

# Investigating Youth Perception Towards Entrepreneurship In The North-West Province, South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship among the youth can be linked to the pursuit of eradicating poverty by creating employment opportunities to reduce youth unemployment and advocate for social change through entrepreneurship. This study investigates the perceptions of the youth regarding entrepreneurship in South Africa. In an area with distinct socio-economic dynamics and obstacles, it is critical to comprehend how the youth see entrepreneurship and its potential as a career route. This study aimed to determine the elements that influence young people's views on entrepreneurship, as well as the obstacles they face and the potential role that they can play in effecting social change through entrepreneurship. A purposive sampling technique was applied for the selection of a maximum of twenty young adults from a township to participate in focus group interviews to ascertain the perceptions of entrepreneurship among the youth. The transcriptions of the data recordings were verbatim, and thematic data analysis was performed following the coding of the data. Findings indicated that there are barriers to entry perceived as obstacles to pursuing entrepreneurship, which include the lack of mentorship, financial resources, and educational opportunities focused on entrepreneurship. Notwithstanding, the findings also reveal that the youth have a positive perception of entrepreneurship and show a strong willingness to pursue it as a career path.

**KEYWORDS:** Employment Opportunities; Entrepreneurship Among The Youth; Millennium Development Goals; Perceptions Of The Youth; Social Change; Unemployed Youth.

**ABBREVIATIONS:** MDGs: Millennium Development Goals; DFID: Department for International Development; CEMUR: Culture of Entrepreneurial Mindset and Undergraduate Research; EEM: Entrepreneurial Event Model; SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The MDGs generally exhort governments to cultivate and foster development along a number of different trajectories, but specifically related to this study is the eradication of poverty and hunger. Many townships and rural communities in South Africa still struggle with food security, and there are also a number of concerns, such as lack of housing, lack of employment and employment opportunities [1]. Although fraught with definitional issues, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) indicated that for 2021, the unemployment rate stood at 34.4% [2]. South Africa has a large population of young people who are unemployed [3], and it is generally known that unemployment is highly correlated with the lack of economic growth and social unrest. It is commonly held that the future of any country, especially South Africa, lies in the hands of the youth. The foregoing is amply demonstrated in a study by Walker and Matebula [4], who argue that youth, especially rural youth whose livelihood is influenced by low income, require a number of factors to succeed in their lives, factors that they create for themselves since the challenge of their present living conditions may 'follow them into their adulthood'. Thus, the argument in this study is that in the face of the general lack of employment opportunities, the development and training of entrepreneurs and the underprivileged with potential may illuminate opportunities that they could use to improve their economic situation as well as that of other underprivileged people in the area through job creation [5,6].

In addition, Sinyolo *et al.* [6] argue that developing entrepreneurship among the youth is critical to achieving poverty reduction and economic growth in South Africa. Dzomonda and Fatoki [7] argue that entrepreneurial competencies can be learned and changed. However, it is poignant that Haase *et al.* [8] point out that there is a lack of availability of information on the entrepreneurial intentions of students in South Africa, among others, in the literature. Entrepreneurship is often seen in the light of the possibility of job creation in many instances, especially the pervasive impact on the easing of social tensions and concerns. Socio-economic conditions in various communities in South Africa are often raised in discussion, especially with a focus on government interventions to provide social grants, employment opportunities to youth and support for vulnerable communities. The study of entrepreneurship remains important at the level of young people as they will have the agency to influence change. The question arises whether perceptions of entrepreneurship would qualitatively differ in relation to social conditions. The socio-economic conditions of the South African populace in townships are quite different from those in urban areas. It is likely that perceptions of entrepreneurship may be influenced by prevailing conditions. Haase *et al.* [8] found differences in the entrepreneurial intention of Namibian students compared to their German counterparts, with the former having a higher entrepreneurial intention. Yatu *et al.* [9], citing literature in their paper, state that the context of

entrepreneurship plays a critical role in shaping entrepreneurship. The present study posits that an understanding of entrepreneurship from the perspective of youth in a township and those in a more urban town may be different given their lived experiences and socio-economic conditions.

The literature on entrepreneurship indicates that there is still a wide variety of definitions and conceptualizations of this construct [10,11]. Socially situated cognitions suggest that context may be important in terms of the formulations of thoughts about entrepreneurship, thus suggesting that socially disparate conditions may yield different perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship. From the literature, it appears that context is important in the definition of entrepreneurship. The problem in this study is to understand how youth perceive entrepreneurship as a vehicle for future employment and alleviate socioeconomic challenges for their own context and whether differences exist in the perceptions of youth from townships and those from suburbs. The aim of the paper is to investigate the perceptions of the youth regarding entrepreneurship in South Africa. Furthermore, the paper was to assess what the youth in the North West province understand about entrepreneurship and the role they are playing in contributing to the economy.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The conceptual development of entrepreneurship may be established through further explorations of the existing theoretical perspectives on entrepreneurship within the different schools of thought (i.e., economics, psychology, and sociology). Mwatsika *et al.*'s [12] examination of the theoretical conceptualizations of entrepreneurship established that the approximate origins and popularity of the term 'entrepreneurship' date back to the year 1730 by economist Richard Cantillon, who recognized the distinguishing quality of an entrepreneur as the readiness to assume the personal financial risk of a company enterprise. The academic refinement of the understanding of the term was later ventured into by economists Joseph Schumpeter and Israel Kirzner. The foregoing may be considered to be the foundation of the premise upon which the related Schumpeter and Kirzner theories of entrepreneurship were established.

#### **2.1.1 INNOVATION (ECONOMIC THEORY)**

The innovation theory (also known as the Schumpeterian theory), as part of the economic theories of entrepreneurship, advanced the conceptualization of entrepreneurship to include innovation and creativity as critical elements of entrepreneurship. Schumpeter argued that in order to create new markets and disrupt current ones, new ideas, goods, or technology must be introduced. This process is referred to as entrepreneurship [13]. According to Schumpeter, the entrepreneur, as a result of his/her innovative and creative ideas, is the primary catalyst to mobilize and effect economic development by introducing new technologically advanced processes and products with the intent to transform, create new and develop more efficient business processes. Schumpeter postulated that only the extraordinary innovative capabilities of the entrepreneur can present new possibilities that not only challenge but also change traditional economic and social development.

#### **2.1.2 KIRZNER'S ALERT ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ECONOMIC THEORY)**

According to Kirzner, an entrepreneur is a person who identifies previously unknown profit prospects and subsequently pursues them in the marketplace until competition in the market renders them obsolete. Kirzner's perspective of entrepreneurship can be understood as a balancing force while Schumpeter's perspective of entrepreneurship is that of a disruptive force [14].

#### **2.1.3 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Reuf [15] states that; the sociological theory reflects and examines entrepreneurship from a much broader perspective that is inclusive of various social ecosystems within a society. The social theory explores the way various social factors (economic, social, political, cultural, and personal), institutions and relationships impact and influence participation in entrepreneurship. This theory of entrepreneurship has been linked to Max Weber's hypothesis of social change, in which Weber argued that the development of entrepreneurship activities and entrepreneurial attitudes is predicated on the value system and cultural environment the entrepreneur is exposed to as an individual's behavior is by their social context. Furthermore, Weber's hypothesis determined that teachings and doctrines (more specifically, religious teachings) cultivate the necessary discipline required for entrepreneurship and the related economic development resultant from entrepreneurial activities undertaken with similar discipline [16]. While Weber's perspective may be appealing in that it takes cognizance of the social environment and the interplay of culture and values on the entrepreneur, it has been criticized for its dogmatic emphasis on religion as the key sociological influence on the concept of entrepreneurship in relation to the social environment [17]. Key aspects that fall within the purview of the sociological theory of entrepreneurship based on its broad perspective in examining and conceptualizing entrepreneurship, according to Dedekuma and Akpor-Robaro [17], are indicated below. Social embeddedness relates to the social and professional networks that impact entrepreneurship as they often determine the extent of the entrepreneurial support, resources, and knowledge the entrepreneur can access, such as investment, clients, partners, and suppliers [18].

- Institutional environment determines the opportunities and barriers for entrepreneurship and includes the socio-political, policies and legal elements.
- Location and communities can impact entrepreneurial activity as community culture and physical location can pose either opportunities or barriers for entrepreneurship (i.e., poor communities may lack the necessary resources and infrastructure to support the local businesses) [19].

#### 2.1.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

The psychological theory of entrepreneurship by David McClelland in the 1960s focuses on an individual's psychological character traits, thought processes and motives that affect their choices to pursue entrepreneurship, which is also linked to their need for self-determination. The psychological aspects of entrepreneurs are explored in relation to how their attitudes and cognitive structures influence their entrepreneurial activity. Emphasis is placed on an individual in respect of the following according to [17]:

- Their predisposition to entrepreneurship (thus possessing an 'entrepreneurial flair').
- Propensity to take risks (specifically business risks).
- Aspiration to pursue entrepreneurship and start a business.

#### 2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

According to the DFID, the process of economic growth in any nation places a high priority on entrepreneurship. While industrialized nations recognize and optimize the value of entrepreneurship, developing nations tend to lag behind in leveraging the benefits of entrepreneurship as a crucial component to maintaining consistent growth [20]. The following points assist in formulating an understanding of the significance of entrepreneurship.

- Self-employment is enabled through entrepreneurship. Robinson and Taubinsky [21] contend that resourceful individuals can utilise their physical and cognitive skills to ensure their own financial stability and well-being. This supports a reduction in the impact that population expansion has on a nation's economic progress.
- Job creation is established when new businesses create employment opportunities. This directly addresses the unemployment socio-economic crisis and related effects, according to Fritsch and Wyrwich [22]. Entrepreneurship actively and positively contributes towards the reduction of crime by providing gainful employment opportunities as an alternative to participating in illegal activities. Through entrepreneurship, miscreants who participated in criminal activities for their provision and livelihood would be able to instead make positive contributions to society as productive and socially responsible members of society [23].
- Change agency is realized through the creation, development, and application of innovative ideas. Additionally, the development of new products, services and advanced technologies contributes to the improvement in the standard of living [24].
- Social stability is promoted as entrepreneurship enables the provision of goods and services to satisfy the growing and diverse needs of citizens. This assists in alleviating potential social unrest and tension that is directly linked to insufficient and inadequate supplies of goods and services [25].
- Capital formulation is established through the mobilization of personal, institutional, and national financial resources to invest in entrepreneurial activities. The economic growth and development of a nation are proportional to the extent to which capital formulation is realized [24].
- Reduction in the concentration of economic power is facilitated as entrepreneurs from any and all socio-economic backgrounds can pursue entrepreneurship and subsequently create wealth. Through income generated from entrepreneurship, socio-economic inequalities can be addressed as entrepreneurship supports and facilitates the distribution of finances and political power [26].
- Economic growth can be achieved through entrepreneurship and the developmental contributions it affords society. Entrepreneurship is viewed as essential to a vibrant economy. Entrepreneurs not only create jobs for themselves but increase the employment opportunities available for other people. The introduction of new products, services, techniques, and production processes to the market, as well as the enhancement of overall productivity and competitiveness, entrepreneurial activities positively impact and boost a nation's economic performance [27].

#### 2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH DEVELOPING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

According to Statistics South Africa, the youth constitute approximately 63% of the South African population, thus making up the majority of the population. The youth possess the most potential, physical strength, and vitality, and make up the largest share of the educated population. Based on this, the youth are essential to the longevity and success of a nation. Predicated on this, significant efforts are required towards developing the youth and creating a socio-economic environment for them to thrive in and to ensure the economic stability and growth of the country as well as mitigate the dependency of the youth on the minority population of working adults [28]. Socio-economic issues like poverty impact many facets of human existence and persist in society despite numerous attempts and programs designed to remove them. Sall [29] argues that

entrepreneurship is critical to Africa's economic growth and fight against poverty. As a result, entrepreneurship among the youth is essential in assisting to combat the struggle against poverty. The youth are the future leaders and possess priceless social capital as well as the mental, physical, and creative agility to establish businesses that address the socio-economic needs of the country. The way that young people perceive society and how they participate in decision-making can influence the success of organizations, communities and, thus, the economy. Additionally, the youth's perspective on poverty reduction is based on the knowledge that young people are initiators, participants, decision-makers, and leaders in addition to being a target population [30]. Similar to entrepreneurs being recognized as 'change agents' in the economy, the youth are also impactful 'change agents' in society. In order to end poverty, young people must, therefore, not only be valued as a resource for social transformation but also actively supported and enabled to make the necessary contributions to effect economic change as they play a significant role in society.

The term 'entrepreneurial mindset' can be described as a collection of attitudes, convictions, and cognitive skills that allow anyone, including young people, to approach opportunities and difficulties from an entrepreneurial viewpoint. It entails adopting a proactive, creative, and risk-taking mindset that stimulates creativity, resiliency, and a desire to achieve success [31]. This type of mindset is essential to cultivate entrepreneurial ambitions in young people. Furthermore, providing the necessary knowledge and encouraging an entrepreneurial attitude among the youth is critical for them to develop their own businesses. The crucial elements for the development of an entrepreneurial mindset include the following, as per CEMUR.

- Creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, risk-taking and resilience- according to Daspit *et al.* [31], entrepreneurs (more specifically, the youth) generally exhibit higher levels of innovative thinking and therefore possess a greater inclination to develop ingenious solutions to problems and discover new ideas. Anjum *et al.* [2] argue that the encouragement of creativity among the youth through entrepreneurial education and activities can assist them in developing this part of the entrepreneurial attitude. Furthermore, the adaption of a creative and solution-oriented mindset will enhance their critical thinking capabilities which is an essential practice in developing the ability to effectively manage risks and foster a resilient mindset. The latter is an essential characteristic of the entrepreneurial journey. Cultivating resilience and the ability to assess as well as manage risks is essential in establishing a growth mindset which perceives challenges as a springboard to develop their abilities and learning opportunities that will serve to catapult them further along their entrepreneurial journey [31].
- Proactive and initiative—Van Ness *et al.* [33] posit that entrepreneurs are known to be proactive and thus more predisposed to recognize and seize opportunities. In the context of the youth, this means that young people should be encouraged and developed to become proactive in pursuit of their desires and entrepreneurial ideas in an effort to cultivate in them a proactive mindset as self-starters.
- Vision—According to Singh and Singh [34], entrepreneurs are synonymous with clarity of goal with respect to the set goals and objectives of their businesses. Exposure to mentorship and to other successful young entrepreneurs can encourage the development of such an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth. It will also assist their ability to envision a future as entrepreneurs.
- Adaptability and flexibility—Entrepreneurial businesses are generally subject to changing market conditions that require an adaptable and flexible-thinking entrepreneur who can strategically pivot to ensure the business's sustainability. Teaching young people to become flexible and adaptable can assist them in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. The skills of adaptation and flexibility can be developed by exposing the youth to actual entrepreneurial experiences, such as startup challenges and competitions [35].

Based on the foregoing, the hypothesis of CEMUR with respect to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset is that a combination of formal education, experiential learning, exposure to mentors and role models, and a supportive environment that promotes and celebrates entrepreneurship are essential components to help the youth develop an entrepreneurial attitude [36]. As a result, young people can develop an entrepreneurial attitude to a significant extent by participating in entrepreneurial programs, workshops, and projects that promote an entrepreneurial culture and provide hands-on learning opportunities to ensure experiential knowledge and skills can be gained.

### 3. METHOD(S)

The ontology of the study of entrepreneurship was achieved through an interpretive lens, which was also used to understand perceptions of entrepreneurship in the context of the lived experience of youth in the North West Province and how this can cultivate opportunities for development. Packard [37] argues that the individualist aspect of entrepreneurship may make the interpretive approach the most suitable. According to the scientific theory of interpretivism, social order, such as markets and the entrepreneurial processes that operate inside them, arises from deliberate behavior and interpersonal interaction at the individual level. Entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon, and therefore, interpretivism was proposed as the meta-theoretical approach for this study. The qualitative research design was the most appropriate methodological approach for the research problem stated in this paper. The deduction and induction are both utilized in the iterative process that leads to qualitative research wherein categories are identified and analyzed [38]. For this paper, two focus groups were used to

give youth from the North West province of South Africa an opportunity to share their conceptions of entrepreneurship, how this may influence their own choices about entrepreneurship in the first instance, and how this may improve their life conditions. The thoughts expressed in words were analyzed for patterns and categories, and then themes were drawn for analysis. The population of this study comprised of youth (post-high school students) in the North West Province that are variously resourced to allow the richness of experience to be shared on the research questions of this paper [39]. Around 47% of the North West (NW) population is considered poor based on the Lower Bound Poverty Line [40]. The unemployment rate is given globally for the North West Province and is lower than the national average, but however, the expanded unemployment rate is higher than the national average at 48.3% [40]. Two focus groups in the North West province were identified through community leaders. As per the rubric for focus groups, each group comprised 6 to 10 members. A purposive sampling technique was applied based on the philosophical underpinnings of the study. This is essentially a non-probability sample but applied with great sensitivity to the potential fact that the youth could share a deep understanding of their lived experience, and thus, attempts were made to be as inclusive as possible. Focus groups were constituted according to the guidelines proposed by Sim and Waterfield [41], especially regarding ethical concerns such as permission, privacy, anonymity, and risk of harm. The interviews were recorded and scribed by the researcher to note group dynamics as these can enrich the process of data collection. Permission to record was sought at the beginning of each session from each participant. Confidentiality of participants' views was assured. Data was collected until a saturation point was attained. Nondirective questions in the focus group interview schedule were used to elicit spontaneous expression among participants on entrepreneurship, possibilities, and sustainability. The questions were open-ended in nature, allowing participants to engage with the discussion from their own worldview. The questions were focused on the objectives of the study and allowed clarity to be sought from participants when statements made needed more discussion. This was an opportunity to extract rich data from the discussion.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of the reflexive thematic analysis method as implemented to respond to the objective of the study are presented. Each objective is taken as the primary theme and discussed. The discussion centers around the visual presentation of the themes responding to the objective and their associated linkages, as shown in Table 1. A discussion of the results in the context of extant literature is presented with an assessment of similarities and differences between the findings with those of the existing research.

##### 4.1. THEME 1: PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH REGARDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The perceptions of the youth in the study regarding entrepreneurship centered around what they considered as accruing through entrepreneurial engagement- both to their own welfare and to the community. These were built from their knowledge of entrepreneurship based on experience and observation of the societal circumstances, existing entrepreneurs, and desire for pathways out of the existing precarious economic situations [42]. The youth also perceived successful entrepreneurship as being linked to entrepreneurial skills, which were prevalent in their discussion about their perceptions of entrepreneurship [43]. Among the youth, entrepreneurs were perceived as community influencers, individuals who undertake social investment and community development, individuals who broaden societal boundaries, improve access to services, develop opportunities to benefit communities and build institutions for societal betterment.

**Table 1: Visual presentations of themes.**

Research Objectives	Themes	Categories	Sub-Categories
To establish what the perceptions of the youth in the North West province are regarding entrepreneurship.	<b>Perceptions of entrepreneurship</b>	1.1. Entrepreneurs as community influencers. 1.2. Entrepreneurship as an engine for building institutions for social betterment. 1.3. Entrepreneurship broadens societal boundaries. 1.4. Entrepreneurship as a mechanism for social investment and community development. 1.5. Building entrepreneurial skills.	1.5.1 Continuous learning. 1.5.2 Entrepreneurship as a key explanation for societal differentiation.

To establish how these perceptions of entrepreneurship influence the possible choices that the youth may make about entrepreneurship to contribute to the economy.	<b>Perceptions of entrepreneurship and choices</b>	2.1 Entrepreneurial skills transferability. 2.2 Entrepreneurship as empowerment and a pathway to capacity growth. 2.3 Drivers of entrepreneurship.	2.3.1 Developmental background and socialization.
To identify the specific roles that youth from the North West province could play in bringing social change and opportunities to their community.	<b>Role of youth in bringing social change and opportunities</b>	3.1 Social entrepreneurship. 3.2 For-profit entrepreneurship. 3.3 Youth's roles in contributing to the economy.	3.3.1 Organising for employment creation. 3.3.2 Immediate family context. 3.3.3 Development of software applications. 3.3.4 Developmental platforms. 3.3.5 Expanding community options.

#### 4.1.1 ENTREPRENEURS AS COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS

A community influencer is an individual who starts a business and seeks to actively participate in the local area. The presence of community influencers in local communities is important as they inspire people in their communities, promote economic growth, and effect positive change through their entrepreneurial endeavors and assets. In thinking of entrepreneurs as community influencers, participants highlighted entrepreneurs as community benefactors (P5IG) that are a product and part of the community (P5IG), are community movers (P6IG) and shape the community's present and future trajectory (P7PC). On the perception of entrepreneurship as influencing people directly, Participant 5 from Ikageng (P5IG) alluded to giving back to the community in the following words:

*"Also, entrepreneurs are able to change people's lives because when they are being able to have an income, they always give back to the community". P5IG*

The participant further explained by giving an existing case of an entrepreneur in their local community who was undertaking development projects. It is also interesting to capture the thought that entrepreneurs are perceived as belonging to the community, shaping the conception of entrepreneurship as part of the community's potential assets. In this way, increasing the community's stock of entrepreneurs can influence entrepreneurial culture within the community.

*"Yes, I do know of one of the entrepreneurs that we have in our local community. It is a lady who has a business of doing construction and being able to go and get a tender at the local municipality...". P5IG*

In this same strand of thought, Participant 7 from Potchefstroom Central (P7PC) alluded to the positive change entrepreneurs bring about in their communities by saying:

*"Umm, for me personally, I feel like although entrepreneurs bring positive change in the community". P7PC*

The perception of entrepreneurship as a mechanism for influencing community trajectory, influencing change, and impacting people's lives lies at the heart of thinking regarding entrepreneurial innovation.

#### 4.1.2 BUILDING INSTITUTIONS FOR SOCIAL BETTERMENT

Entrepreneurs were perceived as individuals building institutions for social/societal betterment. In perceiving entrepreneurs as individuals building institutions for social betterment, the focus was on interventions and undertakings that they commit to the societies in which they establish their businesses. These interventions through entrepreneurship were viewed as undertaking socially beneficial investments (P5IG) and making investments that open new possibilities for social organization and activity (P6IG). In discussing socially beneficial investments, Participant 5 said:

*"So, they are able to help people in the community to better their lives maybe by giving back an orphanage or building an orphanage place for those who don't have a place to stay". P5IG*

In this strand, Participant 6 took a broader focus on long-term community change, understanding the current processes shaping societal change and the roles entrepreneurs can take in bringing about that change through investment. The Participant observed that entrepreneurs could invest in new ways of doing things or introduce new ways of social or economic organization. The Participant said:

*"I think entrepreneurs can bring change into people's lives by inventing things and then where people going to do things different from like they used to. Like now we are in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are changing from paper moving to the paperless". P6IG*

The perception that entrepreneurs are channels through which social betterment can be achieved aligns with Weber's social theory of entrepreneurship in that the focus of entrepreneurs is on the development of people and society [16]. They seek long-lasting solutions to environmental, social, and cultural problems by applying entrepreneurial concepts. As opposed to being just motivated by profit, social entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to positively impact society [15]. They start projects or organizations with the goal of improving society and addressing social issues. As such, entrepreneurs are frequently driven by a sense of obligation to the well-being of their local community and society at large.

#### 4.1.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS BROADENING SOCIETAL BOUNDARIES

In thinking about entrepreneurs as individuals who broaden social boundaries, this was viewed to be through resources generated as entrepreneurial returns (P4PC) and overcoming limiting communal beliefs, options, and attitudes (P6IG). Limiting beliefs included attitudes toward risk and perceptions of entrepreneurship as a challenging endeavor. Entrepreneurship was also highlighted as an option to overcome unemployment in societies where employment creation was limited (P6IG). According to Participant 6:

*"Many people might say or advise us that it's risky to become an entrepreneur in a way, but it enables one to explore and cross the limits that one may be given by society. It can also help people survive without jobs". P6IG*

The participant alluded to general perceptions about the challenges and risks of entrepreneurship. These general perceptions are limiting motivations to undertaking entrepreneurship given the lack of positive motivation they confer upon those attempting and acting as disincentives to engage [44]. In a study exploring entrepreneurial characteristics, motivations and behaviors in Italy, strong prevailing motivations were seen as influencing the shape and decision of entrepreneurial endeavors, presenting movers or inhibitors of action [45]. Another study on motivation and entrepreneurial cognition argued that most entrepreneurs are driven by non-financial motivations, which may mask potential financial rewards if the former, in the form of a pervasive focus on entrepreneurial failure, may inhibit action [46]. These financial and non-financial motivations are observable in the perspective shared by Participant 4, who made reference to community change by stating "changing your life" and placing emphasis on the entrepreneur by mentioning "then the entrepreneur's" and consequently the ways in which that change is brought about. Reference to the services to the community was expressed by stating "then accessibility with the top of service," and financial motivation on the entrepreneur's side was expressed by stating "profit on the entrepreneur".

*"So, we are changing your life and then the entrepreneur's life also because of the profit on the entrepreneur side, and then accessibility with the top of service is on the consumer". P4PC.*

#### 4.1.4 ENTREPRENEURS UNDERTAKING SOCIAL INVESTMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Finally, in thinking about entrepreneurs as individuals undertaking social investment and community development, three facets were broadly identified. Entrepreneurs engage in organizations to address social problems (P2IG; P7PC), where they set up projects for social and human development. It was also suggested that entrepreneurs plow back their profits or returns into communities through the provision of schooling aid (P7IG) or providing for less fortunate community members (P5IG). Participant 2 from the Ikageng community identified investment in social projects aimed at childhood development, providing holistic development by equipping the children in various ways, rehabilitation, and nutrition programs. The Participants saw these as avenues through which, as entrepreneurs, they could effect change in the community. The Participant said:

*"I feel that there must be more children development programs and more rehabilitation centers in place. So, even rehabilitation clinics where someone who doesn't have a place to sleep can go there, someone who doesn't have something to eat can go there. I feel those are the social changes and opportunities that I can bring as an entrepreneur." P2IG.*

A similar perspective was shared by Participant 7 from Potchefstroom Central, who saw the entrepreneurial role as effecting social change through solving social problems, where entrepreneurs identify problems and organize to solve them and, in the process, improve people's lives.

*"I wanted to say that entrepreneurship does bring about change as the fellow participants had mentioned. When people find that there is a problem in the community, they try to find ways to solve them and make people's lives better". P7PC*

Participant 7 from Ikageng agreed with Participant 2 that child developmental initiatives, educational support, and financing for the less fortunate is a way of ploughing back into the community. Entrepreneurial success was perceived as providing the means to implement social investments.

*"I think what I was going to say is more or less what she has just said about the plowing back to the community whereby some of the entrepreneurs will buy school shoes and give learners from the profit they have made, or from any income that went into the business and not only learners at some point they will be in need of a second sponsorship and then they will be able to probably assist and say okay let's just we will be able to assist you with this much". P7IG*

The theory of planned behavior argues for three considerations guiding human behavior: behavioral beliefs (expected or likely consequences), normative beliefs (normative expectations) and control beliefs (facilitating or impeding factors) [47]. In the results presented in this section, it is observed that entrepreneurs are expected to assume normative roles, which their success in an entrepreneurial endeavor enables them. While general societal beliefs and attitudes towards entrepreneurship are observed in the analysis to be negative, such as the associated risk profile or general challenges and heightened conception of failure in the enterprise, entrepreneurial endeavor is expected to confer positive benefits to the community. In line with the theory of planned behavior, expectations of creating employment, improving one's options both economically and generating financial security, and positively affecting the community are intrinsic motivations for engaging in entrepreneurial endeavors.

#### **4.1.5 BUILDING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS**

The study participants, while expressing positive sentiments about the role of entrepreneurship in improving their options, were also concerned about structural and perceived limitations that inhibited entrepreneurial choice. The limitations centered around entrepreneurial capacitation and skills, which were perceived as critical in entrepreneurial endeavors building these skills; the participants' responses were categorized as the need for broadening formal education and training to focus on entrepreneurial skills. This was argued to be best gained through providing education on avenues to accessing capital and finance, which are critical in entrepreneurial choice (P7PC), mainstreaming business and entrepreneurial education in formal training (P7PC). The importance of this finding lies in the structural setting that the majority who have no entrepreneurial background nor access to any form of training or experience, need to at some point acquire some level of formal education. As such, providing entrepreneurial education early can create fertile ground, ensuring that building entrepreneurial skills broadens the scope for youth engagement in entrepreneurship. In expressing this perspective, Participant 7 said:

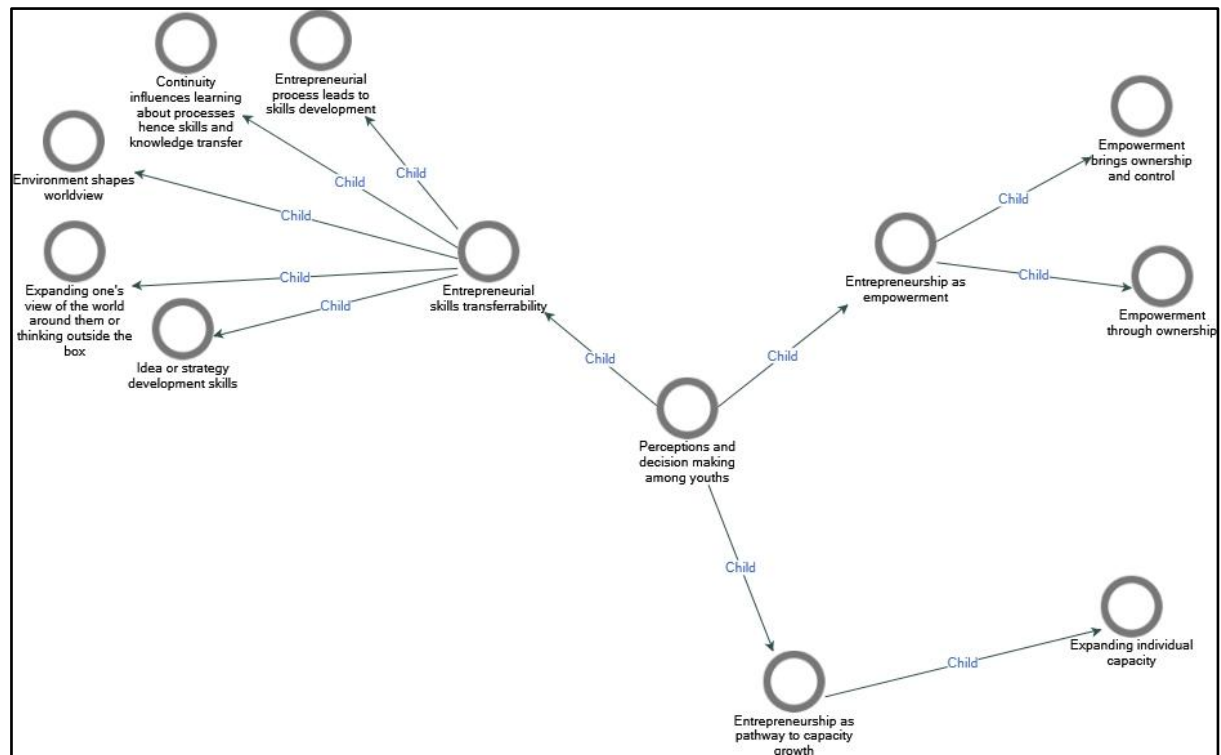
*"For me, I feel like maybe in school, subjects such as business studies, maybe more attention can be given to entrepreneurship, maybe they could just teach us where to get the sources of funds to enable the youth to actually start businesses...". P7PC*

In explaining the remarkable post-second World War economic progress of East Asian countries, research showed the impact of investment in entrepreneurial education, human development and creation of cultures of innovation and creativity in increasing human productivity [48]. These societies were also observed in the study to be largely entrepreneurial, had stable governments preparing platforms and organizing for economic activity, and encouraged competition and learning in the domestic and global markets.

## **4.2 THEME 2: PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CHOICES THAT THE YOUTH MAY MAKE ABOUT ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMY**

The perceptions of the youth on entrepreneurship impact their decisions to support or engage in entrepreneurial endeavors as well as their potential undertaking of initiatives that boost local economies, foster innovation, and create employment. Positive perceptions impact their entrepreneurial agency to undertake initiatives that can generate opportunities for themselves and also extend to the overall upliftment of the economy. The cultivation of perceptions that invoke a positive agency toward entrepreneurship depends on various drivers of influence upon the youth [49]. The analysis of the qualitative data showed that perceptions shaping youth's choices in engaging in entrepreneurship were observed as perceptions driving entrepreneurial engagement, those influencing decision-making, and the role of entrepreneurship in contributing to the economy. The perceptions of the youth regarding entrepreneurship took three forms: entrepreneurship as a skills transfer mechanism that provides an avenue for intergenerational development and progress (P5IG; P1PC; P2PC; P4PC); entrepreneurship as a form of empowerment (P6IG; P5IG; P2PC); and entrepreneurship as a pathway to capacity growth (P6IG; P5IG). These findings are summarised in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Perception Shaping Entrepreneurial Engagement Among Youths.**

#### 4.2.1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS TRANSFERABILITY

The results showed that entrepreneurship is perceived as a way of transferring skills intergenerationally, hence improving generational fortunes. This was a concern among participants in Ikageng with reports of joblessness and limited economic prospects for formal employment due to a lack of skills among younger demographics. The process of becoming an entrepreneur/or the journey of entrepreneurship engenders the development of a set of skills. Continuity was seen as influencing learning about processes, hence skills and knowledge transfer and thus transferring entrepreneurial skills and motivating the entrepreneurial endeavour to the next generation. A study identified entrepreneurship as an avenue to youth employment continuity and stopping economic disruptions through the employment of unused labor [50]. Households are identified as economic units in the economic theory, shaping innovation and supplying labor and entrepreneurial skills to the economy [51]. Entrepreneurial engagement at the household level develops essential skills that are transferrable within households, thus shaping economic continuity through entrepreneurial transferability. Entrepreneurship was seen as important in shaping worldview, expanding one's view of the world around them, sharpening critical thinking and honing skills in strategy development to solve observed problems. Intergenerational entrepreneurial skills transfer notions were observed in the background shared by Participant 4 from Potchefstroom Central, who related the entrepreneurial molding aspect of their family background. According to the participants, this socialization shaped their perspective and desire for entrepreneurship since their immediate environment while growing up was shaped by enterprising individuals. The Participant explained that:

*"But I feel like where I came from, the way I was raised. We had a tuck shop. So, ever since I was young, my mom would go to work, and she would be like, OK, you are left with the shop and say, take care of the shop. Then, when she came back, we did the stocktaking to calculate how much we benefited, how much the profit was, and what was needed. So, it's all those things as a kid growing up that help you get to be invested as a person that wants to be having your own business". P4PC*

Concerning skills acquisition, Participant 5 from Ikageng saw entrepreneurship as a pathway to exploring and overcoming one's limitations which opens new possibilities and creates individual capacity. Prospectively this experience shapes future transfer of skills or entrepreneurial acculturation.

*"I feel that entrepreneurship is a good thing to do because you find yourself exploring the things that you thought you could not do, and you see that you are skilled at one, two, three, and when you doubt yourself and see that you are doing well, you grow to the next thing, and there's like a chain of flowing of getting to explore the skills that you have". P5IG*

According to Participant 2 from Potchefstroom Central, it begins with analyzing one's situation and objectives: "You are trying to be independent and change your current situation," and entrepreneurship enables the achievement of both. As an entrepreneur, the Participant can motivate and shape the thinking of the next generation of entrepreneurs who may be seeking to achieve similar objectives. Participant 2 alluded that:

*"You're trying to be independent, and you're trying to change your current situation, and it's always the first thing you should do. I always encourage the matriculants that if you're struggling to find a job, try to start a business and always turn back to your school and see what challenges they have so that you can maybe try to just change that". P2PC*

According to the EEM, life experiences, exposure to entrepreneurship and the evaluation of entrepreneurship are motivators for engaging in entrepreneurial activity [52]. The EEM focuses on factors that shape entrepreneurial intention or forces that are shaping entrepreneurial choice. From the results emerging from the study, it is evident that background environment has an effect on shaping entrepreneurial mindsets and worldviews and that participants' lived experiences were observed as shaping the mindset of participants' engagement in entrepreneurship. The results also showed that the desire to transition out of limiting circumstances or situations shapes entrepreneurial choice, such as the need to change present circumstances like struggles with finding employment (P2PC). Entrepreneurship is viewed as providing a pathway and influencing the choices to improve available options.

#### **4.2.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS EMPOWERMENT AND A PATHWAY TO CAPACITY GROWTH**

Through economic independence, skills development, innovation, and job creation, entrepreneurship offers communities and individuals the chance to empower themselves. It acts as a route for capacity expansion, empowering individuals to reach their full potential, support economic growth, and effect constructive social change. In perceiving entrepreneurship as empowerment, ownership and control were key attributes observed from participants' responses. Entrepreneurship enables ownership and control of assets that shape one's options (P2PC), brings independence over one's life trajectory (P2PC), and can define and determine their working parameters (P2PC). This last option defined the perception of complete control over one's revenue-generating system, work schedule and time. In emphasizing empowerment as control and the ability to shape one's working profile that is possible through entrepreneurship, Participant 2 from Potchefstroom Central stated:

*"Also, the fact that you can determine your own prices, the fact that you are your own boss, the fact that you get to operate wherever you want to operate, it's like you are choosing not to be someone else's slave because, in today's world, you are either the employer or an employee". P2PC.*

Perceptions of entrepreneurship as ownership were seen to be influenced by the perspective of what entrepreneurship confers to a disempowered individual. The perspectives ranged from "sense of ownership and accomplishment" (P6IG), the sense of entrepreneurship as becoming or what one becomes because of the process "it empowers you and makes you innovative as you become an entrepreneur" (P6IG), and entrepreneurship as an adaptive mechanism to economic downturns.

*"I feel that entrepreneurship empowers one when you become an entrepreneur because, there's a sense of belonging to say this is mine, I've started this, I've come up with this. It builds a sense of belonging; it empowers you and it makes you to become innovative when you are becoming an entrepreneur". P6IG*

*"But I feel like by the time our economy bounces, our business would have at least thrived. So, I do believe that we should start our own businesses". P2PC.*

According to the framework of psychological theories of entrepreneurship, the idea that entrepreneurship is about empowerment, ownership, and control can be connected to self-determination as the focus is on the individual. The concept known as self-determination centers on the fundamental human need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. As such, it explains why the youth are inspired to engage in entrepreneurship and how doing so would provide them with a sense of empowerment [17].

#### **4.2.3 DRIVERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

A catalyst that encourages or forces people to engage in entrepreneurial activity is known as a driver of entrepreneurship. These motivators range from extrinsic (outside forces and opportunities) and intrinsic (personal goals and incentives) drivers of entrepreneurship and are both important in determining the nature of entrepreneurship. Among the participants, another set of perceptions incentivizing the entrepreneurial decision/choice among youths were identified as drivers of entrepreneurship. These included perceptions of developmental background and socialization (P1PC; P2PC; P4PC; P7PC), perceptions of entrepreneurship and future expectations (P6IG; P7IG), ease of business set-up and continuity (P8IG), lack of job opportunities (P5IG; P8IG; P2PC), need to generate income through provision of products and/or services (P1PC) and perceptions of social innovation driven by social marginal benefit (P3IG; P1IG; P2IG). While perceived positive gains

through entrepreneurship were motivators for engagement and choice, the perceived drivers of entrepreneurship were also viewed as providing incentives to engage in entrepreneurship.

#### 4.2.3.1 DEVELOPMENTAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIALISATION

In considering developmental background and socialization, participant responses indicated the role of access to developmental institutions, family background, socialization, and intercultural models of inspiration. The participants perceived that access to developmental institutions such as SETA, which could shape entrepreneurial development and help them garner the needed skills, could have shaped and influenced entrepreneurial engagement as compared to generalized training (P2PC). Knowledge about business, establishing business start-ups, capital/finance acquisition and training institutions were perceived as important influences of entrepreneurial engagement. Participant 2 said:

*“... there are many institutions in South Africa. I think one of them is SETA. I'm not sure if they do fund small size and medium sized businesses, but I am very disappointed that our schools never teach us such things. They teach us more about, I don't want to use these words, but the teachers, more about qualifications that are not relevant. They could have taught us about business, how to start businesses, ways to get funding because there are, as I said, institutions that can provide us with funding, but we are not getting that information”. P2PC*

Perceptions of family background and socialization centered around the influence of the family circle. Participants in the study, who were engaged in entrepreneurial activity alluded to the inspirational influence of family background (P2PC; P1PC; P4PC). Socialization was observed to have occurred through observational learning and immersion in the existing family businesses, with the family entrepreneurial environment influencing inspiration towards entrepreneurial endeavors (P1PC; P2PC; P4PC). Participant 1 from Potchefstroom Central alluded to the influence of family background in shaping entrepreneurial choice by saying:

*“Umm yes, my father and mother they started a business where they would be getting clothes from Johannesburg and then selling it where there wouldn't be the same amount of clothes. They would get it from the wholesalers in Johannesburg and bring it to towns such as Ventersdorp or Coligny where they didn't really have wholesalers or maybe only have Pep or something like that”. P1PC*

The same family background and its influence in shaping entrepreneurial choice was corroborated by Participant 2 from the same community, who alluded that:

*“I can see that, uh, it's also from my family because when I was growing up, a lot of my uncles and aunts were selling things, whether it was Atchar, whether it was this hand wash powder soaps, my uncle is still running a Tavern back home. I was inspired by some of my family members”. P2PC*

And in this strand, Participant 4 also said:

*“We had a tuck shop. So, ever since I was young, my mom would go to work, and she would be like, OK, you are left with the shop and say take care of the shop. Then when she comes back, we do the stocktaking to calculate how much did we benefit, how much is the profit, what is needed”. P4PC*

A study on the influence of family background and personal characteristics on entrepreneurial inclination among university students in Malaysia found a statistically significant influence of personal characteristics, entrepreneurial education and family background on entrepreneurial inclination [53]. The study also aligned with the earlier finding in this study that entrepreneurial skills transferability was a viable long-term strategy for reducing the rate of unemployment in most developing and emerging economies [53]. A study conducted among European students with a family entrepreneurial background found that supportive educational programs and entrepreneurial skills mastering are significant influences on entrepreneurial succession [54]. The study also found that while the role of background socialization, entrepreneurial skills mastering and supportive educational programs were significant influences on entrepreneurial choice, they were not strong predictors of children continuing with the family business as many branched off into new ventures [54]. This finding is confirmed in the current study, where participants reporting the influence of family background seem to have branched off into new businesses in most cases differing in trajectory from the businesses that influenced their entrepreneurial decisions (P1PC; P2PC; P4PC). Thus, the observed effect of family background on entrepreneurial inclination or as a driver of entrepreneurial choice seems well established in studies conducted elsewhere.

#### 4.3 THEME 3: ROLES THAT THE YOUTH COULD PLAY IN BRINGING SOCIAL CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITIES TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

The energy, ideas, and efforts of the youth can be used to address urgent community needs and promote economic growth. As such, the youth can be effective agents to create social change and opportunities. The youth are intrinsic and necessary for opportunity creation, the development of society and the realization of social change. Through the fresh insights and innovation of the youth, community challenges can be addressed. The outspokenness of the youth can also be used for

social advocacy and the promotion of social change [55]. Through youth entrepreneurship, local economic growth can be experienced, employment opportunities created, and campaigns can be organised to solve environmental and social problems as well as promote constructive change in their communities [56]. The analysis of the focus group data showed that in thinking about community change and contribution through entrepreneurship, there were broadly three forms in which entrepreneurship was conceived. There was purely for-profit motivated entrepreneurship (P5IG; P6IG, P8IG; P11G), social entrepreneurship (P2IG) and a hybrid that combined characteristics of the two (P6IG; P5IG; P3IG; P11G; P2PC).

#### 4.3.1 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The business strategy to start and operate companies with the main objective of resolving social problems is known as social entrepreneurship. The primary goal is to positively impact society by addressing issues in the community, encouraging sustainability, or enhancing the lives of underprivileged people. In engaging in social entrepreneurship, participants highlighted opportunities for social intervention through entrepreneurship and the implementation of developmental programs (P2IG), building/setting up rehabilitation centers and investments directed at influencing the trajectory of social change (P2IG). An analysis of the driving motives for social entrepreneurship was normative and driven by a strong sense of individual responsibility and making contributions towards the development of the community of one's upbringing. In evaluating the perceived role of influencing the trajectory of social change, the participants as candidate entrepreneurs demonstrated levels of observation and concern with change and saw entrepreneurial endeavor as the mechanism to influence change in the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District (P2IG). Observing social change and opportunities, Participant 2 from Ikageng was concerned with both mechanisms for achieving change and the way social change is mediated and alluded that:

*"In Dr Kenneth Kaunda, there are social changes that are taking place and social opportunities that are taking place in communities, but ways of how we get them and how they get to us is a big problem". P2IG*

The participant also explained further the role of social entrepreneurship in organizing needed developmental projects for which no visible organizing mechanisms were available. The Participant said:

*"It's because the children's development programs, I feel, are not stable. There is no building set up after school and children going home, there is no programme that will keep them from ruin in communities except... I feel that there must be more children development programmes and more rehabilitation centres in place". P2IG*

The distinction between social entrepreneurship and for-profit or commercial entrepreneurship is recognized in studies [57-59]. The study by Mueller *et al.* [57] argues for the importance of critical theory in social entrepreneurship research. Critical theory as a paradigm or perspective argues that scientific investigation must be premised on the objective of social change [60]. In the analysis of the data, undertones of the need for social change are present in the participants' responses. For instance, the need for developmental programs for the youth was observed to be important due to limitations in the existing institutions or activities to fill the observed gap (P2IG). This critical assessment connected the absence of adequate developmental programs with the development of adverse social outcomes such as high crime rates and crime offenses observed as rampant in the community and, more broadly, in the country. This was an interesting focus on the broader view of the local to the national conditions in the P2IG response. The critical perspective is also observable in the need to use entrepreneurship as a way of influencing the trajectory of social change where the participants observe and realize social change, although shaped as distant from their conditions: "social changes that are taking place ... but ways of how to get them and how they get to us..." (P2IG).

*"Another social changing opportunity that I feel most that entrepreneurs turn a blind eye on is on building more rehabilitation centers for young people... the facilities are there for the development of children, but proper programs are not in a place where you can monitor the development of children, and that's why we've got such crime rates and crime offences that we find in our country". P2IG*

#### 4.3.2 FOR-PROFIT/COMMERCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For-profit or commercial entrepreneurship is a business strategy where businesses are created with the main goal of generating a profit. These business owners search for market niches, create goods or services, and carry out business ventures in order to make money. The main focus is on financial gain, but they may also produce value and jobs. The analysis showed predominantly the focus on commercial entrepreneurship among participants. This was driven by various considerations, including the lack of job opportunities and entrepreneurship as a pathway to creating employment for oneself and the community (P5IG; P8IG). Other considerations are the need for financial security and autonomy. Additionally, considering entrepreneurship as providing a sustainable path to weathering economic downturns (P6IG), ensuring employment for one's family (P8IG), sustainable income or value generation through engaging in production or services for monetary gain (P5IG; P4PC; P11G); and viewing community challenges as opportunities for monetary gain (P2PC). Generally, economic conditions were observed as limiting at both a personal and community level, as traditional institutions are not providing a viable pathway since the economy is not generating jobs. Entrepreneurship for-profit is a viable means

of overcoming financial challenges and considers the environment with this view in mind. Concerning limited economic opportunities, Participant 5 from Ikageng stated that:

*“The lack of jobs in our community and when you are in a place of attempting and failing and then you consider doing something that will benefit you, as we said in the beginning, to have an income”. P5IG*

Income was needed to implement any form of change and to transform one’s economic circumstances and those of the community. In this view, Participant 6 from the same community said:

*“Entrepreneurship can make you feel secure... it enables one to explore and cross the limits that one may be given by society. It can also help people survive without jobs”. P6IG*

Participant 8 said:

*“I think I would do maybe a cleaning services business. One special reason is because maybe I’ll be so eager that when I do have children, they won’t go looking for jobs like I did”. P8IG*

Two other participants, in emphasizing the traditional profit motive for entrepreneurship, alluded to investments that could be made and the promise of profitable entry points for one considering entrepreneurship. They said:

*“Why accommodation is because the research that I have done is that the value of property never goes down, but it’s always rising” P5IG. “With the issue of property, he has touched on it that property doesn’t depreciate but it increases, ... the issue of farming she touched on it as well and since you will be having a farm, many people will be working there” P1IG.*

A study comparing social entrepreneurship and for-profit/commercial entrepreneurship showed that individuals investing in the creation of for-profit social ventures have higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and more ambitious goals than their commercial counterparts [61]. Another study using regression analysis on motivating factors for social and commercial entrepreneurship found the positive effect of traditional societal values on commercial entrepreneurship prevalence and self-expression of societal values were associated positively with social entrepreneurship [62]. The present analysis shows that considerations such as income generation and financial security for oneself and family correlate with traditional values driving for-profit entrepreneurship. Considerations such as making a difference in the community, developing community programs, or investing in institutions were associated with higher self-efficacy of societal expression. Various objectives thus drive the nature of the perceived organization to effect change, whether in one’s present economic circumstances or to improve the societal conditions with either form of an organization contributing to the wealth and benefit of the community.

### **4.3.3 YOUTH’S ROLE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY**

The contribution of young people to the economy and their participation in entrepreneurship are substantial and varied. They support economic growth, innovation, employment creation, technology breakthroughs, and social impact. Young-owned companies boost trade, consumption, and output, all of which support economic expansion. They increase economic activity, which raises standards of living. The analysis of the various roles or strategies the participants perceived as viable ways of influencing social change and contributing to the economy included assessing the existing needs of their immediate communities and organizing to address these needs, creating employment, creating developmental platforms, entrepreneurship as a pathway to change, as an opportunity for solving social problems, investing in community health, role modeling, expanding the community’s options and social development.

#### **4.3.3.1 ORGANIZING FOR EMPLOYMENT CREATION**

The youth can harness the employment creation potential of entrepreneurship to drive economic growth and lower unemployment by mobilizing for the creation of jobs through entrepreneurship. This a multifaceted strategy that includes enabling infrastructure and resource access. In assessing the needs of the immediate community, participants saw roles of organizing for creating employment and income for their immediate family (P8IG; P7PC), monetizing social activity through repurposing and creativity (P1PC), developing businesses appropriate for their community segments and the development of services that can benefit the community such as virtual applications (P2PC; P4PC; P1PC). In emphasizing the importance of organizing for employment creation and other related issues for the benefit of the community and meeting the needs of immediate family, two participants said:

*“Also, entrepreneurs are able to change people’s lives because when they are able to have an income, they always give back to the community...” P5IG*

*"I wanted to say that entrepreneurship does bring about change as the fellow participants had mentioned. When people find that there is a problem in the community, they try to find ways to solve it and make people's lives better. Entrepreneurship does not only help people by addressing challenges, but it also helps them through job creation and things like that" P7PC*

The findings demonstrate that the youth's roles in organizing to generate income and work for their immediate family were in line with the economic growth potential entrepreneurship affords, especially with respect to job creation and economic development [63]. Furthermore, it supports the entrepreneurial event model hypothesis that life experiences can create entrepreneurial alertness and evaluation of opportunities. The youth in both Ikageng and Potchefstroom Central indicate a cognizance of unemployment community challenges and the life experiences resulting from these challenges, which contribute to their expressed entrepreneurial intentions to also organize for the creation of jobs [64].

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research revealed that the youth's general perception of entrepreneurship is that it is an effectual avenue to address local socio-economic challenges and creates positive social impacts and, as such, aligns with the view that entrepreneurship can positively boost a community's social and economic performance as posited by Ahlstrom *et al.* [65]. Demonstrated in the findings was that the youth have a strong interest in entrepreneurship, and perceive entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic independence, self-employment, and a means of creating job opportunities for themselves and others. For the youth, in particular for the Ikageng youth, entrepreneurship is a way of contributing toward the development of their communities and addressing the social ills prevalent in townships (such as poverty, crime, and drug addiction). Based on the perceptions of entrepreneurship among the youth, the study revealed that the youth are eager to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities that will make significant contributions to their local economy. Despite the indicated barriers of entry to entrepreneurship, there was a consensus that the youth are inclined to think about launching their own companies as they believe entrepreneurship to be a desirable and feasible career path. Their expressed interest and positive perception of entrepreneurship demonstrated that the youth believe that starting their own business can help combat the high rates of youth unemployment in the North West Province. There is an unequivocal belief that by starting their own businesses, the youth can create jobs for other locals and directly assist in reducing unemployment and poverty rates. Additionally, indicated in their potential choices of entrepreneurial enterprises, like getting involved in the restaurant industry and creating pool tournaments, is the desire to unite people, fortify relationships, and promote group behavior. As a result, for these youth, their involvement in entrepreneurship will enable them to promote social cohesiveness and a sense of community. Demonstrated in the desire to develop farming enterprises to promote healthy eating lifestyles, thus contributing to sustainable food security, the youth can spread awareness and encourage eco-friendly behaviors. Through the art centers and cultural events, the youth can highlight and conserve their district's cultural legacy. This can promote tourism, increase developmental opportunities, open doors and encourage a celebration of the local community identity. The recommendations of the paper, in summary, were to assist in cultivating the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth. These recommendations can be implemented by the government, education institutions, organizations in both the public and private sector, youth leaders and the community at large to support the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem geared toward increasing entrepreneurial activities among the youth. The recommendations provided include the advancement of research, education and training; cultural and social norms; financial support; government intervention; and agile entrepreneurship programs.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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