Examining The Role and Nature of Entrepreneurship Education in the uMnambithi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v12i3p109

Abstract: This study examined teachers' understanding of Entrepreneurship Education in the uMnambithi circuit, South Africa. A qualitative approach, interpretivism paradigm, and a multiple case study design were used. We sampled purposively and conveniently five secondary school EMS teachers within the uMnambithi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, and the data was thematically analysed. To theorise teachers' perceptions of entrepreneurship education, we used the curricular spider-web theory developed by Thijs and Van den Akker (Van den Akker, 2003). The findings of the study revealed that Entrepreneurship Education plays a significant role in economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship Education is a practical subject that relates to learners' lived experiences. In addition, it addresses socioeconomic concerns. We suggest that teachers in Technical Vocational Education and Training as well as teachers in other circuits, districts, and provinces be included in a similar study.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education; Entrepreneurship; Socio-economic Factors; Economic growth, Economic and Management Science

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship, a worldwide occurrence that positively impacts economic growth, fosters the establishment of inventive, creative business start-ups (Waghid, 2019; Valerio, Parton & Robb, 2014). It is crucial for learners aspiring to be entrepreneurs to receive education in entrepreneurship so they can develop the skills necessary to succeed in any setting. It is commonly acknowledged that entrepreneurship education has practical value and contributes to the acceleration of the global economy's economic prosperity. Applying theory to current business operations is the main goal of entrepreneurship education (Valerio, Parton & Robb, 2014). The use of entrepreneurial education and practices is spreading over a variety of fields and non-business subjects. But one has to wonder if teachers have the knowledge and self-assurance needed to impart entrepreneurship education in the classroom, and consequently, if they can train learners to become future entrepreneurs.

Received: 05.01.2025
Accepted: 22.08.2025
Mbatha, L. S., & Ajayi, O. B. (2025). Examining The Role and Nature of Entrepreneurship Education in the uMnambithi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 12(3), 109-126.

The goal of entrepreneurship education is to give students an overview of their career options and opportunities overall, as well as the tools they need to realise their ideas (Wonder & Pfano, 2024). According to certain research (Ajayi, 2021; Ismail, Sawang, and Zolin, 2018), entrepreneurship education should be required to begin early in the curriculum, yet this has not happened. Furthermore, a lot of graduates' laments that their degree programs are excessively theoretical, depriving them of the necessary practical abilities to pursue more opportunities. Using entrepreneurship models in teaching, Chinyamurindi (2021) contends that there is an urgent need to invest in establishing curricula as well as strengthening facilitators' ability to deliver.

Many educational institutions in South Africa and around the world have already included entrepreneurship education in their curricula; however, there is a lack of research and uncertainty about the best ways for these institutions to integrate entrepreneurship into their curricula and programs (Iwu et al. 2021; Waghid 2019), with the specific aim of fostering an "entrepreneurial mind-set" that is willing to take risks and feel empowered to launch a business venture. The question posed by Ahmad and Buchanan (2015, p. 361) include "Should entrepreneurship in these institutions be integrated as a module, as a full subject, or as an extracurricular short course?". Are there, in reality, some academic disciplines where it is not required? In response, Chinyamurindi (2021) and Bauman and Lucy (2021) say that all students should participate in this type of education, irrespective of their major, to increase their competitive edge and for the good of society at large. Unfortunately, normative theory-based approaches are frequently used to teach entrepreneurship. A more appropriate strategy is a programmatic approach that takes the context into account and is sensitive to it; as a result, it is more immersive (Bauman & Lucy (2021). Usually, the purpose of teaching entrepreneurship to students is to supplement their standard business management education (Waghid, 2019). To be effective today, entrepreneurship education needs to consider a number of factors, including curriculum renewal, better teaching and learning facilities, and an awareness of social and cultural impacts (Solomon, Alabduljader, & Ramani, 2019; Waghid, 2019).

Although there has been considerable economic progress in South Africa, it has not been enough to improve employment or lessen social economic inequality or poverty (Littlewood & Holt 2018). The idea of a knowledge economy, where entrepreneurial education will help to produce the professionals needed for the country's economy to thrive, has been embraced by the South African government. It has been suggested that adding entrepreneurship education to the curricula will help graduates gain exposure to the entrepreneurial mindset and a variety of competences required in today's global workforce (Iwu et al. 2019). But a supportive policy environment is necessary for this kind of approach (Littlewood & Holt 2018).

Ferguson et al. (2021) believe that it is crucial to examine teachers' understandings. Mdhlalose et al. (2022) identify teachers as individuals who are tasked with ensuring that quality teaching and learning takes place to benefit learners. Molise et al. (2024) assert that Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) plays a significant role in promoting quality teaching and learning in Economic and Management Sciences (EMS).

The impetus for undertaking this study arose from our reflections on our experiences and observations regarding the teaching of EE in both EMS and Business Studies. Over time, we have noticed that teachers across different educational phases possess varied understandings of EE. This diversity in understanding

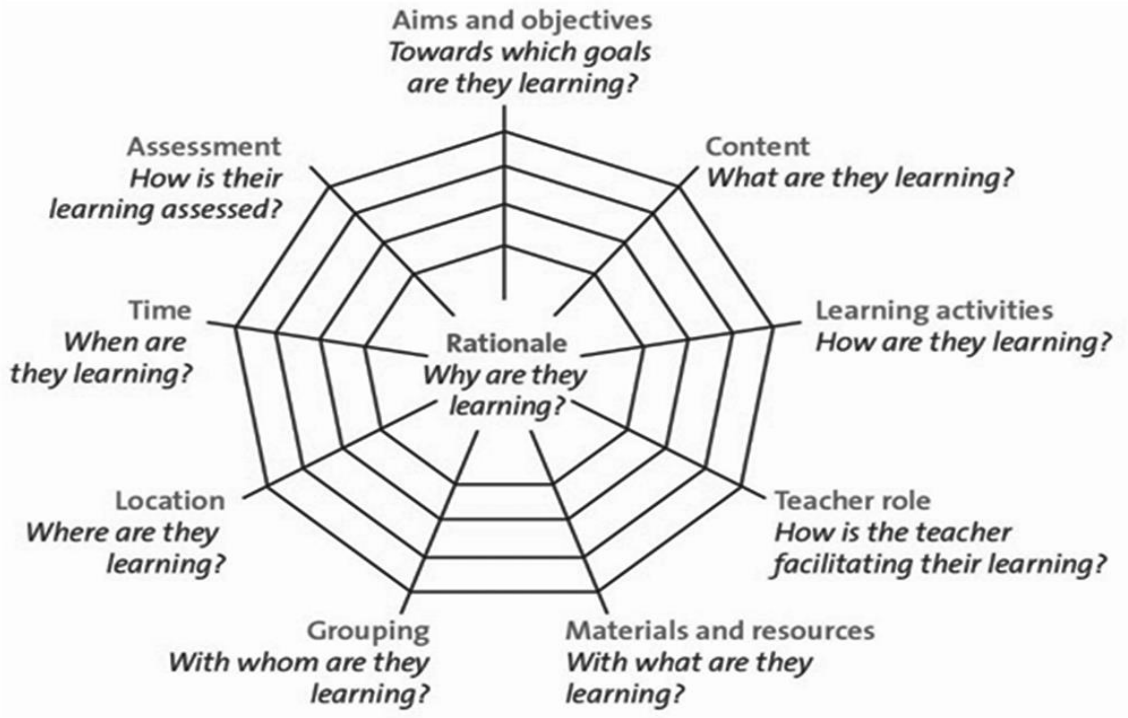
significantly influences how EE is taught, particularly evident in EMS during the senior phase and in Business Studies within the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. Additionally, our experiences and observations have highlighted that learner often express interest in engaging in entrepreneurial activities while in school. This observation prompted us to investigate the depth of understanding of EE regarding the role and nature of the subject, as we recognize that teachers' comprehension of a subject directly impacts their teaching approach.

2. The current study

The aim of this study is to explore the role and nature of Entrepreneurship Education in the uMnambithi circuit. The research question that was used to guide the study is 'What is the role and nature of entrepreneurship education in the uMnambithi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa?'

3. Theoretical framework

In this research paper, we used the curricular spider-web framework proposed by Van den Akker (2003). We adopted the curricular spider-web based on its design which values the significance of concepts that assist in answering the research question of this study. Since this research paper explores the role and nature of EE in the uMnambithi circuit. The curricular spider-web comprises ten interrelated concepts crucial for implementing curriculum in a classroom. Rationale, goals and objectives, content, learning activities, the role of the teacher, materials and resources, grouping, location, time, and assessment are some of these ideas.



The curricular spider-web (Van den Akker, 2003)

Van den Akker (2003) uses the metaphor of a spider web to illustrate the comprehensive and all-encompassing character of a curriculum. Since all of its parts are interconnected, an imbalance will cause it to deteriorate or maybe collapse. The curricular spider web explains educational components and their connections. The objectives and subject matter of education typically form the central hub of the spider web. Usually, alterations to this foundation require adjustments to a great deal of other elements of (the learning plan). The rationale connects all other curricular elements together as a primary theme. To provide coherence and consistency, these should ideally be related to one another.

Using the spider web as a tool facilitates the development of ideas regarding the facets of education that are appropriate for learner participation. Every string on the web stands for a distinct component connected to the reasoning (Makumane & Ngcobo, 2021). By responding to questions on the nine distinct educational strings, teachers can have a conversation about learners' involvement. The responses offer insights for additional consideration when devising strategies to boost learner involvement (Makumane & Ngcobo, 2021). Given the complexity and ubiquity of teaching and learning, formal education must have a well-structured approach to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. To accomplish the learning objectives, the teaching items or resources must be carefully chosen and arranged for a formal teaching and learning process to be successful. The curriculum, scheme of work, and lesson plan phases involve the selection and ordering of learning content and approaches (Van den Akker, 2006).

A standards-based or outcome-based education reform plan includes a curriculum framework. The second step is the framework, which lays forth precise, demanding standards that every learner must meet. After that, the curriculum is matched with the standards, and learners are evaluated in relation to the standards (Van den Akker, 2003). A standards-based education reform approach guarantees that everyone will succeed if high standards are met, in contrast to traditional education which is mainly concerned with content delivery. To assist learners in achieving learning outcomes that support entrepreneurial skills, it is crucial that facilitators make appropriate use of the resources at their disposal to establish ideal learning environments that support the EE learning signals. Understanding the core requirements for learning—content, learning activities, learning resources, when and where learning takes place, and assessment is what Van den Akker (2006) define as learning (curricular spider web).

4. Literature Review

The literature review section addressed some of the factors that contribute to the teachers' understanding of Entrepreneurship Education.

4.1 Conceptualising Entrepreneurship Education

In the literature on entrepreneurship, "entrepreneurship education" is defined in a variety of ways (Svensson et al., 2020). The core of entrepreneurship education is the ability to plan and visualise a new business venture by integrating data from the external environment and functional disciplines in light of the unique ambiguity and uncertainty that a new business venture face (Mankgele et al., 2023). It shows itself as imaginative plans, cutting-edge methods, astute observations of market trends and mood swings, brave leadership when there is no clear path forward, and so forth. These skills should be ingrained in and strengthened by the lessons we teach in our entrepreneurship classes.

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) is a rapidly evolving field globally, introducing new teaching methods that are reshaping EE's impact on society (Ratten & Jones, 2021). In a similar vein, Mankgele et al. (2023) see EE as a way to boost South Africa's meagre entrepreneurial activity. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2011) state that EE is integrated into two subjects: firstly, within Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) as an entrepreneurship component, and secondly, within Business Studies. Othman et al. (2021) suggest that entrepreneurship can be transmitted from individuals possessing entrepreneurial skills and experiences to others who aspire to become entrepreneurs but lack knowledge and skills. The findings of Soi and Mkulu (2022) reveal that Entrepreneurship promotes creativity, social cohesion, collaboration, and employment opportunities.

According to Venkataraman (2019), defining the field of entrepreneurship is one of the main challenges in developing a conceptual framework for it. Most scholars tend to describe entrepreneurship exclusively in terms of what and who an entrepreneur accomplishes (Othman et al., 2021; Venkataraman, 2019). But there are two things that go into entrepreneurship: profitable opportunities and enterprising people. Consequently, the topic of entrepreneurship encompasses the study of opportunity sources, the processes of opportunity discovery, appraisal, and exploitation, as well as the group of people who find, assess, and take advantage of possibilities. According to Ncube and Matlala (2024), entrepreneurship is the process of seizing and seizing financial possibilities that present themselves in an imperfect world.

Entrepreneurship education equips learners with the information, abilities, and drive necessary to start a profitable business. This implies that schooling can "mature-up" entrepreneurial talents (Soi & Mkulu, 2022). The research now agrees that it is possible to teach entrepreneurship, and the focus has shifted to what and how it should be taught (Soi & Mkulu, 2022). The information that is currently available, however, seems to suggest that there might be a difference between graduates' actual rates of self-employment and start-up and students' views of the importance of entrepreneurship. This has highlighted the significance of entrepreneurship education. More and more people are doubting the purpose, relevance, and nature of entrepreneurship education. Finding the best way to manage the teachable skills and aligning teaching methodologies with student needs are key components of an effective entrepreneurship education (Ncube & Matlala, 2024).

4.2 Significance of Entrepreneurship Education

Over the past 20 years, entrepreneurship has become maybe the most powerful economic force the world has ever seen. The discipline of entrepreneurial education has grown in tandem with that expansion. The programs and curricula focused on entrepreneurship and the creation of new ventures have grown and developed significantly in recent years. There are now more schools offering entrepreneurship courses than there were in the 1970s (Kuratko, 2005; Astiana et al., 2022). The study of entrepreneurship, which is frequently praised as the foundation of contemporary economies, is increasingly being taught in school curriculum all around the world (Silberman et al., 2023). It could help students become more creative, resilient, and proactive thinkers, enabling them to become job creators as well as job searchers. Schools face a wide range of pedagogical and practical obstacles when they begin the road of integrating entrepreneurship instruction (Silberman et al., 2023). It is more important than ever to teach entrepreneurial skills in an efficient manner while making sure students understand both their academic foundations and real-world implementations.

Astiana et al. (2022) note that EE plays a significant role in inspiring and developing young people's desires, goals, and entrepreneurial behaviour. Ncube and Matlala (2024) indicate that EE influences learners to pursue self-employment as one of the new ventures they can engage in, further preparing individuals to be responsible contributors to economic development. Furthermore, Astiana et al. (2022) believe that EE assists in developing young people to be competitive and contribute to nation-building initiatives. Additionally, Ncube and Matlala (2024) identify EE as responsible for preparing learners for the existing challenges in the business arena and equipping them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Igwe et al. (2022) believe that EE should foster learners' development in the business environment, create awareness related to economic growth, and address social problems. Eretan and Omotoso (2024) highlight that EE plays a significant role in various segments of the country, including political, social, and economic development.

Raising students' awareness of small business ownership as a viable career option and raising their awareness of the process of starting and running a new company are two major goals of entrepreneurship education programs (Solomon et., 2019). According to Svensson et al. (2020), the goal of entrepreneurship education is to foster or strengthen entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviours, and cultures in both the individual and the larger community. Recognition of opportunities, establishment and expansion of ventures, and entrepreneurship education are all related. This aligns with the perspective of Wonder and Pfano (2024), who suggested that entrepreneurship education should cover managing current resources, acquiring new resources, identifying possibilities already present, and creating new opportunities.

4.3 Pedagogies utilised in Entrepreneurship Education

Many nations have struggled with unemployment in recent years, and many have made it their mission to open new economic options for their inhabitants. Countries have been forced by unemployment to figure out how to let their people work for themselves. Considering these developments, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education are becoming more and more prevalent in curricula across numerous nations. It is believed that entrepreneurship has a significant role in a country's economic progress. Employers desire their staff members to have entrepreneurial traits in this regard (Hägg & Kurczewska, 2022). Therefore, it can be stated that students should be encouraged to practise writing business reports and attending real-world business meetings so that they are familiar with the concept of entrepreneurship from an early age. This is especially true in many developed and developing nations where national and international projects have been organised. The relationship between education and entrepreneurship has been noted to have grown significantly in the last several years (Igwe et al., 2022).

In the educational process, experiential learning is frequently used, particularly when cultivating an entrepreneurial attitude and set of skills is one of the objectives. As a result, it's critical to connect pedagogical practice and educational theory (Tiberius & Weyland (2023). Experiential learning theory, as defined by Olumuyiwa et al. (2023), is the pedagogical method most frequently connected with entrepreneurship education in the literature, as evidenced by references to (Olumuyiwa et al., 2023; Igwe et al., 2022) appears to be the most widely accepted and suitable for the development of entrepreneurial abilities. There are also references to various instructional strategies and learning processes. Examples of pedagogical approaches that are associated with the incorporation of digital technology include collaborative pedagogical models, problem-based learning, design thinking, experience-based learning,

service-learning, cinema (Bauman & Lucy, 2021), simulation, or gamification. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education can increase students' propensity to launch social enterprises by employing an experiential learning methodology where students jointly establish shared communities of practice (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2015).

The value placed on the learner's experience during the teaching and learning process is what distinguishes experience-based learning, sometimes referred to as experiential learning. In order to make sense of their prior experiences, students analyse them by reflecting on, evaluating, and rebuilding them either individually or collaboratively (Hägg & Kurczewska, 2022). Research indicates that people must engage in entrepreneurship in order to gain experience knowledge, which is commonly referred to as "learning by doing." According to Mbonambi et al. (2023, p.36), this method puts the student at the centre of the process and requires that he take on shared responsibility for learning from the experience.

Giving students the skills and mindset they need to turn creative ideas into successful businesses is the aim of entrepreneurship education. This is an essential skill for all students to have since it promotes social inclusion, civic engagement, personal growth, and employability (Olumuyiwa et al., 2023). This statement holds significance for the entire lifespan learning process, encompassing all academic fields and types of official, non-formal, and informal education and training that foster an entrepreneurial mindset or approach, whether a profit motive is present.

4.4 Existing hindrances in teaching Entrepreneurship Education

Transferring knowledge, skills, and values from the instructor to the student is the act of teaching. Only when the intended goals are met is teaching considered to be finished. In other words, the learner's newfound knowledge and abilities must influence both the person and society (Bauman & Lucy, 2021). When these abilities are applied effectively, education spreads. Education is essential to the process since it is the only way that entrepreneurship can arise from a void (an empty man). A learning process that results in a positive shift in the entirety of human experience, knowledge, and value system is the ultimate goal of teaching. Learning allows a person to develop new concepts, abilities, and behaviours that he can use in his surroundings (Adeel et al., 2023). When a learner applies their experiences and newly gained information to solve issues, their learning process is considered complete. This type of education imparts values, information, skills, and other behavioural patterns that will help people become valuable members of both their own society and the larger one (Adeel et al., 2023).

Overcrowding in institutions of learning is one of the major problems hindering EE, as it limits effective contact sessions between teachers and learners (Igwe et al., 2022). Additionally, Igwe et al. (2022) further identify the existing gap between theory and practice, which hinders the effective teaching of EE. Eretan and Omotoso (2024) highlight the lack of relevant textbooks and equipment to enable the teaching of Entrepreneurship, as some of these resources are expensive. Mbonambi et al. (2023) identify a shortage of teachers, funding in schools, lack of teacher professional support and development, learners' disinterest, and overcrowded classes as challenges that impede EE.

Having access to materials is essential to properly teaching entrepreneurship. Funding, mentorship possibilities, or useful tools may be limited for you. Use the assistance and cooperation of local business

communities to address and seek sponsorship or collaboration possibilities that can expose students to the real world. Making use of internet platforms can also provide access to a multitude of low-cost or free resources designed for learning about entrepreneurship. Maintaining the relevance of the curriculum might be difficult because the entrepreneurial scene is always evolving (Mbonambi et al., 2023). Keep up with the most recent developments in technology and industry trends to ensure that the course material is current and useful. Engage business owners and extend invitations to outside speakers to offer up-to-date knowledge.

4.5 Comparative education perspective on Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education was implemented to help young people learn how and what to do while utilising the resources available for economic growth and self-sufficiency. A few of the fundamental skills needed for entrepreneurship training, include value creation, ideal generation, opportunities, accounting, finance, creativity and invention, technological aptitude, marketing, and risk analysis (Mbonambi et al. (2023). According to Bauman and Lucy, (2021), marketing, resources, opportunities, interpersonal, learning, strategic management, and attitudes skills are the factors that define entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial passions, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial identity, proactivity, uncertainty, tolerance, inventiveness, and perseverance are further clustering skills (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008).

Due to its acknowledged function as an economic stimulant (Adeel et al., 2023), entrepreneurship education has become more and more popular in educational institutions around the world (Ntsanwisi & Simelane-Mnisi, 2024). Dorji (2021) argues in favour of incorporating entrepreneurial education into elementary and secondary schools, highlighting the positive effects on student motivation and engagement. Adenutsi (2023) highlights its pivotal role in generating employment, income, empowering individuals, and mitigating poverty in low-income economies. It promotes policy measures and intervention programs that are in line with the goal of welfare improvements to encourage high-income generating job opportunities and mitigate poverty. Students' capacity to detect business chances is highlighted by Adeel et al. (2023), demonstrating the ability to recognise opportunities and pursue projects. By leveraging economic potential, entrepreneurship education enhances student learning and promotes economic expansion.

Compared to the USA, interest in entrepreneurship education is relatively new in Europe; however, this trend is shifting, with courses on entrepreneurship now being provided in all the major European schools (Makumane & Ngcobo, 2020). Numerous academic and governmental studies support the inclusion of entrepreneurial school subjects and courses in university curricula. According to a survey conducted by Ntsanwisi and Simelane-Mnisi (2024, p. 98), "both undergraduate (73%) and post-graduate (69%) levels of entrepreneurship courses were offered at European universities." Beyond traditional degree programs, schools and universities provide a range of entrepreneurial education possibilities, such as business plan writing competitions, student internships, incubation facilities, and mentoring for start-ups (Wonder & Pfano, 2024). But unlike their American counterparts, rich European businesspeople seldom donate through funding institutes or chairs. In contrast to the USA, where there is a tradition of successful entrepreneurs "giving back" by funding centres or chairs of entrepreneurship at their previous universities, most of the funding for these centres comes from governments, foundations, and the universities themselves (Bauman & Lucy, 2021).

In Nigerian senior secondary schools, entrepreneurship education also known as "trade subjects" was implemented to help young school leavers acquire their technical and career skills. In addition to academic study, the subjects allow students the chance to pick up useful entrepreneurial skills (Eretan & Omotoso, 2024). Eretan and Omotoso (2024) point out that a lacklustre curriculum is just one of the numerous issues plaguing EE in Nigeria. Kenya's entrepreneurship education program focusses on the pre-start phase in vocational institutions, where students need to develop positive business and entrepreneurial attitudes before starting their own business. All students enrolling in technical training institutes at the artisan, craft, and technician levels are required to satisfactorily finish a 154-hour course in entrepreneurship education in order to promote positive attitudes towards self-employment and entrepreneurship (Wonder & Pfano, 2024). In Tanzania, Soi and Mkulu (2022) indicate that EE is promoted to eradicate unemployment. According to Boubker et al. (2021), in Morocco, EE is highly valued in such a manner that the students' project ideas are funded.

Every country in the world is assessed by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) to find out how much entrepreneurship is being done there, especially in the early stages. Although several higher education institutions have been offering entrepreneurship programs since the early 1990s, the GEM report on South Africa for 2023–2024 revealed that the field of entrepreneurship education in the country was still in its infancy. The urgent need for more company start-ups was noted in the report (Muchineripi et al, 2019). Many people attribute South Africa's dearth of exceptional entrepreneurs on the educational system (Adenutsi, 2023, Adeel et al., 2023). The GEM 2023/2024 Global Report (Csákné Filep et al., 2024) states that in 2023, South Africa's general entrepreneurial climate declined in quality. The score increased to 4.1 in 2022 from 3.7 in 2021 but dropped to 3.6 in 2023, the third lowest of the 49 participating economies in the GEM. Of the 13 Entrepreneurial Framework Conditions (EFCs), 11 had decreases. South Africa trailed behind the rest of Africa and the world in terms of entrepreneurial activity and the efficiency with which it supported the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ntsanwisi and Simelane-Mnisi (2024) note that most school leavers enter the workforce as "economic illiterates" since they were not sufficiently trained in disciplines like Economic Management Science (EMS) or Business Studies.

5. Methods

5.1 Research design and Participants

In this research paper, we used a qualitative approach, which helped us establish meaningful connections with teachers' understanding of EE. We also employed an interpretivism paradigm to gain insight into the perspectives of EMS teachers. This study further utilised a multiple case study design. Since the EMS teachers selected were from five different secondary schools that teach the EMS subject, The EMS teachers were selected purposively and conveniently in the Mnambithi circuit. The five schools were chosen because they offer EMS, and they had shown their willingness to participate in the study. One EMS teacher was selected per school. Therefore, five EMS teachers participated in the study. The teachers were selected based on their year of experience with the EMS subject, which ranges between 5 and 25 years.

5.2 Instruments

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded with the interviewee's consent. The semi-structured interviews allowed us to obtain the views of the participants. The interview was conducted under the guidance of an interview guide, which also provides for opportunities for clarification and further questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Audio recording ensured that participants' views were accurately captured and could be replayed later for clarity. The interview questions were open-ended and related to the role and nature of EE. Some of the questions asked during the interviews include: "What is your understanding of entrepreneurship in EMS?" "Do you believe entrepreneurship education is important for learners in South Africa? Why or why not?" The interviews were conducted in English, as the selected schools used English as the language of teaching and learning. The interviews each lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

5.3 Procedure for data collection

The University of KwaZulu-Natal and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education provided ethical clearance for this research. The principals of the selected schools gave permission for access to the school. Participants were informed that their involvement was completely voluntary and that all information pertaining to them would remain confidential. In addition, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Each interview session lasted about one hour at an agreed-upon time. These teachers provided their informed consent for the use of their interview responses in the research.

5.4 Data Analysis

A thematic approach was used for the data analysis. Data was coded, categorised, and discussed using this method to demonstrate the role and nature of Entrepreneurship Education in the uMnambithi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The analysis, which was directed by the research question, was based on the field notes and transcriptions of the audio recordings. The interview data was analysed using the three data coding techniques of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Neuman, 2014). First, the researcher coded the raw data after it had been transcribed into a word document. This process, called open coding, is the first way to go through the data. It is crucial to keep in mind that the interview questions are the source of these initial labels, which are at a very low level of abstraction. This allowed the researchers to familiarise themselves with the data by reading it multiple times. The information was then transferred to an Excel spreadsheet so that an analysis could be performed. Axial coding is the second run through the data following the completion of open coding (Neuman, 2014). Finding connections between categories and subcategories that resulted from this second pass through the data is the goal of this second pass through the previously labelled data. To code the data, particular text sections were selected. This is done in order to arrange data in a meaningful and systematic manner. Large volumes of data are condensed into manageable chunks through coding.

The researchers examined overlaps between the first and second runs through the data to establish the required connection between the categories. Following the creation of these connections and the emergence of themes, the researcher looked at the themes to determine whether they addressed the research questions and whether any additional subthemes could be added to the main theme. The themes were then

grouped and looked at during the process of selective coding, which is the last step in the data analysis process (Neuman, 2014). The themes were then examined to determine the primary idea. This stage aids in determining whether the data was sufficient and whether there was a link between the codes to support the proposed themes. The analysis was then written using these themes that were generated. Pseudonyms were used to represent the responses in order to protect participant confidentiality. The participants were also given the chance to confirm the transcriptions in order to ensure the validity and reliability of this study.

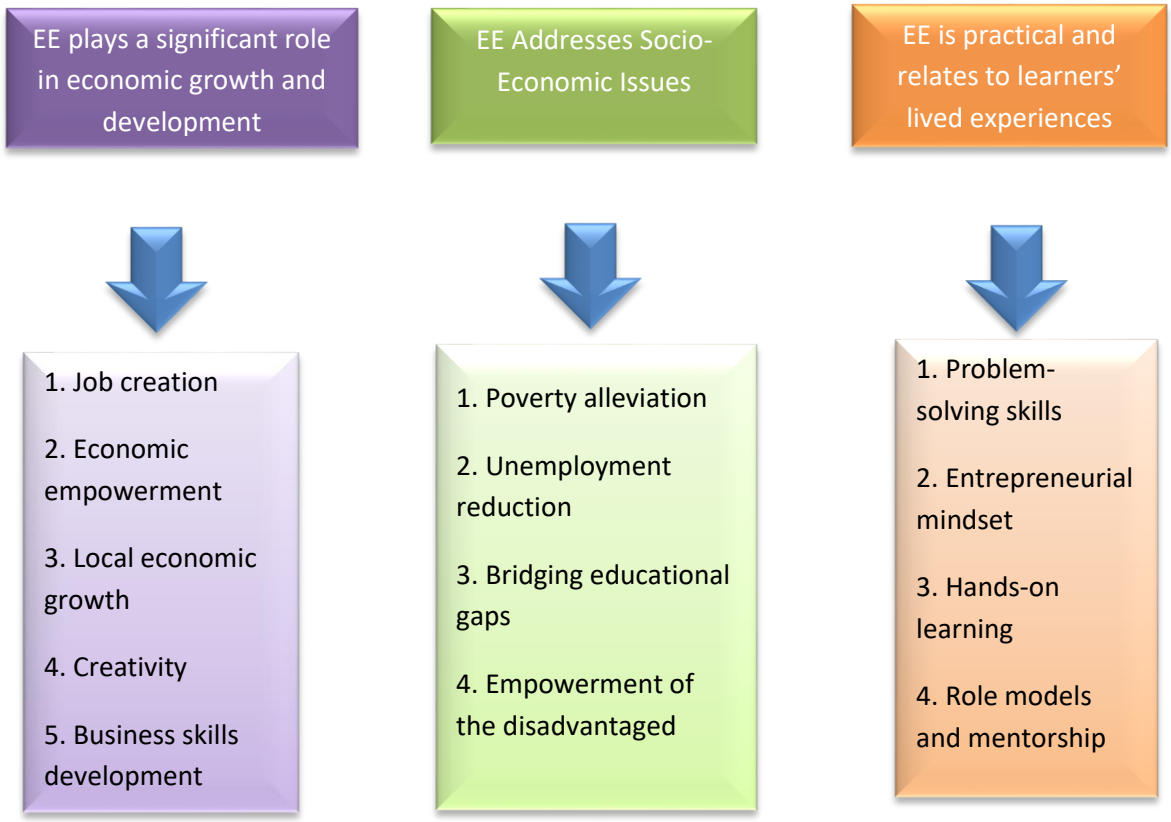


Figure 1: Themes and related codes

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA (Authors)

A minimum of four responses were clustered to generate each theme. To reiterate, the study participants were 5 EMS teachers selected from each of the 5 schools identified for the study. The first theme had five codes: job creation, economic empowerment, local economic growth, creativity, and business skills development (Entrepreneurship Education (EE) Plays a Significant Role in Economic Growth and Development). The four codes that relate to the second theme are poverty alleviation, unemployment reduction, bridging educational gaps, and empowerment of the disadvantaged group (EE Addresses Socio-Economic Issues). The last theme had four codes: problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial mindset, hands-on learning, and role models and mentorship (EE is practical and relates to learners' lived experiences).

5.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to an ethical code of conduct following the ethical clearance obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The principles of anonymity, non-maleficence, and beneficence were clarified to the participants and observed throughout the study. Teachers provided consent to have their interviews recorded, and pseudonyms were assigned to participants and their schools to protect their identities.

6. Results

In this study, we examined the role and nature of entrepreneurship education in the uMnambithi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This session presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews. Three themes emerged from the findings, which answered the research question: What understanding do EMS teachers have concerning the role and nature of EE in the uMnambithi circuit? It emerged from the findings that teachers understand EE, that it plays a significant role in economic growth and development, that EE addresses socio-economic issues, and that EE is practical and relates to learners lived experiences.

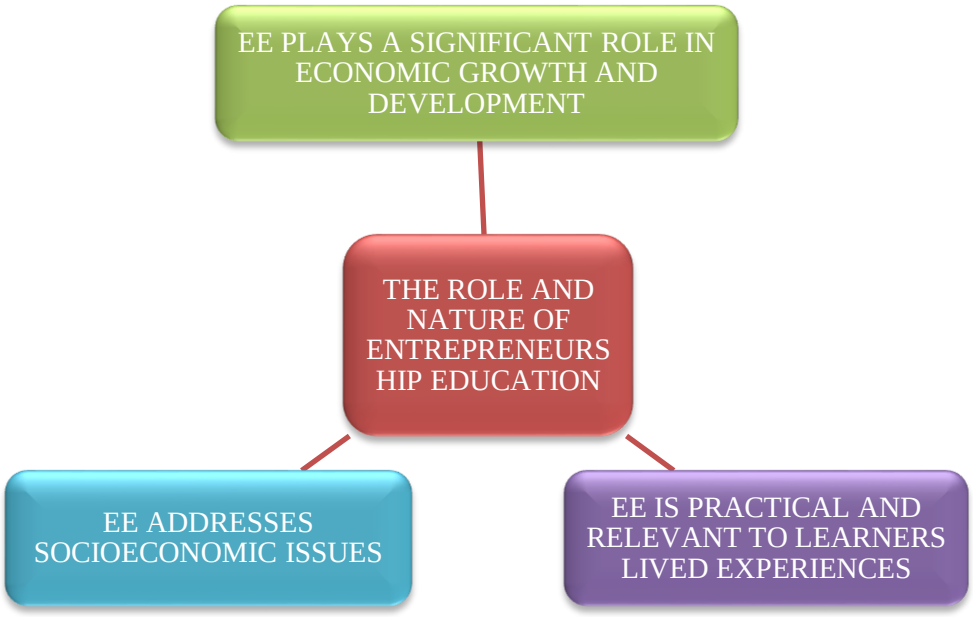


Figure 2: Themes

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA (Authors)

6.1 Entrepreneurship Education plays a significant role in economic growth and development

The findings showed that teachers regard EE as significant discipline that is beneficial to the learners. The participants further viewed EE as a key role player in economic growth through its role of encouraging business establishment and development and circulation of the economy through buying and selling. This is what the Mrs Zikalala and Mr Makhathini said:

> "*Yes, it is important no economy will exist without an entrepreneur, because if we are not talking about entrepreneurship means no buying and selling. No economy will grow if there is no buying and selling in the country while we need the economy to circulate so we have to buy and sell something.*" (Mrs Zikalala, teacher from School F).

> "*Entrepreneurship is about setting up your business or businesses to make a profit from selling goods or providing services to communities to satisfy their needs and wants at a given point in time*." (Mr Makhathini, teacher from School G).

The teachers above presented the ideas based on their understandings of EE. Teachers considered that EE focusses on enhancing activities based on economic growth. Mrs Zikalala's perspective highlights the relationship between entrepreneurship and the economy. Mr Makhathini's sentiment supports the idea presented by Mrs Zikalala; he believes EE supports business development, which benefits communities, entrepreneurs, and the country's economy at large.

6.2 Entrepreneurship Education addresses socio-economic factors

In South Africa, entrepreneurship education is essential for empowering the youth and addressing socio-economic issues, including high unemployment among youth as well as income inequality. The findings revealed that teachers understand EE as a bridge aimed at eradicating unemployment and poverty. Teachers believed that EE played a crucial role in creating job opportunities and in equipping people with skills. Teachers are of the opinion that EE could assist learners in developing an interest in entrepreneurship to create employment opportunities for others. This is apparent in the statement of Mr. Mthembu, teacher from School H, when he was discussing the importance of EE: *"... so that learners can create jobs for others and also support themselves and their families."* This was supported by another teacher from school I, as indicated in the excerpt below:

> "*Yes, entrepreneurship is very important in peoples' lives as it provides job opportunities to the unemployed, provides skills, and gives them their own profit from opening a business in South Africa."* (Mr Ndlovu, teacher from School I).

Mr. Mthembu and Miss Shange shared similar opinions, which revealed that EE has a great significance in developing job opportunities and providing people with skills, which results in better and improved lives for the people.

Miss Shange added that EE is essential in assisting people not to be a burden to the South African government by using their capabilities to sustain their lives.

> *"It is important because it helps people not to rely on the government so that people can use their ideas to manage their lives."* (Miss Shange, teacher School F).

Miss Shanges' reveals that EE plays a fundamental role in assisting learners succeed in their lives. Learners' success includes things such as the ability to do a budget and engage in critical decision-making. Miss Shanges' view highlights the importance of EE in learners' well-being and that EE revolves around creative thinking.

6.3 Entrepreneurship Education as practical and relates to learners lived experience

The findings indicated that teachers possess an understanding that EE is a practical discipline which relates to learners' daily lived experiences. Mr Mkathini and Mr Ndlovu indicated that EE comprises of real-world content which is relevant and practical to the livelihood of the learners. Mr Makhathini said:

> "*Entrepreneurship is not difficult because learners are exposed to the businesses in their daily lives. Learners happen to see businesses around their communities and sometimes they are given some opportunities by their parents to come and sell things to other learners and even to my colleagues. So, I found it now not that difficult.*" (Mr Makhathini, teacher from School G).

Teachers viewed EE as a discipline that enables learners to integrate the theory and practicality of the subject matter. This is evident in Mr Ndlovu.s statement as revealed below:

> "*If we talk about entrepreneurship, it is more practical when it comes to learning it. That is why learners understand it easily when using their experiences.*" (Mr. Ndlovu, teacher School J).

Mr. Ndlovu mentioned that EE is an important practical discipline which is easy to understand, especially when learners are using their experiences.

The extract above reveals that EE is understood by the teachers as a practical component that values learners' experiences and backgrounds. EE equips learners by utilising their experiences, which relate to the real world, to develop a better understanding of EE content.

7. Discussion

This research paper examined the role and nature of EE in the uMnambithi circuit, KwaZulu-Natal. The findings revealed that EMS teachers possess an understanding of EE as a significant role player in economic growth and development. This corroborates with Eretan and Omotoso (2024) and Porfírio et al. (2022), who believe that EE contributes to the country's economic development. The understanding that teachers possess EE as a significant role player in economic growth and development aligns with the rationale concept of the curricular spider-web. This finding asserts that teachers understand very well what and why they are teaching to learners, as they have managed to recognise the significance of EE.

In addition, the findings further revealed that EMS teachers understand that EE addresses socio-economic factors. This finding is also supported by Igwe et al. (2022) and Ndou (2021), who identify that EE develops skills and establishes job opportunities aimed at eradicating poverty. Similarly, Soi and Mkulu (2022) argue that EE plays a major role in eliminating unemployment. Looking at the responses provided by the teachers, teachers understand that they utilise EE to cultivate learners with skills aimed at equipping them with business insight. This finding corroborates with the aims and objectives concept of the curricular spider-web. Moreover, this study found that EMS teachers understand that EE is practical and relates to learners' lived experiences. This aligns with Hägg and Kurczewska (2022), who advocated that acquiring

EE through lived experiences contributes significantly. This finding aligns with the content concept of the curricular spider-web.

The limitations encountered in conducting this study were that some teachers were not willing to participate, as they were not accustomed to participating in research. Additionally, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education indicated that teaching and learning should not be disturbed. The researchers addressed this limitation by conducting interviews after working hours when some participants were busy with household chores and could not pay complete attention. This sometimes requires rescheduling the interview in order to get the participant's full attention. This study examined the understanding of EMS teachers regarding the role and nature of EE, future research based on learners' and parents' views and understandings of EE can be conducted. Moreover, a study of this nature can be extended to lecturers in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. In addition, a study of this nature can be extended to other circuits, districts, and provinces.

8. Conclusion

This study presented the role and nature of EE. The findings of this study revealed that EMS teachers understand EE as a significant role player in economic growth and development. Moreover, EMS teachers understand that EE addresses socio-economic factors. Lastly, EMS teachers understand that EE is practical and relates to learners' lived experiences. The findings presented in this paper have implications for school principals, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and subject advisors to develop and implement policies in schools that promote EE. This will result in recognising the significance of EE and further benefits the communities in eliminating social problems.

Conflict of interest: There is no conflict of interest for this paper.

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