient to create new jobs, therefore entrepreneurship needs to be recognised as an employment option for the youth (Sharma & Madan, 2013, p. 5).

Youth participation needs to be encouraged across different market segments has become a necessary step globally, to grow and sustain the business operations of a country and its macro environment (United Nations Programme & Restless Development, 2011, p. 7). To be able to this, the public and private sector needs to support and facilitate youth entrepreneurship. The research intended to determine the level of support provided by the public and private sector and to determine the level of influence on the entrepreneurial intention of the youth in Gauteng. Previous research has only studied the entrepreneurial intention of students or graduate students and did not include the youth in general, which this research study aimed at closing this gap.

1. Problem Statement

Promoting economic development in South-Africa is complex among all targeted groups, especially due to poor economic participation of the youth, which hinders the country's economic growth and development (Van Tonder, 2017, p. 12). One of the reasons for the high unemployment rate and low entrepreneurial activities is due to poor participation of the youth in entrepreneurial activities (Department of Trade and Industry, 2013, p. 10). Numerous government and private sector initiatives have been in place to address the issue of the low entrepreneurial activity in South-Africa. Despite these initiatives there are still a low number of youth individuals that become or intend to become an entrepreneur, which could be due to the lack of awareness with regards to these existing initiatives (Herrington et al., 2014, p. 40).

The Gauteng economy is mainly made up of tertiary sectors that require workers with the necessary skills and capabilities to perform a task. However, most of the youth population is unskilled or semi-skilled and therefore the formal sector will not create jobs for these individuals (Gauteng employment Strategy, 2012, p. 11). To address the issue of the high unemployment rate of the youth, one needs to examine the role that the public and private sector plays in facilitating and promoting youth entrepreneurship.

2. Literature Review

The literature review will include a comprehensive overview of current literature on the topic youth entrepreneurship. The literature will start with a clarification of key terms, a discussion on the support structures for youth entrepreneurship, public and private sector support and lastly the entrepreneurial intentions of the youth in South-Africa.

Clarification of Key Terms

- **Entrepreneurial intention**

Thompson (2009, p. 676) defines entrepreneurial intention (EI) as “self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future”.

- **Youth Entrepreneurship**

Chigunta (2002, p. v) defines youth entrepreneurship as “the practical application of enterprising qualities, such as initiative, innovation, creativity, and risk-taking into the work environment (either in self-employment or employment in small start-up enterprises), using the appropriate skills necessary for success in that environment and culture.”

Support Structures for Youth Entrepreneurship in South Africa

Mahadea, Ramroop and Zewotir (2011, p. 76) highlighted that the current state of the labour market in South Africa will leave many young people without jobs when entering the working world. Therefore, it is important for the youth to realise that alternative working options need to be considered, such as self-employment which is becoming an entrepreneur, rather than seeking full-time employment. Entrepreneurs face many challenges on the path to achieving success (Legas, 2015, p. 23). Therefore, it is important to understand and explore the challenges that young entrepreneurs face.

The public and private sectors are responsible for addressing these challenges and the youth unemployment crisis (Glick, Huang & Mejia 2015, p. 1). The Department of Trade and Industry (2013, p. 39) has identified the role of the private sector and state-owned enterprises to support youth entrepreneurship in South Africa as follows:

- Promote and support economic youth participation through new venture creation in the private sector;
- Provide at least 30% procurement opportunities and enterprise development support and corporate social investment to youth enterprises that can be claimed from the BBBEE Codes of Good Practice and sector codes;

- Report on the progress of economic youth participation in terms of new venture creation in annual reports and information technology data that can be available to the public;
- Motivate mainstream businesses and state-owned enterprises to support and partner with youth business formation;
- Enter purchasing power parity initiatives aimed at supporting economic youth participation through new venture creation for young people;
- Provide programmes that include business mentorship, training and technical skills.

Support structures such as mentors, support networks, business clubs and incubators can be the key for transforming a single youth start-up business into a successful small or medium size business (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011, p. 10). The current support structures and programmes offered by the public and private sectors will be discussed in the following section.

Public Sector Support

Government programmes have been initiated to support start-up businesses and existing businesses that need support to grow further. However, authors such as Herrington and Kew (2014, p. 40) and Fatoki and Chindoga (2011, p. 163) have found that there is a lack of awareness among the youth concerning the existence of these programmes.

Since 1996 the South African government has established various institutions to create a supporting environment for the youth to start their own businesses. These institutions include the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), sector education and training authorities (SETAs), the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE) and many other incentives, grants and fiscal advantages (Antonites & Truter, 2010, p. 448). Regardless of all these initiatives, youth entrepreneurial activity remains low (Mahadea & Pillay, 2008, p. 442).

Private Sector Support

All over the world, public sectors in both developing and even developed countries face many financial challenges, and therefore the public sector cannot be the only key to economic development (De Gobbi, 2014, p. 305). The role of the private sector is to provide different forms of economic opportunities to society and is an essential part in alleviating poverty (Cain, 2014, p. 2).

The private sector has established various institutions to support the youth to start and grow a business. Some of these institutions include The Sasol Business

Incubator, SAB Kickstart programme, Sasol Siyazenzela Youth in Business, The Standard Bank Ignitor programme and The Shell LiveWIRE programme. The private sector has been a vital role player to develop and implement training programs and assisting national strategies aimed at skills development (Van Tonder, 2017, p. 48). This can however only be successful if there is active engagement of employers within the private sector and the public sector.

Youth Entrepreneurial Intentions in South-Africa

The current state of youth entrepreneurial intentions in South Africa is a worrying factor. The youth intention towards entrepreneurship is the lowest amongst all sub-Saharan African countries, with a Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate of only 15%, compared to the average of the sub-Saharan African countries with 56% (Turton & Herrington, 2012, p. 68). Additionally, in 2012, only 1% of the youth has established a business (Turton & Herrington, 2012, p. 74). Promoting entrepreneurship amongst the youth will emphasise that the youth do have alternative employment options by starting a new business, rather than waiting for an established business to provide a job (Sharma & Madam, 2013, p. 2). These findings agree with Fatoki (2014, p. 187) and Steenkamp, Van der Merwe and Athayde (2011, p. 67), stating that if the youth will engage in entrepreneurial activities, these youth individuals will be less reliant on the government and achieve their own economic goals, higher income and more job satisfaction. Scrutinizing the South African environment, the youth do not have the necessary abilities, skills and inspiration to establish entrepreneurial activities, which has led to the poor economic state of South-Africa (Benderman, Bezuidenhout, Hewett, Rensburg, Naidoo, Arrdt, Bank & Visser; 2011, p. 4)

The study of Mbuya and Schachtebeck (2014, p. 233) found that both entrepreneurship and non-entrepreneurship students in the urban environment had high intentions of pursuing an entrepreneurial career. Many studies (Gerba, 2012, p. 258; Muofhe et al., 2011, p. 345), have indicated that entrepreneurship students were more attracted to an entrepreneurial career than non-entrepreneurship students. However, the focus cannot only be placed on the youth that are studying towards a career. The study of Olufunso (2010, p. 87) found a low entrepreneurial intention amongst graduate students in South Africa, suggesting that students prefer the steadiness of a job opposed to starting a business. These findings are in contrast with the study of Malebana (2014, p. 137), reporting a high entrepreneurial intention amongst rural university students. Musengi-Ajulu (2010, p. 5), found that fifty-two percent (52%) of youth graduates in South Africa have an attraction to becoming an entrepreneur. It can be concluded that most of the South-African graduates do have the intention to become an entrepreneur, but based on the TEA rate of the South-African youth, the intention to become an entrepreneur never turns into the reality of being an actual entrepreneur and this is the worrying factor.

These findings only reflect the entrepreneurial intention of students or graduate students and do not include the youth in general, thus there was a gap in the literature which this research study aimed at address.

3. Research Objective

The primary objective of the research study was to determine if a significant relationship exist between the public and private sector support and the entrepreneurial intention of the youth in Gauteng.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was tested:

H₁₊ Youth entrepreneurial support provided by the private and public sectors for the youth positively influences the youth's entrepreneurial intention.

4. Methodology

The study utilized a positivistic paradigm through a quantitative research approach using a questionnaire to obtain the relevant data from the youth respondents within the Gauteng area. The target population for this study was youth individuals between the ages of 18-35 years within the Gauteng region. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used by the means of purposive sampling.

The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to youth individuals listed on the database of two individual organisations: (1) Johannesburg Digital Ambassadors (JDA) and (2) Reunert College within the Gauteng region.

Reliability and Validity

The instrument was pilot tested on five respondents to determine the reliability of the study. The results were compared to see if the instrument was reliable or not and thus the reliability of the project could have been improved (Fox & Bayat, 2013:103). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured, using Cronbach alpha coefficient (α). The alpha values are illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha (α) Values of Entrepreneurial support and Entrepreneurial Intention

Topic	Number of questions	Cronbach Alpha's Coefficient
Youth entrepreneurial support provided by public sector	3	0.812
Youth entrepreneurial support provided by private sector	2	0.691
Entrepreneurial intention	10	0.941

Table 1 indicate that all the Cronbach alpha values for the three individual factors ranged from 0.6 to 0.9 surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.6. Goforth (2015:1) argue that Cronbach values between 0.65 and 0.8 can be seen as reliable. Content validity was ensured through consulting subject matter experts of entrepreneurship, to determine if the research instrument measures all the facets of the given construct. Construct validity was determined through tapping into the theory of entrepreneurship and aspects relevant to an entrepreneur. Criterion validity was determined by measuring the instrument against the Entrepreneurial Intention Model (EIQ), developed by Liñán and Chen (2009, p. 612).

5. Results

During the data collection process, 400 questionnaires were distributed, of which 364 questionnaires were collected and 357 questionnaires were usable. This equalled an 89,25% response rate.

Demographic Description

The sample of the study comprised of 42.6% males and 57.4% females. A large portion of the study were aged between 18-24 years, (62,9%) with 1,9% aged between 14-17 years, 33,2% were aged between 25-34 years and lastly 1,9% were aged 35 years and older. Being regarded as a youth individual, one can only be aged between 14-34 years, thus, the age group 35 and older (1,9%) were removed from the study, leaving a useable 357 responses. The ethnicity distribution indicated that 50,4% were Black, 43,1% were White, 3,4% were Indian or Asian and lastly, 3,1% were Coloured. Based on the level of education, only 1,1% have grade 11 or lower, 51,5% have grade 12 (matric), 13,7% have a post matric Diploma or Certificate, 16,5% have Baccalaureate Degree(s) and 16,5% have a Post-Graduate Degree(s). The distribution of the employment status contributed in determining the percentage of youth that are currently pursuing entrepreneurial activities or would prefer the security of a permanent job. Therefore, 29,4% are working full-time, 7% are working part-time, 9,2% are self-employed, 13,4% are unemployed and 40,9% are students.

Inferential Statistics

The respondents were asked whether they have the intention to start a business or not. This question was only relevant to the respondents that were working full-time, part-time, unemployed or a student. 198 respondents (77,6%) said “yes” they do have an intention to start a business in the future and 56 respondents (22,0%) said “no” they don’t have an intention to start a business in the future. The respondents were then asked if they have owned a business in the past and if yes, why did they not continue with self-employment. The findings indicate that 49 respondents (15,1%) have owned a business in the past and 255 respondents (78,7%) have not owned a business in the past.

Based on the 49 respondents that owned a business in the past, several reasons were provided by the respondents for not continuing with the business. Table 4 indicates that the most common three reasons were (1) business was a liability (2) financial challenges and (3) furthering education. Some of the other reasons provided by the respondents included that the location of the business was not suitable, materials were stolen and the profits were to inconsistent causing slow growth, selling on credit led to the business not being profitable.

It can therefore be concluded that the intention to start a business is evident, however only few have started a business in the past and did not continue with self-employment, based on the reasons provided before. These challenges can be one of the reasons for only having the intention to start a business, but never actually pursuing it.

Frequency Distributions

To determine the entrepreneurial intention amongst the youth, the respondents were asked to answer ten questions based on the intention to become an entrepreneur. The results indicated that most of the respondents strongly agreed on the questions, with a mean higher than 5. The following question had the highest mean of 5.43 (1) “I have the intention to start a business in the foreseeable future”, with 37,8% strongly agreeing with this statement. Followed by “I have seriously thought of starting a business”, with a mean of 5.29 and 37,0% strongly agreeing with this statement. However, there was one statement with a mean of 3.67 “I have the intention to start a business in the next year”, 20,1% strongly disagreeing with this statement.

These findings indicate that there is an intention to start a business amongst the youth in Gauteng, however the intention to start a business is only in the foreseeable future and not within the next year, thus most of the respondents are not currently pursuing entrepreneurial activities or imminent in starting a business.

Public and Private Sector Support

The questions were intended to measure the perception of the support provided by both the private and public sector for the youth. All the questions had a mean lower than 5. The statement with the highest mean of 4.02, “the private sector supports young individuals to start a business”, had 36,8% unsure with the statement and 28 10,0% disagreeing with the statement. The second question with the highest mean of 4.02, “entrepreneurial training is easily available for the youth”, with 29,7% unsure with the statement and 14,0% disagreeing with the statement. Taken the statement with the lowest mean of 3.51 into account, “business information is made easily available by the government”, 15,4% strongly disagreed with this statement.

These findings can be interpreted that most of the respondents do not believe that there is sufficient support from both the public and private sector. Secondly, the public sector does not provide the necessary business information. The youth also do not know who to approach when planning to start a business.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis. Table 2 indicates the correlation analysis.

Table 2. Correlations of dependent and independent variables

		Entrepreneurial Intention	Youth Entrepreneurial Support
Pearson Correlation	Entrepreneurial Intention	1.000	0.288
	Youth Entrepreneurial Support	0.288	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Entrepreneurial Intention		0.000
	Youth Entrepreneurial Support	0.000	
N	Entrepreneurial Intention	276	276
	Youth Entrepreneurial Support	276	276

Source: Author's compilation

Table 2 indicated that the dependent variable, *entrepreneurial intention* is positively correlated to the independent variable- *youth entrepreneurial support*. The level of significance indicated that the p-value $\leq 0,05$, thus, the null hypothesis (H0) will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will be accepted (H1).

Coefficients

The strength of the relationship can range from -1 to +1, if a value is zero, then there is no relationship and if a value is 1, then there is a relationship (Pallant, 2013:139). Table 3 shows the coefficients values for the independent variables.

Table 3. Coefficients of independent variables

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-0.039	0.320		-0.123	0.902	-0.670	0.591
	Youth Entrepreneurial Support	-0.011	0.045	-0.008	-0.239	0.811	-0.099	0.078

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 3 indicates that the level of significance for the *constant* value is ($p = 0.902$), indicating that the p -value ≥ 0.05 , and therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. The independent variable *youth entrepreneurial support* ($p = 0.811$) indicate that the p -value ≥ 0.05 . Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected, meaning that the independent variable, *youth entrepreneurial support* makes a very small contribution to the model.

6. Recommendations

Public Sector

Introducing entrepreneurship as a subject in the secondary schooling system and career advice services should be presented to secondary schools, to encourage entrepreneurship as career option. Furthermore, providing scholarships to study entrepreneurship courses, offer short courses to write a business plan. The government has the responsibility to broaden policies and negotiate an agreement with financial institutions to provide cheaper finance for potential and existing entrepreneurs to start and grow a business. Wage subsidies can be provided to encourage the youth to start a business, these subsidies can be used as an injection capital to kick start a business.

Private Sector

These training programs offered by the private sector institutions could benefit the institution by gaining BBBEE points. Creating internship opportunities for the youth, to acquire the necessary business management skills and financial skills. Job interventions are another approach to address the issue of high unemployment. Job interventions can assist the youth with information on who to approach when having an idea to start a business. Labor centers should be introduced where enterprises can advertise and provide on the job training opportunities and create internship opportunities for the youth, to obtain the necessary business management skills and financial skills. Universities, colleges and other business institutions can establish partnerships with the private sector to include entrepreneurship programs and courses that is both theoretical and practically.

Conclusion and Future Direction for Research and Policy

The findings indicated that the variable- *youth entrepreneurial support* does affect the entrepreneurial intention of the youth in Gauteng. The study revealed that the youth in Gauteng do have the intention to start a business, but only in the foreseeable future and this will leave South-Africa in the same position with a below average total entrepreneurial activity (TEA) rate of 15% amongst the youth. Therefore, there is a need to promote entrepreneurship amongst the youth and alternative tools will be needed to transform the entrepreneurial intention into entrepreneurial action. The youth also has the perception that there is not sufficient support provided by the public and private sector and this could be a reason for a high entrepreneurial intention, but a low actual entrepreneurial activity amongst the youth.

Future research is apposite to measure the current impact of private and public sector initiatives on the success of current youth entrepreneurial start-ups in order to see areas that are working and not working that would allow to make suggestions for change and improvement.

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