


Entrepreneurship interventions and the intentions of South African youths to start own business



Authors:

Steven Zwane^{1,2} 
 Ubochioma U.S. Osuigwe¹ 

Affiliations:

¹Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship, Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, Sandton, South Africa

²Business School, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

Corresponding author:

Ubochioma Osuigwe,
 osuigweu@gibs.co.za

Dates:

Received: 09 July 2024
 Accepted: 30 Aug. 2024
 Published: 03 Oct. 2024

How to cite this article:

Zwane, S. & Osuigwe, U.U.S., 2024, 'Entrepreneurship interventions and the intentions of South African youths to start own business', *Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management* 16(1), a944. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajesbm.v16i1.944>

Copyright:

© 2024. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

Background: Increasingly, there is a concerted effort to provide entrepreneurship interventions to young people in a bid to activate their appetite for entrepreneurial activity. The current research seeks to offer meaningful insight into the effectiveness of these interventions and their potential to encourage entrepreneurship among disadvantaged youths in South Africa.

Aim: The study aims to understand the connection between the participation of young people from poor communities in South Africa in entrepreneurship interventions and their entrepreneurial intentions to start a business.

Setting: The data used for the study were collected from participants aged between 18 years and 34 years who had previously participated in entrepreneurship programmes between 2008 and 2019 offered by a variety of institutions.

Methods: Using data drawn from a sample of 165 young people based on a survey instrument consisting of 16 questions, a regression analysis was employed to examine the significance of the relationship between the variables.

Results: The results revealed that entrepreneurship interventions positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions. The study found that certain programmes had a significantly greater impact on promoting entrepreneurial intentions than those with a lesser focus on practical business skills. This outcome indicates the need for more real-world business training in future interventions.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that providing entrepreneurship interventions and related resources can be an effective strategy for encouraging entrepreneurial intentions among disadvantaged youths.

Contribution: This study contributes to knowledge related to entrepreneurial intentions with emphasis on the significance of entrepreneurship interventions in the advancement of entrepreneurial activity.

Keywords: entrepreneurship intervention; entrepreneurship education; entrepreneurial intention; theory of planned behaviour; youth entrepreneurship.

Introduction

In recent times, entrepreneurship and associated activities have been considered crucial contributors to economic growth, social well-being and job creation (Singer, Amoros & Moska 2015). The increased significance of entrepreneurship is especially relevant in developing countries such as South Africa (Osuigwe & Eresia-Eke 2022) given its contribution to poverty alleviation, innovativeness and the competitiveness of economies (Wu, Kuo & Shen 2013). For this reason, to develop the requisite skills for enhanced entrepreneurial activities, a focus on entrepreneurship interventions becomes a necessity. Muhammad, Akbar and Dalziel (2011) connect systematised entrepreneurship education as a contributor to economic growth in developing economies. Bischoff, Volkmann and Audretsch (2018) argue that entrepreneurship education is a key driver for advancing entrepreneurial activity.

Consequently, in a developing economy such as South Africa, entrepreneurship intervention is considered imperative. Despite the increasing focus on providing entrepreneurship interventions at the youth level in South Africa (Forcher-Mayr & Mahlke 2020), access to entrepreneurial education and resources remains limited for the youths from poor communities, which hinders their ability to start and sustain successful businesses. Such an entrepreneurship education deficit warrants that targeted entrepreneurship intervention programmes be set up for this category of youths in the country. Extant literature (Lawan et al. 2015; Premand et al. 2016) argues that

entrepreneurship interventions stimulate intention for entrepreneurial activities. Thus, promoting entrepreneurial intention through entrepreneurship interventions among youths from poor communities is crucial to fostering entrepreneurial actions.

Notably, the question of the limitations to entrepreneurial intention and action related to a person's context and personal circumstances that include one's background (Ahmed et al. 2020) has preoccupied entrepreneurship studies. As such, whether entrepreneurial interventions can enhance the ability of individuals to overcome the limitations that characterise their personal circumstances remains a relevant question. What scholars do agree on, however, is that conclusions on the benefits and effectiveness of entrepreneurial interventions are inconsistent and conflicting (Nabi et al. 2017; Omotosho, Gamede & Uleanya 2020; Rauch & Hulsink 2015).

This study aims to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship intervention programmes on entrepreneurial intentions among youths from poor communities in South Africa. This paper contributes to the debate on the effects of entrepreneurship interventions on intentions, attitudes or behaviours towards entrepreneurship. The study attempts to respond to the question of the extent to which entrepreneurship interventions impact the entrepreneurial intentions of young people from poor communities in South Africa to start their own businesses. The article provides a fresh perspective on the importance of targeted entrepreneurship intervention programmes for promoting entrepreneurial intentions among young people from poor communities.

Literature review

Entrepreneurial activity among the youth in South Africa

Globally, young people are seen as catalysts for transformation (Mudasiru & Fatai 2020) and the case is no different in a developing economy such as South Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is purported to have a growing youth population expected to exceed 60% by 2050 (Zulu, Djenontin & Grabowski 2021) providing significant numbers of youth capable of addressing unemployment and poverty through entrepreneurship. Several initiatives have been inaugurated globally to encourage the involvement of young people in entrepreneurship, underscoring the significance of youth entrepreneurial activities to economic growth. Similarly, various youth development initiatives have been introduced within the South African context to recognise the contributions of youth entrepreneurship to the economy (Mmbengwa, Qin & Nkobi 2021).

Advocacy for youth entrepreneurship in South Africa is warranted, considering the current youth unemployment rate of 46% (Statistics South Africa 2023). Self-employment through entrepreneurship is a key factor in addressing the rate of unemployment among young people (Fatoki & Chindoga 2011). Entrepreneurship scholars tend to agree that entrepreneurial activity enhances wealth creation, improves

social well-being and reduces social ills (Osoro & Areba 2013). Despite this, youth entrepreneurship in South Africa is considered to be relatively low compared to other countries in the region. Several factors have been advanced as being responsible for the inability of young people to start their own businesses including a lack of resources and support as well as societal barriers and stereotypes (Radebe 2019).

Entrepreneurship intervention

Extant literature argues that teaching people about entrepreneurship is a significant way of encouraging people to start their own businesses and invariably advancing economic growth (Lackeus 2017). Consequently, entrepreneurship interventions are understood as critical steps in enabling individuals to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to start and run successful businesses (Zellweger & Sieger 2012). In recent years, there has been a shift in focus resulting in the provision of entrepreneurship interventions to young people in developing countries (Guerrero, Urbano & Fayolle 2016). The primary goal of this radical shift is to promote economic empowerment and reduce poverty in the targeted contexts.

Entrepreneurship intervention programmes in Africa have gained increased attention as a means of promoting economic development and alleviating widespread poverty. These entrepreneurship intervention programmes have been implemented at various levels, including primary and secondary schools, universities and vocational training centres. The goal of these programmes is to give young people the skills and knowledge they need to be successful business owners and to make entrepreneurship a way of life in the wider community. Such programmes typically involve classroom-based training, mentoring and support services (Ramphele 2012) and include training in subjects such as planning a business, managing finances, marketing and networking. Moreover, entrepreneurship intervention programmes have emerged as a popular means of providing essential education to disadvantaged youth.

Several studies have shown that providing young people with access to entrepreneurship intervention programmes can have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions and activities of participants (Fayolle & Gailly 2015; Martin, McNally & Kay 2013; Teferra & Altbach 2004). Notably, however, for the interventions to work, they must be tailored to the specific situation and needs of the region and taught by experienced teachers who can act as mentors.

Entrepreneurship support programmes such as business plan competitions are utilised to encourage entrepreneurship in and out of high school. Russell, Atchison and Brooks (2008) argue that entrepreneurship support programmes enhance students' desire to become businessmen or businesswomen in the future. Such programmes are therefore considered as a crucial means of incentivising students to work on their ideas, providing a platform to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit within them. Entrepreneurship intervention is a term used in

this research to define the variety of interventions that promote entrepreneurship among young people during their high school years. It could take the form of lectures or teachings where the outcome leads to entrepreneurial intentions.

Entrepreneurial personality and skills

Consistent with Zellweger and Sieger's (2012) description of entrepreneurship intervention within the purview of knowledge, skills and attitude, the current study understands entrepreneurship interventions through the lens of entrepreneurial personality and entrepreneurial skills. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) has been widely used to explain start-up intentions (Barba-Sanchez, Mitre-Aranda & Del Brío-González 2022). The constitutive elements of the TPB model explain a person's intentions to start a business, which include personal attitudes towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms and people's perceptions of their level of behavioural control (Ajzen 1991). Theories, such as Baum et al.'s (2007) psychological entrepreneurship theory, provide insight into the value of personality traits to such entrepreneurial behaviours that include opportunity recognition, decision-making and persistence. Linden (2015) argues that entrepreneurial personality consisting of personality traits and locus of control (LoC) may explain entrepreneurial behaviour. Personality attitudes and traits associated with entrepreneurial behaviour by scholars include the need for high achievement, risk-taking or tolerance for risks, tolerance for ambiguity, innovation, creativity, high level of management skills and business know-how (Chen & Lai 2010).

Locus of control, described as the perception of having personal control over situations rather than being at the mercy of external circumstances (Bulmash 2016), is considered a key aspect of personality traits common with entrepreneurs. Several studies (Cromie 2000; Rauch & Frese 2000; Utsch et al. 1999) provide evidence associating LoC with entrepreneurial behaviour, intention and success. Instructively, individuals who have certain personality traits are more likely to successfully participate in entrepreneurial activities.

Entrepreneurship intervention and entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial intention is an individual's plan to start a business or conduct other business-related activities. Entrepreneurial intention describes one's mindset that directs curiosity, experience and behaviour towards the goal of venture creation (Hueso, Jaén & Liñán 2021). It is extensively argued that entrepreneurial intention is a key precursor to actual entrepreneurship behaviour (Kautonen, Van Gelderen & Tornikoski 2013). As such, intentions are crucial to understanding how people behave and plan to act.

Entrepreneurship intervention, on the other hand, provides participants with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to enhance the desire to participate in entrepreneurial activities.

This is consistent with the suggestion by Phelan and Sharpley (2012) that entrepreneurs require various skills to develop specific competencies to start and manage an enterprise. Entrepreneurial skills acquired through entrepreneurship interventions include technical skills (written and oral communication skills, technical management and organising skills), business management skills (managerial skills such as planning, organising, and leading) and personal skills (risk-taking, innovation, and persistence). Given the scope of skills drawn from entrepreneurial interventions, it is argued in this study that entrepreneurs who have high entrepreneurial skills will be more inclined towards starting their own entrepreneurial ventures in the future.

Extant literature has shown that providing young people with access to education on entrepreneurship can help them become more interested and active in entrepreneurship. For instance, a study conducted by Adeyemo and Adebayo (2018) found that entrepreneurship education had a positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of students in Nigeria. The study also found that students who learned about entrepreneurship were more likely to start their own businesses and had a more positive view of business. Similarly, a study by Njenga, Gikunju and Kariuki (2018) found that entrepreneurship education in Kenya positively impacted the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of students, as well as their intentions to start their own businesses.

These studies and many others demonstrate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship intervention in promoting entrepreneurial intentions and activities among young people in Africa. Based on the reviewed literature, the study hypothesises that:

- H1:** Entrepreneurship interventions influence entrepreneurial intention.
- H1a:** Entrepreneurial personality has a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.
- H1b:** Entrepreneurial skills have a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention.

Research methods and design

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential relationship between entrepreneurship interventions and entrepreneurial intention among young people from South Africa.

Study design

To achieve this, the study adopted a positivist philosophy that allowed for the quantitative and empirical nature of the study. The study aimed to interrogate the relationship between entrepreneurship interventions and entrepreneurial intentions among disadvantaged youths in South Africa. The positivist approach, which assumes that reality is objective and independent of the observer (Aliyu et al. 2014), underscores the importance of using empirical data and scientific methods to understand the relationships between variables.

The study collected primary data from students who participated between 2008 and 2019 in the Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development (YLED) programme as well as Junior Achievement South Africa's (JASA) programmes, comprising Life Skills & Mentorship Programme (LSMP) and the Mini Enterprise Programme. A survey instrument with 16 questions was designed to capture key information regarding the demographics of the respondents, their participation in entrepreneurship interventions and their entrepreneurial intentions. The survey was administered electronically to ensure broader reach and accessibility. A survey in the form of a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 1100 previous participants on these programmes. The time horizon for the data collection was longitudinal given that the study sought to observe the behaviours of previous participants across cohorts from 2008 to 2019.

Research method

Prior to full-scale data collection, a preliminary study was conducted with a small group of participants to test the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. Based on feedback from this initial phase, the questionnaire was revised and refined to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness. The study drew complete responses from 165 young people aged between 18 years and 34 years from 1100 former participants who were on the programmes. The data collected were representative of the broader population of youths who had participated in these programmes, which ensured responses from participants with a diverse mix of backgrounds and experiences.

Data collection took place over 3 months, with the sample stratified into three cohorts based on the period in which they participated in the entrepreneurship programmes. The cohorts were defined as follows:

- Cohort 1 (2008–2011): Participants who completed the entrepreneurship programme between 2008 and 2011.
- Cohort 2 (2012–2015): Participants who completed the entrepreneurship programme between 2012 and 2015.
- Cohort 3 (2016–2019): Participants who completed the entrepreneurship programme between 2016 and 2019.

This cohort-based design allowed for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions over time and provided a longitudinal perspective on the development of entrepreneurial intentions. The diverse sampling strategy also allowed for insights from the different groups related to trends across different periods.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Durham University Business School with reference number DUBS-2023-05-08T00_56_28-fnfh97. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Results

The collected data were analysed to identify patterns, relationships and potential relationships between

entrepreneurial interventions and entrepreneurial intentions. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of the sample and their responses to the survey questions. Inferential statistics based on regression analysis were employed to test the study's hypotheses and evaluate the strength and significance of the relationships between the variables. Factor analysis was used to validate the survey instrument and to ensure the reliability of the constructs used in the study. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine correlations and to determine whether the data met the assumptions required for further analysis.

Descriptive statistics enabled the evaluation of the demographic profile of the respondents, across their different cohorts and the relevant interventions they participated in. Table 1 presents the participants' demographics by cohort.

TABLE 1: Demographic data by cohort.

| Demographics | Cohorts | | | | | | Total (N = 165) | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|----|
| | 2008–2011 (n = 29) | | 2012–2015 (n = 45) | | 2016–2019 (n = 91) | | n | % |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | | |
| Programme name | | | | | | | | |
| LSMP | 15 | 83 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 11 | 18 | 11 |
| Mini enterprise programme | 8 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 39 | 74 | 53 | 32 |
| YLED programme | 6 | 7 | 38 | 42 | 47 | 52 | 91 | 55 |
| Missing | - | 0 | - | 0 | 3 | 100 | 3 | 2 |
| Institution name | | | | | | | | |
| JASA | 6 | 10 | 9 | 16 | 43 | 74 | 58 | 35 |
| YLED | 23 | 22 | 36 | 34 | 46 | 44 | 105 | 64 |
| Missing | - | 0 | - | 0 | 2 | 100 | 2 | 1 |
| Age group (years) | | | | | | | | |
| 18–21 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 68 | 97 | 70 | 42 |
| 22–29 | 4 | 6 | 44 | 64 | 21 | 30 | 69 | 42 |
| 30–34 | 24 | 96 | - | 0 | 1 | 4 | 25 | 15 |
| Missing | - | 0 | - | 0 | 1 | 100 | 1 | 1 |
| Gender | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 19 | 17 | 31 | 27 | 63 | 56 | 113 | 68 |
| Male | 10 | 19 | 14 | 27 | 28 | 54 | 52 | 32 |
| Race | | | | | | | | |
| Asian people | - | 0 | 1 | 50 | 1 | 50 | 2 | 1 |
| Black people | 25 | 19 | 36 | 27 | 72 | 54 | 133 | 81 |
| Coloured people | 3 | 18 | 6 | 35 | 8 | 47 | 17 | 10 |
| Indian people | 1 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 82 | 11 | 7 |
| White people | - | 0 | 1 | 50 | 1 | 50 | 2 | 1 |
| Education | | | | | | | | |
| Certificate | 2 | 13 | 6 | 40 | 7 | 47 | 15 | 9 |
| Grade 12 | 6 | 16 | 8 | 22 | 23 | 62 | 37 | 22 |
| Other | - | 0 | 3 | 60 | 2 | 40 | 5 | 3 |
| Postgraduate | 15 | 38 | 17 | 44 | 7 | 18 | 39 | 24 |
| Undergraduate | 5 | 7 | 11 | 16 | 51 | 76 | 67 | 41 |
| Missing | 1 | 50 | - | 0 | 1 | 50 | 2 | 1 |
| Employment | | | | | | | | |
| Employed and entrepreneur | 2 | 22 | 5 | 56 | 2 | 22 | 9 | 5 |
| Employed | 21 | 34 | 27 | 44 | 14 | 23 | 62 | 38 |
| Self-employed | 4 | 29 | 5 | 36 | 5 | 36 | 14 | 8 |
| Unemployed | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 57 | 95 | 60 | 36 |
| Other | - | 0 | 6 | 33 | 12 | 67 | 18 | 11 |
| Missing | 1 | 50 | - | 0 | 1 | 50 | - | 1 |

LSMP, Life Skills and Mentorship Programme; YLED, Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development; JASA, Junior Achievement South Africa.

The descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the 165 respondents and their participation in entrepreneurship interventions revealed that the majority of the participants were women (68%), with an age range of 18–35 years. Most respondents were pursuing tertiary education (97%), which indicated generally high educational attainment among the study's participants. Regarding entrepreneurial intentions, the descriptive analysis highlighted that 83% of respondents expressed high entrepreneurial intentions, with 50% strongly agreeing that they had been contemplating a business idea or multiple ideas that could develop into actual ventures. This finding indicates a substantial level of entrepreneurial interest in the sample.

Approximately 35% of the respondents had taken classes or seminars on how to start a new business, which indicated active engagement in entrepreneurial learning. Despite the high interest in entrepreneurship, 21% of respondents disagreed that they had discussions with existing suppliers or distributors, while 22% were indifferent to these discussions. This suggested a gap in networking or a reluctance to engage with industry stakeholders. Although 50% of the respondents indicated a strong interest in business ideas, 20% were indifferent about dedicating time to their ideas, while 8% disagreed that they had devoted time to their business idea. This suggests that while interest in entrepreneurship is high, actual commitment to developing business ideas may require further encouragement and support.

These findings highlight a generally positive impact of entrepreneurship interventions on the entrepreneurial intentions of disadvantaged youths in South Africa; however, there appears to be a need for additional guidance and resources, particularly in engaging with industry stakeholders and translating intentions into concrete actions.

To validate the constructs used in the study, a factor analysis was conducted. Principal component analysis (PCA) was employed to reduce the number of observed variables while retaining the underlying latent structures. The constructs for the questionnaire demonstrated strong reliability, with consistency values ranging from 89% to 97%, which indicated that the measurement tools used in this study were dependable. A Chi-square test was conducted to assess correlations between the variables. The test showed that the variables were not correlated, which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis at a significance level of 0.01. This indicates that the variables in the analysis were independent and that the constructs used in the study were not influenced by inherent correlations.

The PCA results provided additional insight into the structure of the entrepreneurial personality and skills variables. The factor analysis led to the identification of four distinct components (attitudes and subjective norms – ASN, perceived behavioural control – PBC, LoC and risk-taking propensity – RTP) within the entrepreneurial personality variable, which explained a total of 57.423% of the variance. Similarly, four components (comprehensive business

management – CBMS, social and interpersonal skill – SIS, financial management skills – FMS and start-up skills – SUS) were derived from the entrepreneurial skills variable, which accounted for 69.356% of the variance.

The relationship between entrepreneurship interventions and entrepreneurial intention was further explored using hypothesis testing through linear regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The Chi-square tests revealed that the variables used in the analysis were not correlated, which provided confidence in the model's independence.

In terms of regression analysis, the influence of entrepreneurial personality and skills as functions of entrepreneurship intervention on entrepreneurial intention was examined. The ANOVA results presented in Table 2 indicate that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 33.147, p < 0.001$).

This outcome provided evidence for a strong relationship between the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention) and the independent variables (entrepreneurial personality and skills as components of entrepreneurship interventions). In the linear regression analysis outlined in Table 3, an entrepreneurial personality component, ASN, emerged as a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.661, p < 0.001$), which demonstrated a strong positive correlation.

Further, the regression analysis for entrepreneurial skills (Table 4) revealed significant relationships with CBMS ($\beta = 0.711, p < 0.001$) and FMS ($\beta = 0.292, p < 0.001$). This output indicated that these skills positively influenced entrepreneurial intention. These results provide support that H1, H1a and H1b were statistically supported.

From an entrepreneurial personality perspective, the insignificant relationship reported between entrepreneurial intention and PBC, LoC and RTP showed that these attitudes, as functions of entrepreneurial intervention, may not necessarily lead to entrepreneurial intention. More so, the

TABLE 2: Analysis of variance test for variable independence: Entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurship interventions.

| Model | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. |
|--------------|----------------|------------|-------------|--------|---------|
| Regression | 72.06 | 4 | 18.02 | 33.147 | < 0.001 |
| Residual | 86.95 | 160 | 0.543 | - | - |
| Total | 159.01 | 164 | - | - | - |

df, degree of freedom; Sig., significance.

TABLE 3: Regression model of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial personality.

| Model | Hypothesis testing | | | 95.0% confidence interval for beta | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------|---------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| | Beta | t | Sig. | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Constant | - | 0.000 | 1.00 | -0.113 | 0.113 |
| Attitude and subjective norms | 0.661 | 11.36 | < 0.001 | 0.537 | 0.764 |
| Perceived behavioural control | -0.083 | -1.42 | 0.159 | -0.195 | 0.032 |
| Locus of control | 0.063 | 1.08 | 0.284 | -0.052 | 0.176 |
| Risk-taking propensity | 0.075 | 1.28 | 0.204 | -0.040 | 0.187 |

Sig., significance.

TABLE 4: Regression model of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial skills.

| Entrepreneurial skills | Hypothesis testing | | | Confidence interval | |
|--|--------------------|--------|---------|---------------------|-------------|
| | Beta | t | Sig. | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Constant | - | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.096 | 0.096 |
| Comprehensive business management skills | 0.711 | 14.36 | < 0.001 | 0.608 | 0.802 |
| Social and interpersonal skills | -0.119 | -2.40 | 0.018 | -0.215 | -0.021 |
| Financial and marketing skills | 0.292 | 5.89 | < 0.001 | 0.192 | 0.386 |
| Start-up skills | -0.041 | -0.837 | 0.404 | -0.138 | 0.056 |

Sig., significance.

results provided evidence that SIS, a component of entrepreneurial skills, had a significant negative relationship with entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = -0.119$, $p = 0.018$). This outcome suggests that individuals with higher social skills might not be as inclined to entrepreneurship, possibly because of different career preferences or risk-averse tendencies.

Discussion

The research investigated the influence of entrepreneurial personality and skills as functions of entrepreneurship interventions on the entrepreneurial intentions of disadvantaged youths in South Africa. The study focused on participants engaged in entrepreneurship intervention programmes offered by the YLED and JASA. The results of this study confirmed that entrepreneurial interventions could have a significant impact in promoting entrepreneurial intentions among youths from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa. Programmes such as the YLED and the Mini Enterprise Programme seemed to be effective in fostering entrepreneurial intentions. This finding aligns with other research, including Kautonen et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis, which demonstrates that entrepreneurial interventions positively influence entrepreneurial intentions.

Interestingly, while programmes such as YLED and the Mini Enterprise Programme had a notable impact on promoting entrepreneurial intentions, the LSMP appeared less effective. This might be because of its focus on personal development rather than practical business skills. This observation suggests that future interventions should emphasise practical business skills to maximise the impact on entrepreneurial intentions among disadvantaged youths.

The results provide an interesting view into a gender-based discrepancy in entrepreneurial intentions, with young women showing higher interest in starting their own businesses than young men. This higher interest from the female participants did not necessarily represent a high number of start-ups by women. The implication of the finding aligns with previous research by Carter et al. (2007), which suggests that women might face more barriers and stereotypes when pursuing entrepreneurship, which underscores the need for targeted support to address such challenges.

The demographic analysis of the study points to the importance of considering factors such as age, gender, race,

education and employment status when designing entrepreneurial interventions. Younger participants and those who are unemployed might require more hands-on training and resources to succeed in starting and running a business. Women may also need specific support to overcome gender-based barriers that truncate the demonstrated high interest to start. These demographic considerations are consistent with research by Zampetakis et al. (2009) and Fayolle and Gailly (2015), which emphasised the role of tailored support in promoting entrepreneurial intentions.

The regression analysis provides evidence demonstrating that the entrepreneurial intentions of young people from disadvantaged communities in South Africa are influenced by their entrepreneurial personality (ASN) and their entrepreneurial skills (CBMS and FMS). This outcome demands that emphasis be placed on the development of their personality and relevant skills in the design of entrepreneurship interventions. Despite the positive outcomes, some gaps remain. The study revealed that only 21% of the respondents had discussions with existing suppliers or distributors, which suggests a need for better networking and industry connections. It is conceivable that the low rate of engagement by the participants with their networks is responsible for the increased entrepreneurial intention identified. This consideration becomes crucial given the finding that SIS, as a component of entrepreneurial skills, have a significant negative relationship with entrepreneurial intention.

Indications from the descriptive analysis and the outcome of the regression analysis show the strong influence that entrepreneurial interventions have on entrepreneurial intention. This provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of entrepreneurial interventions in promoting entrepreneurial intentions among disadvantaged youths in South Africa. Ebewo, Rugimbana and Shambare (2017) found that entrepreneurship education significantly affects the entrepreneurial intentions of students in Botswana, which aligns with this study's results. The positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions underscores the importance of providing practical business skills and targeted support, especially for young women who face additional barriers.

However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in engaging with industry stakeholders and encouraging commitment to business ideas. Further research and control group comparisons could help strengthen the evidence and guide future entrepreneurship intervention programmes. By addressing these challenges, entrepreneurship intervention can continue to play a vital role in empowering disadvantaged youths to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Limitations of the study

Highlighting some of the limitations of the study could enable a better contextualisation and interpretation of the findings. The study's sample size might be too small to draw broad conclusions about the effectiveness of

entrepreneurial interventions among disadvantaged youths in South Africa. The study focused on participants from specific organisations and regions while excluding participants from other regions of South Africa. The study did not examine the long-term effects of entrepreneurial interventions on participants, which limits understanding of their sustained impact. Additionally, a comparative analysis of the three different cohorts could have provided deeper insights related to the impact of curriculum enhancement over the years on entrepreneurial intention. More so, the absence of a control group makes it difficult to isolate the impact of the interventions on entrepreneurial intentions.

Recommendations for future research

This study's findings raise questions about the long-term impact of entrepreneurial interventions. While current research indicates that these interventions positively influence entrepreneurial intentions, it would be interesting to examine whether this translates into successful business start-ups in the long run. Further studies examining the impact of entrepreneurship interventions on starting a business might provide further evidence that entrepreneurship intervention effects might persist over time.

Given the results of the current study, future research would benefit from exploring the cultural and structural contexts that influence entrepreneurial intentions. Additionally, using control groups in future studies could provide stronger evidence of the causal relationship between interventions and entrepreneurial intentions. More so, there is an opportunity to further explore the variety of entrepreneurship interventions used in various contexts to drive successful entrepreneurial activities which could enable the integration of new forms of entrepreneurial interventions.

Conclusion

The current research finds that entrepreneurial interventions have a significant impact on promoting entrepreneurial intentions among youths from disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa. The study's findings also highlight the importance of considering demographic factors such as age, gender, race, education and employment status when designing entrepreneurial interventions. Women, in particular, may face gender-based barriers to entrepreneurship and require specific support and resources. The study's results are consistent with previous research, such as by Kautonen et al. (2013) and Carter et al. (2007), who support the idea that entrepreneurial interventions have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of young people from disadvantaged communities and that women may face more barriers than men.

Despite the positive impact observed, the study indicates that ongoing support and resources are crucial for promoting entrepreneurship among disadvantaged

youths. Access to mentorship, networking opportunities, ongoing training and support can help turn business ideas into reality. This aligns with previous research that indicates that these factors are key in successful entrepreneurship education programmes (Zampetakis et al. 2009). The findings suggest a potential path forward for entrepreneurship education programmes targeting disadvantaged youths in South Africa. By addressing the identified gaps and enhancing support mechanisms, these programmes can continue to foster entrepreneurial intentions and help young people to translate their ideas into successful ventures.

The findings have both theoretical and practical implications as well as invitations for further research. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge that emphasises the categorical importance of entrepreneurial intention to the advancement of entrepreneurial activity. The present study contributes to our understanding of entrepreneurship intervention through the lens of entrepreneurial personality and skills. The study provides further clarity on ASN that make up entrepreneurial personality and the extent of its relationship with entrepreneurial intention. Additionally, the study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurial skills and, in particular, the effects of CBMS and FMS on entrepreneurial intention. This study contributes to the academic literature by examining the impact of entrepreneurial interventions on disadvantaged youths in South Africa. It expands on previous research by focusing on this specific population and emphasising the role of practical business skills, mentorship and networking in fostering entrepreneurial intentions.

The findings have practical implications for policymakers, educators and practitioners involved in entrepreneurship interventions because targeted support can promote economic development and reduce unemployment in South Africa. Future entrepreneurial interventions should emphasise practical business skills and resources, as these were shown to be significant in promoting entrepreneurial intentions. Given the gender-based barriers to entrepreneurship, specific support for women is crucial to encourage their entrepreneurial aspirations. Continued support through mentorship and networking can help young entrepreneurs to overcome initial hurdles and build successful businesses. Considering that cultural and structural contexts are important in designing effective entrepreneurship programmes, tailored programmes can address the unique needs of disadvantaged youths in South Africa.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

S.Z. conceptualised the research article, handled data collection and analysis. U.U.S.O. conducted the literature review and contributed to the structuring and writing of the article.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, U.U.S.O, upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

References

- Adeyemo, O.O. & Adebayo, S., 2018, 'Impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Nigeria', *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education* 21(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.34118/djei.v9i2.179>
- Ahmed, T., Chandran, V.G.R., Klobas, J.E., Liñán, F. & Kokkalis, F., 2020, 'Entrepreneurship education programmes: How learning, inspiration and resources affect intentions for new venture creation in a developing economy', *The International Journal of Management Education* 18(2020), 100327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.100327>
- Ajzen, I., 1991, 'The theory of planned behavior', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Aliyu, A.A., Bello, M.U., Kasim, R. & Martin, D., 2014, 'Positivist and non-positivist paradigm in social science research: Conflicting paradigms or perfect partners', *Journal of Management & Sustainability* 4(3), 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jms.v4n3p79>
- Barba-Sánchez, V., Mitre-Aranda, M. & Del Brío-González, J., 2022, 'The entrepreneurial intention of university students: An environmental perspective', *European Research on Management and Business Economics* 28(2), 100184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2021.100184>
- Baum, J.R., Frese, M., Baron, R.A. & Katz, J.A., 2007, 'Entrepreneurship as an area of psychology study: An introduction', in R. Baum, M. Frese & R.A. Baron (eds.), *The psychology of entrepreneurship*, pp. 1–8, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, New Jersey.
- Bischoff, K., Volkman, C.K. & Audretsch, D.B., 2018, 'Stakeholder collaboration in entrepreneurship education: An analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystems of European higher educational institutions', *The Journal of Technology Transfer* 43, 20–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-017-9581-0>
- Bulmash, B., 2016, 'Entrepreneurial resilience: Locus of control and well-being of entrepreneurs', *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management* 5(1), 171–177. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2169-026X.1000171>
- Carter, S., Shaw, E., Lam, W. & Wilson, F., 2007, 'Gender, entrepreneurship, and bank lending: The criteria and processes used by bank loan officers in assessing applications', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 31(3), 427–444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2007.00181.x>
- Chen, Y. & Lai, M., 2010, 'Factors influencing the entrepreneurial attitude of Taiwanese tertiary-level business students', *Social Behavior and Personality* 38, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2010.38.1.1>
- Cromie, S., 2000, 'Assessing entrepreneurial inclinations: Some approaches and empirical evidence', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 9(1), 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135943200398030>
- Ebewo, P.E., Rugimbana, R. & Shambare, R., 2017, 'Effects of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions: A case of Botswana', *Management* 5(4), 278–289. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2328-2185/2017.04.002>
- Fatoki, O. & Chindoga, L., 2011, 'An investigation into the obstacles to youth entrepreneurship in South Africa', *International Business Research* 4(2), 161–169. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v4n2p161>
- Fayolle, A. & Gailly, B., 2015, 'The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial attitudes and intention: Hysteresis and persistence', *Journal of Small Business Management* 53(1), 75–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12065>
- Forcher-Mayr, M. & Mahlkecht, S., 2020, 'A capability approach to entrepreneurship education: The sprouting entrepreneurs programme in rural South African schools', *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education* 11(1), 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2020-0011>
- Guerrero, M., Urbano, D. & Fayolle, A., 2016, 'Entrepreneurial activity and regional competitiveness: Evidence from European entrepreneurial universities', *The Journal of Technology Transfer* 41, 105–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-014-9377-4>
- Hueso, J.A., Jaén, I. & Liñán, F., 2021 'From personal values to entrepreneurial intention: A systematic literature review', *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 27(1), 205–230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-06-2020-0383>
- Kautonen, T., Van Gelderen, M. & Tornikoski, E.T., 2013, 'Predicting entrepreneurial behaviour: A test of the theory of planned behaviour', *Applied Economics* 45(6), 697–707. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2011.610750>
- Lackéus, M., 2017, 'Does entrepreneurial education trigger more or less neoliberalism in education?', *Education & Training* 59(6), 635–650. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-09-2016-0151>
- Lawan, U.M., Enzuladu, E.A., Mohammad, M.A., Wali, N.Y. & Mahmoud, H.M., 2015, 'Perceptions and attitude towards entrepreneurship education programme, and employment ambitions of final year undergraduate students in Kano, northern Nigeria', *International Journal of Education and Research* 3(11), 229–242.
- Linden, P., 2015, 'Entrepreneurship: Theory and application in a university arts management setting', *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association* 15(1), 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.25101/15.4>
- Martin, B., McNally, J. & Kay, M., 2013, 'Examining the formation of human capital in entrepreneurship: A meta-analysis of entrepreneurship education outcomes', *Journal of Business Venturing* 28(2), 211–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2012.03.002>
- Mmbengwa, V.M., Qin, X. & Nkobi, V., 2021, 'Determinants of youth entrepreneurial success in agribusiness sector: The case of Vhembe district municipality of South Africa', *Cogent Social Sciences* 7(1), 1982235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1982235>
- Mudasiru, S.O. & Fatai, A., 2020, 'State, vigilantism, and youth violence in Nigeria: A study of Onyabo in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State', *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 14(2), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2019.1199>
- Muhammad, M., Akbar, S. & Dalziel, M., 2011, 'The impact of institutions on entrepreneurship development in developing countries: A review of the literature', *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management* 6(1), 65–85.
- Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N. & Walmsley, A., 2017, 'The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda', *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 16(2), 277–299. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0026>
- Njenga, K.M., Gikunju, M.K. & Kariuki, J.M., 2018, 'Impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions and skills in Kenya', *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education* 21(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.34118/djei.v9i2.179>
- Omotoso, A.O., Gamede, B.T. & Uleanya, C., 2020, 'Effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of rural-based university students in South Africa', *Afrika* 10(2), 83–104. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3649/2020/10n2a4>
- Osoro, K. & Areba, A.M.D.N.J., 2013, 'Constraints facing women entrepreneurs in Kenya: A case study of micro and small enterprises in Kisii County', *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 16(6), 116–124. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-166116124>
- Osuigwe, U.U.S. & Eresia-Eke, C., 2022, 'The nexus between effectual actions and small business performance', *South African Journal of Business Management* 53(1), a3188. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v53i1.3188>
- Phelan, C. & Sharpley, R., 2012, 'Exploring entrepreneurial skills and competencies in farm tourism', *Local Economy* 27(2), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094211429654>
- Premand, P., Brodmann, S., Almeida, R., Grun, R. & Barouni, M., 2016, 'Entrepreneurship education and entry into self-employment among university graduates', *World Development* 77, 311–327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.08.028>
- Radebe, T.N., 2019, 'The challenges/barriers preventing the South African youth in becoming entrepreneurs: South African overview', *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies* 11(4(J)), 61–70. [https://doi.org/10.22610/jeb.v11i4\(J\).2921](https://doi.org/10.22610/jeb.v11i4(J).2921)
- Ramphele, M., 2012, *Conversations with my sons and daughters*, Penguin Random House South Africa, Johannesburg.
- Rauch, A. & Frese, M., 2000, 'Psychological approaches to entrepreneurial success: A general model and an overview of findings', in C.L. Cooper & I.T. Robertson (eds.), *International review of industrial and organizational psychology*, 15, pp. 101–142, Wiley, Chichester.
- Rauch, A. & Hulsink, W., 2015, 'Putting entrepreneurship education where the intention to act lies: An investigation into the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial behavior', *The Academy of Management Learning and Education* 14(2), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2012.0293>
- Russell, R., Atchison, M. & Brooks, R., 2008, 'Business plan competitions in tertiary institutions: Encouraging entrepreneurship education', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30(2), 123–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800801938739>
- Singer, S., Amoros, J.E. & Moska, D., 2015, *Global entrepreneurship monitor: 2014 global report*, Babson College, Wellesley, MA.
- Statistics South Africa, 2023, *Quarterly labour force survey (QLFS) – Q1:2023*, viewed 18 August 2023, from <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media%20release%20QLFS%20Q1%202023.pdf>.

- Teferra, D. & Altbachl, P.G., 2004, 'African higher education: Challenges for the 21st century', *Higher Education* 47, 21–50. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:HIGH.0000009822.49980.30>
- Utsch, A., Rauch, A., Rothfufs, R. & Frese, M., 1999, 'Who becomes a small-scale entrepreneur in a post-socialist environment: On the differences between entrepreneurs and managers in East Germany', *Journal of Small Business Management* 37(3), 31–42.
- Wu, L., Kuo, F. & Shen, S., 2013, 'Exploring the impacts of online academic education on entrepreneurial intention among Taiwanese students', *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 9(2), 157–173.
- Zampetakis, L.A., Kafetsios, K., Bouranta, N., Dewett, T. & Moustakis, V.S., 2009, 'On the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions', *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 15(6), 595–618. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13552550910995452>
- Zellweger, T. & Sieger, P., 2012, 'Entrepreneurial orientation in long-lived family firms', *Small Business Economics* 38, 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-010-9267-6>
- Zulu, L.C., Djenontin, I.N. & Grabowski, P., 2021, 'From diagnosis to action: Understanding youth strengths and hurdles and using decision-making tools to foster youth-inclusive sustainable agriculture intensification', *Journal of Rural Studies* 82, 196–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.01.023>