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A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE FACTORS LEADING TO SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

UMA REVISÃO DA LITERATURA SOBRE OS FATORES QUE LEVAM AO SUCESSO E AO FRACASSO DO EMPREENDEDORISMO JOVEM NA ÁFRICA DO SUL

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Eyitayo Francis Adanlawo*
***Social Transformation Research Entity, North-West University, South Africa
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5407-5724
eyitayofadan@gmail.com

Sinqobile Immaculate Mncwango**
****Business Studies Department, uMfolozi TVET College, Richards Bay, South Africa
smncwango7@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper focuses on both ‘success’ and ‘challenges’ that youth face when starting their own businesses, which resulted in entrepreneurial opportunities for youth. A literature review was conducted to identify the factors that lead to youth entrepreneurship success/failure. The final sample for the review consists of 62 articles that were found to be relevant to the study. Social cognitive theory was used to underpin the study. The findings identified success factors to include mentorship, skill development, and access to resources. However, systemic barriers such as limited funding, bureaucratic hurdles, and restricted market access impeded entrepreneurial growth. Rural youths were particularly disadvantaged due to geographic and infrastructural constraints. Moreover, mentorship and training programmes play a vital role in enhancing self-efficacy among aspiring entrepreneurs. These interventions often incorporate experiential learning and practical skill-building to empower individuals. Building on these findings, a multidimensional approach is required to sustain entrepreneurial interventions. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of tailoring entrepreneurship capacity development interventions to address the diverse needs and challenges of youths. Hence, it is essential to go beyond training to provide sustained support, including mentorship, funding access, and market linkages.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Interventions. Self-Efficacy. Youth Empowerment. Social Cognitive Theory. Skills Development. Literature Review.

Resumo
Este artigo foca tanto no "sucesso" quanto nos "desafios" que os jovens enfrentam ao iniciar seus próprios negócios, o que resultou em oportunidades empreendedoras para eles. Uma revisão bibliográfica foi realizada para identificar os fatores que levam ao sucesso/fracasso do empreendedorismo juvenil. A amostra final da revisão consiste em 62 artigos considerados relevantes para o estudo. A teoria sociocognitiva foi utilizada para embasar o estudo. Os resultados identificaram fatores de sucesso, incluindo mentoria, desenvolvimento de habilidades e acesso a recursos. No entanto, barreiras sistêmicas, como financiamento limitado, entraves burocráticos e acesso restrito ao mercado, impediram o crescimento empreendedor. Os jovens rurais foram particularmente desfavorecidos devido a restrições geográficas e de infraestrutura. Além disso, programas de mentoria e treinamento desempenham um papel vital no aumento da autoeficácia entre aspirantes a empreendedores. Essas intervenções frequentemente incorporam aprendizagem experiencial e desenvolvimento de habilidades práticas para empoderar os indivíduos. Com base nesses resultados, uma abordagem multidimensional é necessária para sustentar as intervenções empreendedoras. De modo geral, os resultados ressaltam a importância de adaptar as intervenções de desenvolvimento da capacidade empreendedora para atender às diversas necessidades e desafios dos jovens. Portanto, é essencial ir além do treinamento para fornecer suporte sustentado, incluindo mentoria, acesso a financiamento e vínculos com o mercado.

Palavras-chave: *Intervenções Empreendedoras. Autoeficácia. Empoderamento Juvenil. Teoria*

Social Cognitiva. Desenvolvimento de Habilidades. Revisão da Literatura.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on both ‘success’ and ‘challenges’ that youth face when starting their own businesses, challenges such as a lack of skills and capital, which has resulted in entrepreneurial opportunities for youth. Such opportunities are essential for the successful launch and operation of a new business (Brixiová et al., 2020; Igwe et al., 2021; Cieslik et al., 2022). It is reported that less access to financial wealth (De Lannoy et al., 2020) and small networks (such as business relationships) will reduce youth social capital (Adanlawo & Nkomo, 2023; Xaba et al., 2025). These challenges could have an impact on starting and operating a business since young individuals might find it difficult to get "legitimacy" among important stakeholders (such as suppliers, clients, and financiers) if they do not have enough social capital. In contrast to youth empowerment, youth development is essential for South African youth. By providing programmes that prepare youth for entrepreneurship, youth development plays a significant role (Arutyunova et al., 2022; Maphela, 2023).

Spaull & Kotze (2015) and Addleman et al. (2024) aver that many young people have entrepreneurial skills to start their own businesses. This is a significant problem, as an estimated 60% of unemployed youth in South Africa have never worked due to a lack of skills or work experience (De Lannoy et al., 2020). It is crucial for youth to be aware of the reality of the job market and to pursue entrepreneurship as a career path. This will help reduce unemployment rates and ensure that the country has a pool of skilled professionals who can contribute to the economy (Graham et al., 2019). For youth to successfully start and sustain businesses, they must have a strong sense of ability to tackle challenges.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is relevant to be a successful entrepreneur. Molema et al. (2024) describe entrepreneurial self-efficacy as the "strength of a person’s belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing certain tasks. Entrepreneurship becomes an important solution in south Africa to establish and operate small businesses to tackle high level of poverty, unemployment and low economic growth. It is thus necessary for all stakeholders to concentrate effort on the development of youth entrepreneurs, to hasten the growth and development of the economy. This effort is influenced by both critical success factors and obstacles. When these two elements are sufficiently understood by agencies and organisations implementing entrepreneurial capacity development interventions, they can design these interventions and support mechanisms to be more effective.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Social cognitive theory

Albert Bandura, a psychologist, developed the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to provide a contemporary understanding of human behaviour. This idea is based on an understanding that behaviour is driven by environmental factors and/or internal predispositions (Bandura, 2001). This theory is relevant to this study as it implies that a person's behaviour is mostly impacted by the opportunities and limitations they see, which are ingrained in their sociocultural surroundings. As this study focuses on both success and failure of youth entrepreneurship, hence, the appropriate theory to adopt. SCT is a combination of environmental and personal factors, proposing that the way humans behave is a result of their internal predispositions (inclusive of thoughts, processes, emotions, motivation, and experiences) within a certain environmental context (Sebastian et al., 2021; Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). The theorist contends that we must make a wide range of decisions since we are surrounded by a variety of ever-changing circumstances. Because our behaviours are neither innate nor only the result of our surroundings, humans are able to navigate a very complicated world despite constantly shifting dynamics. As active agents, we coordinate behaviours with one another, affect the behaviour of others, and affect outcomes.

The theory argues that all decisions are taken in line with the individual's behaviour as impacted by environmental and personal factors (Tran & Von Korflesch, 2016). "People evaluate their surroundings, and based on their intrapersonal predispositions, their perceptions become influenced by the intended goal or outcome, which will facilitate or hinder their ability to act," according to Bergman et al. (2019, p. 3). The SCT differs from other theories because of its unique feature that focuses on both internal and external reinforcement as well as social impact. The theory believes that an individual observes and processes thoughts before taking a decision, and this allows for decisions to be taken with careful consideration of social conditions that exist within one's social context, further influencing behaviour (Bandura, 2001).

To explain the complex relationships between one's behaviours, their environment, and internal predisposition, Bandura uses a Triadic Reciprocal Causation (TRC) model. According to Bandura (2001), 'internal personal factors exist in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, which include patterns in an individual's behaviour and external or environmental factors and influences. All of these operate as individual concepts that interact extensively to influence one another. According to Adanlawo and Chaka (2025), cultural influences and contextual factors, such as individual activities, status quo or situational analysis, and sociocultural opportunities and barriers, all help to facilitate personal agency.

In essence, the theory is based on the idea that individuals bring personally related complexities (experiences, emotions, and perceptions) to their environment, which act as key informants of their desire to engage in specific activities, such as entrepreneurship in this case. Their complexities are accompanied by environmental factors and conditions that play a significant role in the determination of the activities that one will engage in by offering sociocultural opportunities and limitations that can both help and hinder the kinds of activities people choose to engage in in a particular environment (Wang et al., 2019).

3 METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is on both 'success' and 'challenges' that youth face when starting their own businesses. To achieve the overall aim of the study, three (3) objectives were set:

Objective 1. To identify the key factors to entrepreneurship success

Objective 2. To identify the barriers to achieving entrepreneurial efficacy

Objective 3. To propose the strategies to enhance entrepreneurial efficacy

At first, the research objective was defined, and we searched for peer-reviewed articles in Elsevier, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. We focused on entrepreneurial business from intentions to starting a business to success and/or failure and defined failure as the closure of a business. Based on the objective, the following inclusion criteria were set. We searched simultaneously within the databases for the keywords (entrepreneurial interventions, self-efficacy, youth empowerment, social cognitive theory, skills development) and the title. As youth entrepreneurship (success and failure) is a topic in various contexts, theoretical backgrounds, and research domains, the search led to 172 results. We set time restrictions on all relevant publications from 2015 to reduce the search results. To ensure a reliable approach, we defined the exclusion criteria as follows: a. The articles lacked an entrepreneurial focus. b. The articles did not focus on the success or failure of entrepreneurial businesses. c. The articles did not focus on youth. To validate the search, both authors of the article separately read all titles and abstracts to exclude irrelevant articles. The final sample for the review consists of 62 articles that were found to be relevant and were carefully read.

4 FINDINGS

Following the review of the 62 articles that met the inclusion criteria, three (3) themes were identified.

Theme 1. Key Success Factors

Theme 2. Barriers to Achieving Entrepreneurial Efficacy

Theme 3. Strategies to Enhance Entrepreneurial Efficacy

4.1 Theme 1. Key success factors

Six major factors are recognised as key to entrepreneurial success.

1. Skills development and education

Skills development and education consist of practical training and entrepreneurship education (Lattacher & Wdowiak, 2020). Skills development and education are two concepts. The practical training is the first concept that Secundo et al. (2020) refer to as the hands-on workshop and experiential learning developed by the agencies to develop entrepreneurs in terms of entrepreneurial skills in crucial business areas such as financial management, problem-solving, and marketing. The second concept speaks to the vocational and academic programmes designed to instil and bridge the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge, which results in enhanced capability and confidence amongst entrepreneurs (Matsheke & Dhurup, 2017; Cieslik et al., 2022).

Skills development and education are identified as key factors to entrepreneurial success (Chatterjee & Das, 2016; Hatthakijphong & Ting, 2019; Bauman & Lucy, 2021).

2. Access to resources

Access to resources includes financial resources such as grants, short- and long-term loans, and venture capital that help young entrepreneurs start their businesses and grow, as well as infrastructure, which refers to tools, co-working spaces, technology, and marketplaces that help businesses operate more efficiently (De Lannoy et al., 2020; Addleman et al., 2024). Access to resources has been identified by scholars as a key factor to entrepreneurial success (Aarstad et al., 2016; Chatterjee et al., 2019).

3. Support systems

Support systems come in the form of mentorship and coaching, which is the guidance and assistance received from entrepreneurs who have experience in business (Bergman et al., 2019; Brixiová et al., 2020; Nicholls-Nixon & Maxheimer, 2022). They aid in the form of giving direction, fostering resilience, and building the confidence of upcoming entrepreneurs. The second concept related to support systems is networking opportunities, which are connections to experts in the industry, colleagues in the business space, and investors with the aim of enhancing access to the market and resource sharing.

4. Government and institutional support

Government support comes in the form of policy incentives, which are supportive policies that break taxes, provide for funding schemes, and reduce bureaucracy with the aim of encouraging youth entrepreneurship (Wang et al., 2019). Shu et al. (2019) and Anwar et al. (2020) aver that government and institutional support are vital to entrepreneurial success.

5. Personal traits and motivations

These key success factors embrace self-belief and resilience (Arutyunova et al., 2022; Cade, 2023; Wall, 2023), which refer to a strong belief in one’s ability to overcome business obstacles and setbacks as well as perseverance tolerance to risk, which is related to one’s willingness to take calculated risks as an entrepreneur. Zarnadze et al. (2022) identify personal traits and motivations as potential factors to small business success.

6. Market opportunities

This success factor speaks to demand-driven innovation, which is about identifying and addressing unmet needs or emerging trends that drive business success and utilization of globalization and technology, where agencies employ digital tools and global networks to open new opportunities for young entrepreneurs (Adely et al., 2021; Zu, 2022; Maphela, 2023).

In summary, for the youth to effectively use the factors to succeed in entrepreneurship, they need to possess some elements that are essential for success in youth entrepreneurship. According to Nguyen et al. (2019), success in youth entrepreneurship involves the ability of young individuals to create, sustain, and grow businesses that bring innovative solutions to the market while contributing to their personal and professional development. The following are the core elements that best define success:

a. Innovation and creativity

Young entrepreneurs often bring fresh ideas and unconventional approaches to solving problems. Rozentale & van Baalen (2021) aver that success comes from leveraging this creativity to develop unique products, services, or business models.

b. Strong business foundations

Understanding the fundamentals of business, such as planning, financial management, and marketing, is essential. According to Dana et al. (2023), writing a solid business plan and conducting market research can significantly increase the chances of success.

c. Risk-taking and resilience

Entrepreneurship requires taking calculated risks and bouncing back from failures. Successful youth entrepreneurs view setbacks as learning opportunities and persist in their efforts (Mncwango & Adanlawo, 2025; Xaba et al., 2025).

d. Networking and collaboration

Building connections with mentors, peers, and industry experts provides access to information, partnerships, and funding opportunities (Spaull & Kotze, 2015; Van Horn, 2016; Malhotra, 2023).

e. Social impact and purpose

Youth entrepreneurship is often driven by a desire to address social or environmental challenges. Success includes creating businesses that generate profits while making a positive impact on society (Ogamba, 2019; Zu, 2020; Bublitz et al., 2021).

4.2 Theme 2. Barriers to achieving entrepreneurial success

Seven barriers to achieving entrepreneurial success are identified:

1. Lack of education and skills

Lack of access to quality education and entrepreneurship training limits knowledge and hinders confidence in business operations (Christodoulou et al., 2024; Rashid et al., 2025).

2. Limited access to capital

De Lannoy et al. (2020) identify difficulty securing funding, especially for marginalised groups, as a significant barrier to starting and sustaining ventures.

3. Weak support networks

Lack of mentors, advisors, or peer support isolates entrepreneurs, reducing their ability to learn and grow (Malecki, 2018; Wang et al., 2019).

4. Regulatory and bureaucratic challenges

According to Lecuna et al. (2020), complex regulations, excessive taxes, and slow bureaucratic processes discourage entrepreneurial efforts.

5. Cultural and social barriers

Societal attitudes that stigmatise failure or undervalue entrepreneurship deter individuals from running businesses successfully (Oghazi et al., 2024).

6. Economic and market constraints

Economic instability, limited market demand, or oversaturated markets pose significant challenges, and competition from large, established firms may hinder small-scale entrepreneurs (Pathak et al., 2022).

7. Personal limitations

Fear of failure, low self-confidence, and inadequate time management impede entrepreneurial growth (Tubadji et al., 2021). Failure in youth entrepreneurship is a common but valuable learning experience. It is frequently caused by a combination of factors that can be addressed to improve chances of success. The below table provides key reasons why youth entrepreneurs may face challenges and potential solutions.

Table 1

Causes of failure in youth entrepreneurship and ways to address them

REASONS FOR YOUTH FAILURE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Lack of Experience - Young entrepreneurs often lack the industry-specific knowledge or business acumen needed to navigate challenges effectively (Grilli, 2022; Aitzhanova et al., 2024).	Seek Mentorship - Engage with experienced entrepreneurs or join incubators and accelerators to gain guidance (Graham et al., 2019; Yitshaki, 2025).
Insufficient Planning - Inadequate market research, poorly designed business models, or lack of strategic planning can lead to failure (Brixiová et al., 2020).	Focus on Learning - Take time to build foundational knowledge in entrepreneurship through books, courses, and practical experiences (Ogamba, 2019).
Limited Financial Resources - Many young entrepreneurs struggle to secure funding, leading to cash flow issues that can cripple the business (Matsheke & Dhurup, 2017; Igwe et al., 2021).	Start small - Begin with a lean approach, testing ideas in a low-risk environment before scaling up (Hatthakijphong & Ting, 2019).
Overestimating the Market - Misjudging demand or overestimating the value proposition result in low customer acquisition (Jelassi et al., 2020; Wall, 2023).	Strengthen financial literacy - Learn about funding options, budgeting, and cash flow management (Anwar et al., 2020, Rashid, 2025).
Inadequate Mentorship - The absence of experienced mentors or advisors can impact on young entrepreneurs (Nicholls-Nixon & Maxheimer, 2022; Yitshaki, 2025).	Conduct thorough research - Validate your business idea through market research and customer feedback (Jelassi et al., 2020; Bublitz et al., 2021).
Poor Time Management - Inability to balancing personal, academic, or other responsibilities often leads to inefficiencies in running a business (Bauman & Lucy, 2021).	Develop time management skills - Use tools and techniques to prioritise tasks effectively and maintain a balance between responsibilities (Aarstad et al., 2016; Yitshaki, 2025).
Weak Networks - Building strong professional networks is critical, but youth often have limited access to such resources (Van Horn, 2016; Rashid et al., 2025).	Leverage networks - Join entrepreneurship communities, attend networking events, and use online platforms to connect with like-minded individuals (Malecki et al., 2018).

Source: Authors' own data

4.3 Theme 3. Strategies to enhance entrepreneurial efficacy

Two-stage strategies are identified to enhance entrepreneurial efficacy.

4.3.1 Stage 1. Policies encouraging youth entrepreneurship

Policies encouraging youth entrepreneurships often focus on creating an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs (Tubadji et al., 2021; Nkomo & Adanlawo, 2025). These policies aim to equip youth with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to start and sustain their business. They are further designed to:

a. Provide financial support consisting of startup grants and subsidies where they offer seed funding and financial incentives to entrepreneurs exploiting opportunities in the market (Van Horn, 2016). This is provided alongside access to credit, where the agency partners with financial institutions to provide youth-friendly loans with low-interest rates or flexible repayment terms and crowdfunding support, which facilitates access to crowdfunding platforms for young entrepreneurs.

b. Creating e-learning platforms that provide online tools and resources for skill-building and entrepreneurial education, youth are encouraged to be innovative in business practices (Hatthakijphong & Ting, 2019; Adely et al., 2021).
c. Provide policy and regulatory support through simplifying processes to formalise youth businesses (Bublitz et al., 2021). Also, offer tax incentives or reduced tax rates for youth-owned businesses and promote policies that prioritise youth entrepreneurship in national development strategies (Adeosun & Shittu, 2021).
d. Provide awareness and advocacy through running entrepreneurship campaigns aimed at promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career path for youth by showcasing success stories that highlight successful young entrepreneurs to inspire others (Ogamba, 2019; Al-Mamary, 2025).

4.3.2 Stage 2. Post-entrepreneurial capacity development intervention actions

After delivering entrepreneurial capacity development interventions, agencies should take follow-up actions to ensure the success and sustainability of the businesses started by the participants. These actions aim to provide continued support, monitor progress, and address challenges. The table below explains the post-interventions necessary for entrepreneurial capacity development.

Table 2

Post entrepreneurial capacity development interventions

Incubation and acceleration programmes	Business Incubators: Offering office space, resources, and advisory services to early-stage businesses (Rozentale & van Baalen, 2021).
	Accelerator Programs: Providing intensive support for growth-stage businesses (Shu et al., 2019).
	Technology Access: Offering tools and platforms to foster innovation (Matsheke & Dhurup, 2017).
Policy advocacy and ecosystem building	Regulatory Support: Advocating policies that reduce barriers to business growth, such as business registration processes (Lecuna et al., 2020).
	Collaboration with Stakeholders: Partnering with governments, NGOs, and private sectors to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Malhotra et al., 2023).

	Creating Entrepreneurial Hubs: Establishing regional centres that provide continuous support to young entrepreneurs (Anwar et al., 2020)
Recognition and incentives	Awards and Recognition: Presenting successful participants to motivate others and showcase programme impact (Oghazi et al., 2024).
	Incentive Programmes: Offering rewards for innovation, sustainability, or social impact (Grilli, 2022).
Knowledge sharing and best practices	Alumni networks: Establishing networks for past participants to stay engaged and support one another (Malecki, 2018).
	Research and development: Using participant feedback to refine interventions and develop new models (Chatterjee et al., 2019).
Crisis and risk management support	Business recovery programs: Helping during economic downturns or unforeseen challenges (Nicholls-Nixon & Maxheimer, 2022).

Source: Authors' own data

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Key success factors

This study identifies skills development and education, access to resources, support systems, government and institutional support, personal traits and motivations, and market opportunities as the six (6) key factors to entrepreneurial success (Nguyen et al., 2019; Rozentale & van Baalen, 2021; Dana et al., 2023). However, mentorship and training programmes play a vital role in enhancing self-efficacy among aspiring entrepreneurs. These interventions often incorporate experiential learning and practical skill-building to empower individuals. As Molema (2024) notes, self-efficacy is influenced by various factors, including personal experiences and participatory learning, which shape an individual's belief in their entrepreneurial capabilities. The study concludes that the youth personal and professional development contribute to the ability to start, grow, and sustain businesses.

5.2 Barriers to achieving entrepreneurial efficacy

Barriers to entrepreneurial success can be framed within the context of social and structural challenges. However, limited market access, particularly for young entrepreneurs, curtails this synergy (De Lannoy et al., 2020; Pathak et al., 2022). The study also revealed that access to funding further inhibit youth potential (Matsheke & Dhurup, 2017; Igwe et al., 2021). However, systemic barriers such as bureaucratic hurdles (Lecuna et al., 2020), weak support network (Malecki, 2018; Wang et al., 2019), and restricted market access impeded entrepreneurial growth (Nicholls-Nixon & Maxheimer, 2022; Yitshaki, 2025). It can be concluded that rural youths were particularly disadvantaged due to geographic and infrastructural constraints.

5.3 Strategies to enhance entrepreneurial efficacy

Youths frequently recognised the advantages of the entrepreneurship entrepreneurship's programmes, particularly its hands-on approach to teaching essential skills such as business registration, marketing, and financial management. Building on these findings, a multidimensional approach is required to sustain entrepreneurial interventions. Programmes need to integrate continuous mentorship (Lecuna et al., 2020), targeted financial aid (Rozentale & van Baalen, 2021), and enhanced infrastructural support to overcome existing barriers (Anwar et al., 2020). Bridging the urban-rural divide by decentralising entrepreneurial resources and networks can foster inclusive growth (Malecki, 2018). Policymakers and stakeholders should prioritise the development of community-driven initiatives that leverage local knowledge and collective action. This approach not only enhances entrepreneurial self-efficacy but also promotes a sense of ownership and accountability among participants.

Overall, based on SCT, youth behave the way they do because they want to achieve a specific outcome (entrepreneurship intention), which we consider 'goals'; as a result, thoughts (Bergman et al., 2019), feelings, and behaviour control (opportunity and constraints) play a significant role in how youth behave in a specific environment or context (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). The findings underscore the importance of tailoring entrepreneurship capacity development interventions to address the diverse needs and challenges of youths. Hence, it is essential to go beyond training to provide sustained support, including mentorship, funding access, and market linkages.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The paper looked at the successes and failures of youth entrepreneurship in South Africa. It was discovered in the review that businesses fail because of low levels of skills, insufficient business management skills resulting from unemployment, and insufficient frameworks for the youth. These challenges highlight the need for targeted support and training programs that can equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of running a business. By fostering a more robust ecosystem that includes mentorship and access to resources, we can enhance the chances of success for youth-led ventures. The reasons for youth entrepreneurship failure are the driving force behind the development and promotion of entrepreneurship interventions aimed at advancing youth so that they can succeed in their business ventures. These interventions are designed to address the specific challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, providing them with tailored support that increases their resilience and adaptability in the competitive market. Ultimately, by understanding and mitigating the factors that contribute to failure, we can create a more favourable environment for youth entrepreneurship to thrive.

This study discovered that the key success factors that enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy are adequate access to skills development and education, access to resources, an adequate and active government support system, personal traits and motivation, innovativeness and market opportunities, and other institutions such as family and business forums. These factors collectively contribute to building confidence among entrepreneurs in their abilities to succeed. The following act as challenges: lack of education, limited access to capital and funding mechanisms, lack of stable and sound support mechanisms, laws, regulations, and bureaucracies, social and cultural barriers, economic and market constraints, and personal limitations. These impediments can pose considerable challenges for potential entrepreneurs, making it difficult for them to develop the skills and mindset required for success.

Addressing these barriers is crucial to fostering a more supportive environment for entrepreneurial growth and self-efficacy. Unfortunately, individuals with the necessary skills, leadership drive, and vision were not usually funded, but the undeserving were, resulting in the failure of small businesses. Understanding key success factors and barriers to entrepreneurship is critical for informing relevant stakeholders about all concepts to consider when developing programmes and interventions. The barriers in this regard can be enhanced by providing training that is both theoretically and practically integrated, diversifying financing and funding mechanisms, reforming policies, and promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career. The study concludes that entrepreneurship promotes innovation, and innovation promotes entrepreneurship (Pathak et al., 2022), which underscores the interdependence between these processes.

In conclusion, this paper has provided a theoretical validation of SCT as a useful lens in understanding the factors that lead to successes and failures of entrepreneurial businesses in South Africa. Social cognitive theory gave substantial insights in regard to how youth can be equipped with the necessary skills and mindset to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship (Tran & Von Korflesch, 2016; Aure et al., 2019; Jannesari, 2022). By fostering a supportive environment and encouraging self-efficacy, stakeholders can enhance the likelihood of entrepreneurial success among youth.

This study recommends the introduction of entrepreneurial studies at the early stages of schooling, especially for learners who must choose different career streams; entrepreneurship should be part of the curriculum. Curriculum can provide students with essential skills and knowledge to navigate the business world. By integrating entrepreneurial studies into early education, learners can develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities that are valuable in any career path they choose. This recommendation would assist learners with the basic knowledge of business mechanisms. Future studies could look into how factors such as skills development and education, support systems, access to resources, personal traits and motivations, and market opportunities could enhance entrepreneurial success.

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