

Entrepreneurship Leadership on Youth Entrepreneurial Intentions Post-COVID-19

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Leadership is possibly an essential element in numerous success factors for start-ups and their continuous growth. Entrepreneurial leadership has been identified as the driver toward a more prosperous economic future. Entrepreneurial leadership can be defined as a leader who possesses entrepreneurship skills in addition to others. The analysis of the profile of the entrepreneur and the role in organisations as entrepreneurial leaders reveals that there is a close correlation between entrepreneurship and the exploration of opportunities, which the entrepreneurial leader bases on adaptability to change, innovation and risk-taking. Entrepreneurial learning has been affected by COVID-19 as it created a physical gap between the learner and the educator.

entrepreneurial intentions

entrepreneurship

entrepreneurial abilities

youth

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial intention is the desire of individuals to venture into entrepreneurship ^{[1][2][3]}. The entrepreneurial intention may be studied in two variables, namely, internally captured by perceived desirability and perceived behavioural control, and the other is externally captured by the perceived social norm ^[4]. Perceived behavioural control and control beliefs are interlinked ^[5]. The study of entrepreneurial intentions ^[5] is closely linked to the intention to become self-employed ^{[6][7][8][9][10][11][12]}. Entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind including a desire to create a new enterprise ^{[3][13][14]}. The majority of the models attempting to explain the relationship between an individual's characteristics and their entrepreneurial intention are mostly based on two models, namely the Entrepreneurial Event Model and the Theory of Planned Behaviour ^{[14][15]}. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by ^[16], entrepreneurial intention is an individual's self-acknowledged conviction that he or she intends to start a new business venture and consciously plans to proceed in the future ^{[17][18]}. Favourable attitudes toward an entrepreneurial career choice are influenced by the individual's perception of the desirability and feasibility of venturing into an entrepreneurial career ^[19].

2. Entrepreneurship Leadership on Youth Entrepreneurial Intentions Post-COVID-19

2.1. Entrepreneurship Leadership and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial leadership comprises organising and motivating a group of people to accomplish a common objective by way of innovation, risk optimization, taking advantage of opportunities, and managing an

organisational environment that is dynamic in nature [20][21]. Entrepreneurial intentions are defined as the reason for encouraging entrepreneurial behaviour and the reflection of the organisational leader's vision and organisational culture [22]. An organisation led by an entrepreneurial leader is more likely to be involved in stimulating and encouraging employees' entrepreneurial intentions [22][23].

The effectiveness of a leader is directly determined by the situational context [20]. The SMEs that are properly managed and led gain superior business performance as well as a sustainable competitive advantage [20]. Entrepreneurial leadership has been defined as the extent to which leaders portray entrepreneurial attributes [24]. According to [25], organisational effectiveness is dependent on entrepreneurial attributes inherent in the workforce. An entrepreneurial leadership style does not necessarily result at the expense of societal goals, in essence, the efficiency orientation of modern schools [26].

Motivation sessions led by successful entrepreneurs can help to alter the attitude of people about entrepreneurship, which will stimulate more entrepreneurial intentions during COVID-19 in the youth [8][26][27]. The majority of COVID-19 cases in sub-Saharan Africa are located in South Africa, where a third of the youth are not employed, educated, or trained [28]. Providing improved healthcare, secondary education, housing and generally enhancing the dignity of impoverished South Africans could encourage youth to consider furthering their studies and improving their future earning potential [29]. Realistically, the entrepreneurial intention may not always result in one starting and managing his/her own business—many who start their businesses may become unsuccessful due to internal or external factors [29][30]. The negative economic implications of COVID-19 have not been evenly felt across South Africa's population [27].

2.2. COVID-19 and Entrepreneurial Intentions

The authors of [31] posit that youth entrepreneurial intentions to become entrepreneurs are strongly influenced by their internal factors, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current COVID-19 pandemic condition or uncertainty is responded to by trainees as conditions that have a similar opportunity; this is demonstrated by the response to uncertainty at about 50 per cent [19]. The process of starting a business has become easier due to technological advancements, including ease of access to information—this is particularly the case when the pandemic is spreading and negatively affecting people [32]. COVID-19 has prompted traditional businesses, including SMEs and traditional markets, to convert their ventures online [28][33]. Youth entrepreneurship has become the subject of study for numerous researchers [34].

According to [34], the analysis of youth entrepreneurship directions indicates that, depending on the main motive for starting a business, they are compelled to conduct business in order to get a livelihood; entrepreneurs focused on seizing new opportunities and driven by the desire to become independent and to increase their income. The mediating role of entrepreneurial education during COVID-19 has been attained through independent variables, including self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude and, as a dependent variable, entrepreneurial intention during COVID-19 [28]. Grants are instrumental in keeping businesses operational following an aggregate crisis whilst sustaining satisfaction levels as well as entrepreneurial confidence [35].

The entrepreneurial environment is complex when compared to the natural environment, and numerous aspects need to be taken into account to ensure entrepreneurial success [36][37]. The business environment is defined as the collection of factors that influence the evolution of entrepreneurship [38]. Enterprises tend to interact with their entrepreneurial environment in defined action situations, which occur in the subareas and may influence each other [39].

It is important to analyse the influence of diversity in contextual factors at each entrepreneurial stage and the specific barriers and drivers in the transition from one stage to the next [40]. Numerous factors lead to entrepreneurial intention; these include personal, psychological, environmental, cognitive and demographic factors [41]. Researchers believe that entrepreneurship is a process that involves social, cultural and economic contexts; therefore, a special topic has arisen in the entrepreneurship field of study that focuses on the contextual factors that affect one's entrepreneurship cognition to launch a venture [42]. Environmental values are positively related to a sustainable entrepreneurial intention, and the relationship between environmental values and sustainable entrepreneurial intention gains moderation through experience and personal attitude, social norms and self-efficacy [43].

Entrepreneurial activities have become a focal point of academic research; as such, many experts and scholars have identified and studied environmental factors that have a significant influence on entrepreneurship [44]. Entrepreneurship is influenced by a range of external environmental factors, namely economic conditions and government laws and regulations [44]. In the literature, few studies have focused on perceptions derived from the dangerous, unsafe, or risky environment and their impact on the intentions of starting a business [45].

A literature review revealed a gap in the body of knowledge regarding the testing of the mediating effects of the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurship leadership, post-COVID-19 environment and entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurial intention.

Overall, attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived environmental support are observed to completely and partially mediate (respectively) the relationship between three independent variables (entrepreneurship leadership, perceived post-COVID-19 environment and entrepreneurship education) and entrepreneurship intention and action. The above findings seem to suggest the direct impact of entrepreneurship leadership on intentions through perceived environment support and on entrepreneurial action through perceived environment support and attitude towards entrepreneurship. Thus, any increase in entrepreneurship leadership might influence youth to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship leadership was observed to directly relate to attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived environmental support and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action. However, when mediation tests were conducted, attitude towards entrepreneurship did not mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship did mediate the relationship between the perceived post-COVID-19 environment and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action. Furthermore, perceived entrepreneurial abilities did not mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship leadership and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial

action. When mediation tests were conducted, perceived environmental support did mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship leadership and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action. This is supported by the revised conceptual model of goodness of fit.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship was observed to have a correlation with perceived environmental support. The variable, Perceived entrepreneurial abilities, was observed to create a correlation for the relationship between attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Perceived environmental support did mediate the relationship between the perceived post-COVID-19 environment and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action. Perceived environmental support did mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial action. All the endogenous variables (entrepreneurship leadership, perceived post-COVID-19 environment and entrepreneurship education) are directly related to entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurial leaders possess a special ability to alter young people's attitudes to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset ^[46].

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