

A qualitative approach to the entrepreneurial education and intentions nexus: A case of Zimbabwean polytechnic students



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Background: Owing to the popularity of entrepreneurship as an alternative to formal employment, entrepreneurship education has become the main instrument for equipping graduates with survivalist and innovative skills for new venture creation in their post-college life. However, despite the growing body of literature on the entrepreneurship education–entrepreneurial intention nexus, there are limited studies based on qualitative methodologies covering this relationship.

Aim: This article develops an in-depth understanding of the interface between exposure to entrepreneurship education and the entrepreneurial intention of students.

Setting: The study draws on the perceptions of 27 purposively selected national certificate level students at a Zimbabwean polytechnic.

Methods: The study used an interpretive qualitative research design, with data being collected through focus group discussions.

Results: Findings suggest that while passive learning and teaching methods were critical to orienting students towards the entrepreneurship field, over-dependence on theoretical content, teacher-dominated delivery, the absence of deep practical orientation and engagement with industry undermined the significance of tertiary level entrepreneurship education.

Conclusion: To enrich the development of potential entrepreneurs, the implication of these findings is that educators and policymakers should address various aspects of the entrepreneurship education value chain (from content creation, delivery strategy, enhancing practical orientation of the subject, and developing lasting relations with industry long before entrepreneurship starts) that potentially affect students' willingness to engage in future entrepreneurship.

Introduction

In the new global economy, entrepreneurship has become a central issue for the socio-economic development of nations. Against this background, the need to groom individuals who are intending to pursue entrepreneurial careers is being experienced by national governments and educators. Arguably, this explains why higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide increasingly seek to integrate entrepreneurship education into their educational curricula. A sobering fact, however, is that there is no foolproof prototype for effective entrepreneurship education (Maritz & Brown 2013). In fact, Professor William J. Baumol interviewed in Griffiths et al. (2012:617) lamented that: 'We do not know what works in teaching innovative entrepreneurship. We are using certain teaching methods because our teachers used those methods'. Against this background, there is a need to understand students' situated experiences of extant entrepreneurial education practices and their implication for learning outcomes, especially entrepreneurial intent. This understanding is particularly important in the least developed countries such as Zimbabwe, which is plagued by a high rate of graduate unemployment and poverty. This context, arguably, needs human capital development practices that embed innovative economic behaviour.

Although substantial research on entrepreneurship education and its learning outcomes has been carried out worldwide, empirical evidence on the specific aspects of entrepreneurial education that ignite entrepreneurship intention and activities of the innovative type is scarce and inconclusive (Baumol 2005; Griffiths et al. 2012; Mayhew et al. 2012). Actually, the

existing literature on the association between aspects of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention places less emphasis on the entrepreneurship intentions of vocational education students in struggling economies (Fulgence 2015; Mwasalwiba 2009). For this reason, it is important to expand the body of knowledge with respect to entrepreneurship education to fully comprehend how it affects the intention of students to engage in entrepreneurship.

Polytechnic colleges are a potentially interesting target group for studies exploring the entrepreneurship education–entrepreneurship intention nexus given their unique educational mandate in the higher education sector. In Zimbabwe, polytechnics are intended to provide a blend of theoretical and practically oriented education, with the aim of producing human resources who are vocationally ready (Phuthi & Maphosa 2007). In other words, the thrust of polytechnics is to provide technical and vocational education and training. Apart from this, these institutions are also meant to promote technology generation and transfer. Study options at such institutions include short courses, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, national certificates, national diplomas, higher national diplomas through to undergraduate degrees in applied sciences, commerce and engineering (Lee 2010). The popularity of this education model in developing countries lies in its emphasis on creating a human resource inventory equipped to drive a society's industrial growth agenda. This is particularly relevant for a country like Zimbabwe which is struggling economically and has endured sustained de-industrialisation and high formal unemployment (over 80%) following its Fast-track Land Reform Programme initiated in the year 2000 (Schmuck 2017).

While compulsory entrepreneurship education programmes are enforced at Zimbabwean polytechnics as a way to prepare prospective entrepreneurs and business owners, very limited studies, to the researchers' knowledge, have been conducted to assess their effect on students' intention to engage in entrepreneurship. Mindful of the urgent need to equip the youths in stressed economies with business and technological skill inventories requisite to launch business ventures, the necessity to comprehend and optimise aspects of entrepreneurship education that impinge on the students' intention to engage in such activities cannot be over-emphasised. This article employs students' learning experiences in entrepreneurship classes to unravel the entrepreneurship education–entrepreneurship intention nexus. It seeks to answer the research question: 'To what extent do the student experiences of entrepreneurial courses help to illuminate the understanding of their entrepreneurial intention?'

Literature review

Understanding entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education relates to the deliberate transmission of entrepreneurial knowledge (Jones & Colwill 2013). Such knowledge encompasses thoughts, expertise and mindsets relevant to venture creation and survival.

In contemporary economies, these qualities are essential for entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs alike (Maritz & Brown 2013). Weber (2012) notes that entrepreneurship education is ongoing and that the different phases of one's entrepreneurship career growth path have unique educational requirements. Consistent with this, some scholars perceive different facets of entrepreneurship education. For example, Liñán (2004) views entrepreneurship education as having four subcategories, namely entrepreneurship awareness education, education for start-ups, education for entrepreneurial dynamism and continuing education for entrepreneurship.

There are suggestions that the contemporary economic environment of emerging economies urgently needs a sustained supply of innovative entrepreneurs to sustain it (Braunerhjelm 2010; Marinova & Borza 2011; Wiseman & Anderson 2013). Not undermining the role of replicative entrepreneurs, it is innovative entrepreneurs through their introduction and acceptance of new products and new production methods that propel economies forward and introduce structural changes (Bruton 2014; Mars 2013; Urbano & Guerrero 2013). Thus, institutions of higher learning and other concerned stakeholders have a critical role in educating graduates to equip them with essential skills and orientation for innovation and dynamism.

In view of the limited research that examines the impact of specifics of entrepreneurship education on different entrepreneurship intentions, this study postulates that the mode of entrepreneurship education that an individual is exposed to influences the nature of entrepreneurship that an individual intends to engage in. Extant literature reveals that scholarly work that connects teaching and learning methods in entrepreneurship education with the effectiveness of learning outcomes has already been undertaken (Balan & Metcalfe 2012; Taatila 2010; Ulvenblad, Berggren & Winborg 2013). Most of these vouch for active learning methods as being more effective in grooming nascent entrepreneurs (Davies & Gibb 1991; Vincett & Farlow 2008). Ojastu, Chiu and Olsen (2011:399) note that despite the lack consensus on the strengths and drawbacks of various teaching methods in entrepreneurship education, there is convergence of opinion on the view that 'the best way to learn entrepreneurship is to "live" it.' Thus, potential entrepreneurs arguably learn best through entrepreneurial action. Components of such a method of entrepreneurship education include project-based assignments, practical field projects, business plan competitions, computer-based business games and simulations, college-supported business incubators, micro field-based student consulting and the involvement of external mentoring schemes.

Entrepreneurship education in the Zimbabwean higher education sector

Following a 1999 joint review of the state of the education sector, the Zimbabwean government henceforth sought to expand entrepreneurship education to all institutions of higher learning in the country (Nziramanga 1999). The most compelling evidence of this drive is the emphasis of the 2010–2015 Strategic Plan of the then Ministry of Higher

Education and Technology on the need to reorient the higher education sector towards entrepreneurship-inclined technical and vocational education (Ministry of Higher Education and Technology 2010). Since 2011, all polytechnic students taking national certificate level courses of the Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO) in Zimbabwe are required to complete a year-long subject in entrepreneurship skills development. Learning occurs through weekly classroom contact where students are exposed to lectures. The students' performance in the subject is assessed using a combination of coursework (i.e. written assignments, in-class tests, business plan) and a final written examination.

Apart from polytechnics, local universities and other vocational training institutions also offer entrepreneurship education and training programmes of different duration and at different qualification levels. While some of the programmes are optional, others have mandatory components for the different qualifications. However, the effectiveness of such programmes is not clear. The fact that diverse students enrol in the entrepreneurship courses for different reasons makes it difficult to have a clear picture of the success of the courses. Some anecdotal and empirical evidence suggest a continuum of student attitudes that range from outright negativity to apparent enthusiasm towards the programmes, with a mixture of indifference and tolerance in between.

Findings from Mauchi et al.'s (2011) study on the state of entrepreneurship education at Zimbabwean universities revealed some teething problems. Their study drew attention to the over-reliance on passive, teacher-centred approaches to entrepreneurship education, while entrepreneurship in reality is rather lively and active. Another observed irony was that the lecturers who conducted the programmes had neither experience of nor qualifications specific to entrepreneurship. These findings are corroborated by results from Hosho, Muguti and Muzividzi's (2013) study on the effect of students' attitude towards entrepreneurship after being exposed to entrepreneurship education. The preceding scholars observed that most students were dissatisfied with the course materials and teaching methods that they were exposed to during their studies. Ndfirepi's (2016) quantitative study on the joint effects of technological creativity and exposure to entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurship intentions of students at a particular Zimbabwean polytechnics revealed significant positive correlations among technological creativity, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions. Unlike Mauchi et al. (2011) and Hosho et al. (2013), Ndfirepi's (2016) study did not explore the teaching and learning approaches that were used at the polytechnic. Such information is arguably essential to sufficiently grasp entrepreneurship at Zimbabwean polytechnics. It is this research gap that the current study seeks to close.

Entrepreneurship intention

Entrepreneurship intention relates to an individual's willingness to engage in business activity in the future

(Krueger 2006). Intention is, therefore, a proxy for future course of action. Concomitantly, the entrepreneurship intention construct has been conveniently used in studies assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education programmes on students, given the difficulties associated with attempting to use actual entrepreneurship activity as a yardstick (Thompson 2009). Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud (2000:411) highlight the high and consistent predictive power of intention on planned behaviour, especially 'when that behaviour is rare, hard to observe, or involves unpredictable time lags.' While several entrepreneurial intention theories have evolved over time, the focus of this study is limited to the three commonly used ones, that is, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Model of Entrepreneurial Event and Theory of Implementing Entrepreneurship Ideas.

An intention-based analytical framework which is commonly used in entrepreneurship studies is Ajzen's (1991) TPB (Heuer & Kolvareid 2013; Kaijun & Sholihah 2015; Manstead & Parker 2015). Although originally not developed for entrepreneurship, Krueger and Casrud's (1993) study set the scene for making it a foundational conceptual lens for entrepreneurial intention research. The theory portrays entrepreneurship behaviour as an outcome of entrepreneurship intention which in turn is a result of three antecedents, that is, attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Attitude refers to one's predisposition towards a subject and is premised on one's attitudinal beliefs towards a subject (Liñán 2004). Subjective norms relate to the opinions of people who are socially close to an individual (Liñán 2004). According to Ajzen (1991), the sentiments of individuals such as friends, family, workmates, mentors or role models carry weight in shaping an individual's intention, although their adoption depends on one's willingness to comply. Lastly, perceived behavioural control means self-belief in one's capabilities to undertake a task (Saeed et al. 2014). This factor determines the strength of the likelihood of intention being translated into action (Boyd & Vozikis 1994).

The credibility of this intention-based theory as a measure of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education lies in its proven strength in predicting planned behaviour in other domains outside entrepreneurship (Ajzen 2015). The model has consistently '... exhibited significant predictive validity, typically explaining 30% of future behaviour.' (Ajzen 1991:179).

Another key intention-based theory of entrepreneurship is Shapero's (1982) Model of Entrepreneurial Event (MEE). It explains an individual's willingness to engage in entrepreneurship in the future in terms of the following three factors: perceptions of desirability (the personal appeal of establishing a business), perceptions of feasibility (extent of belief in one's abilities to start a business) and a propensity to act upon opportunities. The thrust of this model is that individuals are prompted to consider engaging in entrepreneurship following a negative (push factor) or positive (pull factor) disturbance in their normal way of life.

Such disturbances include, dissatisfaction with current employment, loss of employment or the need for independence. However, the strength of the influence of such events is influenced by perceived desirability and feasibility of an entrepreneurial action, as well as one's propensity to act. In the absence of an instigating event, people will continue with their usual ways of life. According to Krueger et al. (2000), perceptions of desirability and feasibility jointly account for over 50% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, and the propensity to act explains the remainder. Compared to the TPB, the model of MEE has received lesser consideration from entrepreneurship scholars.

Another under explored scholarly contribution in entrepreneurship research is Bird's (1988) Theory of Implementing Entrepreneurship Ideas. This theory suggests that the processes of new venture creation and growth or expansion of existing ones are an outcome of preplanned behaviour. The theory also advances that entrepreneurial intention and activity is an outcome of conscious (rational) and unconscious (intuitive) thought processes against a background of different personal and social-political settings. A key feature of Bird's (1988) theory is its acknowledgement of the role of intention in the establishment and expansion of new ventures. In as much as the theory acknowledges the role of contextual factors in shaping entrepreneurial intention and activity, it falls short of explaining the mechanism through which this occurs.

A closer analysis of the three theories reveals an overlap of components across theories in some instances and a divergence in others. For instance, Krueger and Brazeal (1994) draw parallels between attitude (TPB) and perceived desirability (MEE), as well as perceived behavioural control (TPB) and perceived feasibility (MEE). In addition, Boyd and Vozikis's (1994) attempt at modifying Bird's (1988) theory by incorporating the self-efficacy concepts ended with an unintended consequence of merging the theory with Ajzen's (1991) TPB. More recently, Schlaegel and Koenig (2013) attempted to integrate the TPB and MEE using meta-analytic structural equation modelling. The outcome of this effort was a comprehensive theoretical lens which provided scholars with a fuller understanding of the evolution of entrepreneurial intent.

The relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions

Although the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of students is widely researched (e.g. Fayolle & Liñán 2014; Hattab 2014; Iacobucci & Micozzi 2012; Malebana & Swanepoel 2015), this relationship is still a rich niche for further investigation particularly in fragile economies where the drivers of entrepreneurial intention are least understood. The need for further studies is informed by the reality that there is limited research on the stated relationship in such troubled settings (Koshkaki & Solhi 2016). Also, the results from more stable economies do not conveniently apply to those from vulnerable economies

(Bruton, Ahlstrom & Obloj 2008). This scenario creates research space to explore the circumstances under which entrepreneurial intention and actual entrepreneurship flourish in economies that are beset with poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Results from Bae et al.'s (2014) meta-analytic review of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention portray an inconclusive and somewhat contradictory picture of the effect of entrepreneurship education and training on entrepreneurial intention. The study which results from 73 previous studies revealed a weak but positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention of students. However, the association was not significant after controlling for pre-education entrepreneurial intentions. The study also showed that the linkage was moderated by factors such as attributes of entrepreneurship education, students' differences and cultural values. Nabi et al.'s (2017) systematic review of publications between 2004 and 2016 on the impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education revealed a predominantly positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention of students. Out of 81 articles reviewed, 61 of them reported a positive link between entrepreneurship education and participants' start-up intentions. Although 18 of the articles reported mixed, negative, or non-significant results for the link, the two seminal studies (i.e. Bae et al. 2014; Nabi et al. 2017) largely support a positive correlation between students' exposure to entrepreneurship education and their intention to partake in entrepreneurship.

More recently, Mehtap et al.'s (2017) investigation of perceptions of female Jordanian business students towards socio-cultural barriers to entrepreneurship revealed that a strong supportive education system to some extent may reduce the perception of potential barriers to entrepreneurship. Such a scenario enhanced the students' entrepreneurship inclination, albeit its limited overall impact. These findings resonate with those of Shah and Soomro's (2017) investigation of entrepreneurial intention of public sector university students in Pakistan which revealed that entrepreneurship education graduates were more willing to engage in entrepreneurship after completion of their degrees. However, this relationship was subject to the graduates' perception of positive support from their families, friends, teachers and experts. Such conditional ties highlight the inadequacy of entrepreneurship education as a sole determinant of the entrepreneurship intentions of university students. Perhaps, a focus on linking entrepreneurship education with the broader entrepreneurship development ecosystem as suggested by scholars like Maritz (2017) and Belitski and Heron (2017) would be more appropriate.

The different results derived from the studies reviewed in this subsection can be reasonably explained by the fact that they used different theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Another reason could be that their focus was

on diverse entrepreneurship education programmes, some voluntary and others compulsory. Interestingly, the studies that revealed a negative correlation between exposure to entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intent of graduates were the compulsory ones which incorporated willing as well as reluctant participants (Oosterbeek, Van Praag & Ijsselstein 2010; Singh & Verma 2010; Von Graevenitz, Harhoff & Weber 2010). Such programmes can be equated to the compulsory 1-year entrepreneurship skills development subject offered at all Zimbabwean polytechnics.

Research methodology

Because the purpose of this study was to get an in-depth understanding of how students' entrepreneurship education experiences had a bearing on entrepreneurship intention, an interpretive qualitative research methodology coupled with focus group discussions was deemed appropriate. The approach enabled the researchers to deeply explore the potential effect of current teaching and learning methods in embedding an inclination towards entrepreneurship among prospective entrepreneurs.

To save time and other resources, the researchers scheduled three focus group discussions (one per group) with participants instead of individual one-on-one interviews. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), face-to-face individual interviews might be intimidating for some people, and so group interviews were considered desirable. Apart from that, groups brought together people with diverse opinions and interacting with such individuals at the same time facilitated the cross-checking of information provided.

A total of 27 students registered and about to complete a year-long compulsory course in entrepreneurship skills development at a Zimbabwean polytechnic in the year 2015 were purposively selected. Criteria for inclusion were: (1) availability and (2) willingness to participate. It was felt that the selected number and diversity of the student backgrounds would generate rich information critical to the success of this study. The first author of this article employed a trained research assistant to recruit participants for the study. The recruitment process was done in May 2015 and took less than a week to complete. Invitations for participation were posted on notice boards found around the polytechnic campus. A total of 46 students responded by expressing their willingness to partake in the study. However, the number narrowed to 27, nine from each of the three academic divisions (Commerce, Applied Sciences and Engineering) at the college. The details of participants are summarised in Table 1.

Students were duly informed of the rationale for the study, the potential benefits of the research to the academic community and that their participation in the study was voluntary. They were also advised of their unconditional right to withdraw from the study if they wished. Likewise, notification of the right not to respond to questions considered sensitive was given. Lastly, participants were given a guarantee of the

TABLE 1: Details of participants.

Applied Sciences group	Business studies group	Engineering group
Four males and five females.	Five males and four females.	Six males and three females.
All participants had no previous entrepreneurship experience.	All participants had no previous entrepreneurship experience.	All participants had no previous entrepreneurship experience.
Ages of participants ranged from 19 to 24 years.	Ages of participants ranged from 19 to 28 years.	Ages of participants ranged from 19 to 39 years.
All participants were of African race.	All participants were of African race.	All participants were of African race.

confidentiality of their contributions and that these were to be used only for the purpose of the study. Before recruiting participants, permission to conduct the study was sought from the principal of the concerned institution.

Research procedure

The planning stage of the data collection process involved splitting the student group into three equal clusters according to the field of study, that is, Business Studies, Engineering and Applied Sciences divisions. Each cluster comprised nine students. Each participant was allocated a particular number within their class group (e.g. Business Studies-participant 1 [B1]; Applied Sciences-participant 1 [AS1]; Engineering participant 1 [E1]). Three days were identified and set aside for the separate focus group discussions. Arrangements were made to meet between 12:00 and 14:00 on the designated days. A free lecture hall was identified as the ideal venue for these discussions as it was considered free of interruptions, and a non-threatening and open environment that ostensibly neutralised lecturer-student power relations. No incentives were offered to participants. However, the moderator always started each session by thanking the participants for turning up for the interview and then outlining the purpose of the study and assuring confidentiality of the whole process.

The interview guide used during the interviews focused on the participants' experiences of the teaching and learning process during entrepreneurship education. The first author also listed a number of focus areas like the students' understanding of entrepreneurship and how the learning process that they went through influenced their inclination towards entrepreneurship careers. However, the natural flow of conversation as discussions progressed was considered. Each session always ended with the moderator asking the participants if they had any information on their experiences during entrepreneurship education that they wished to add.

During the discussions, the first author facilitated and guided the interaction process. Group facilitation involved introducing a topic and then raising a question, moderation of the discussion and probing for the solicitation of rich information. The proceedings were recorded on tape for post-interview content analysis. In addition to recording the discussions on tape, a senior student from the office management department was recruited to transcribe the discussion on behalf of the researchers.

Data analysis was conducted by means of Burnard's (1991) thematic content analysis and the whole process was managed manually. The researchers first forwarded the interview texts which were captured in Microsoft Word to participants for verification and proofing before carrying out the actual analysis. After getting feedback and correcting the raw data records, the researchers went through all the recorded text to get an appreciation of data. The researchers took notes on the general impressions they got as they read through the texts. Using the notes, the researchers segmented the data into analytical units by way of bracketing. Open coding was used to detect keywords and label the bracketed data with preliminary codes. Following this, the researchers then attached meanings to the allocated codes. After that, the researchers identified some clusters of codes which they then transformed into themes. Patterns, relations and trends that emerged from the data were then noted in the themes. The researchers enumerated the frequency with which certain observations occurred as a way of identifying prominent themes. Only those themes that fitted the research objectives were considered for further analysis.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness and eliminate bias in the results, Lincoln and Guba's model was used to increase the credibility of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Two rounds of content analysis were performed on the field recordings. The first round was to generate diverse views independently. The latter was part of member checking to cross-check if researchers' documentation of report findings were consistent with what the research participants actually said. Also, the main author sent the focus group discussion transcripts to the co-author for comparability and cross-examination. The main author also did the same and they exchanged notes and refined findings after clearing some different views and ambiguities. This was done as part of corroboration of evidence and promoting trustworthiness of results. Thus, consideration was given to the following issues: credibility (verifying the truthfulness of the results by means of the researcher's reflective notes and peer inspection; transferability (relevance of the findings) was guaranteed through 'thick' characterisations of the data. Dependability or the consistency of the findings was safeguarded through documenting the key phases of the research process, particularly the data collection and analysis procedures.

Ethical considerations

All ethical considerations such as informed disclosure, voluntary participation and protection from harm were considered and adhered to in the study.

Findings

This section presents the main findings of the study through a synthesis of the results from focus group discussions. The analysis of the data collected revealed five overarching themes across the three focus groups (see Appendix 1 for

illustration of how the themes were manually derived). The findings to be presented revolve around the identified themes.

Theme 1 (a): Conception of entrepreneurship

The first theme to emerge from the responses was the students' conception of entrepreneurship. Students' perspectives on entrepreneurship were varied and multiple interpretations of what it meant to be an entrepreneur. Three potentially intersecting interpretations which arose from their conception of entrepreneurship were self-employment, self-reliance and business incubation. The following quotes demonstrate this outlook:

'Entrepreneurship is about being self-employed and economically self-reliant.' (Participant E3, male, aged 31)

'Entrepreneurs own business entities.' (Participant E7, female, aged 21)

'Entrepreneurship is about being your own boss.' (Participant AS1, female, aged 20)

'An entrepreneur is one who owns a small or medium-sized business for the sake of making profit.' (Participant B2, male, aged 26)

The preceding quotes reveal a narrow minimalist understanding of entrepreneurship. Although the reasons for such an interpretation are not obvious, it is possible that all the entrepreneurs that the students knew were self-employed and worked independently. This is also a plausible explanation for those participants who demonstrated a reductionist perspective by confining entrepreneurship to starting and owning a small business. Yet, growth is one of the defining features of an entrepreneurial business. Apart from that, entrepreneurship can also thrive within large cooperations. It can be concluded from participants' views that what most them considered as authentic entrepreneurship were purely survivalist activities mostly carried out in the informal sector of the economy.

Theme 1 (b): Value of entrepreneurship education

To unravel the connection between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions of students, research participants were expected to articulate the value they accorded to entrepreneurship education in fostering their entrepreneurship intentions. Under the theme of entrepreneurship education, the sub-themes entrepreneurial courses and environmental hostility emerged from the research data. These are unpacked in the subsequent sections of this article.

Entrepreneurship courses

The majority of the participants in the study felt that the entrepreneurship education they received had equipped them with the necessary skills to start and manage small businesses. The following sentiment was expressed by a participant:

'Before taking the course in entrepreneurship, all I knew was how to fix cars. That is what I came here to learn. However, I have earned more than what I bargained for. I now know the procedure to follow when I want to register a business. I have an idea about the administrative and monetary aspects of running a business even though I have no practical experience of running one.' (Participant E4, male, aged 22)

The preceding view suggests that the entrepreneurship course provided the student with some basic preparation for the business environment. Other participants concurred that they could prepare a business plan, understood market analysis and had the requisite skills to run a business after undergoing entrepreneurial education. Other participants highlighted the significance of the course in augmenting their soft skills which are integral to setting up and managing a business. One participant described the influence of the entrepreneurial course on their self-confidence:

'Taking part in each class raised my self-esteem and gave me the confidence that I can actually succeed as an entrepreneur.' (Participant B2, male, aged 26)

Remarkably, the skills which the participants talked about were not unique to entrepreneurship but common to traditional business management (Pittaway & Edwards 2012). This insinuates that, except for business plan preparation, entrepreneurship was being taught in a manner that was not different from any other business subject. Some scholars are sceptical about using business plan preparation as a way of grooming entrepreneurs (Ojastu et al. 2011). They argue that although the process of business planning is critical in a business set-up, the actual document does nothing to aid innovation and stifles creativity through encouraging conformity and rigidity. Bearing the foregoing in mind, the appropriateness of modalities in entrepreneurship education at Zimbabwean polytechnics becomes questionable. Though inadequate for sustaining entrepreneurship, the traditional modes of entrepreneurship education delivery have the potency to ignite entrepreneurship intention among students.

Role of environmental hostility

When asked if they intended to initiate a business venture within 12 months of completing their course of study, the majority view among participants was that exposure to entrepreneurship education had attracted them to entrepreneurship. The following quote illustrates the participants' position:

'I realised even more than before that a negative attitude in life is not helpful at all. Even if things are hard in life ... make lemonades. I might fail in some instances just like any other entrepreneur, but I also know that a failure means that another opportunity for success will come up.' (Participant AS3, male, aged 24)

Compared to engineering and applied sciences students, a substantial number of business students preferred a prestigious job in a good organisation to self-employment. This preference suggests that technical fields are more amenable to self-employment and entrepreneurship than non-technical fields. However, the majority of the participants

also hinted that they considered the course to be interesting and useful in developing their entrepreneurial knowledge.

What cannot be ignored from students' expressed views was the element of inevitability of an entrepreneurial career trajectory. There were suggestions that the lack of decent formal employment opportunities left them with no choice but to embrace entrepreneurship education and prepare for entrepreneurial careers. Hence, the expressed intention to engage in entrepreneurship is probably an outcome of the collective influence of entrepreneurship education and a hostile economic outlook. Environmental hostility describes a socio-economic, political and cultural environment that is inimical to the pursuit of growth-oriented and sustainable business ventures and thriving entrepreneurship. Students described the Zimbabwean business environment as non-conducive and not vibrant for the pursuit of economic opportunities.

Theme 3: Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship attitudes

Most participants expressed their desire to engage in entrepreneurship upon completing their programme of study, particularly if they had the financial means to do so. One participant expressed the following sentiment:

'The current economic situation leaves me with little choice but to settle for anything to eke a living out even if it means being creative enough by doing what we did not learn at school.' (Participant AS5, male, aged 24)

What can be interpreted from the preceding comment is that economic turbulence can breed a tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. This can strengthen one's resolve to engage in entrepreneurship. However, there is a need to be wary of a potential negative effect on learning which a sense of lack of choice can instil. Another participant expressed the following sentiment:

'Yes, entrepreneurship education enlightened me to entrepreneurship as a career. Since there are very few good job opportunities available these days, I do not have many options. I have to improvise and do what others are doing to earn a living.' (Participant E2, male, aged 24)

From the preceding statement, it is evident that difficult circumstances forced some of the participants to develop personal resilience. Thus, hostile circumstances provide the displacement event needed to stir one to find means to survive. While the entrepreneurship education received equipped the participants with some coping mechanisms, these were inadequate for the reality of the actual business environment. The following quote from a participant is worth noting:

'Yes, the entrepreneurship education that we get at college has enhanced my entrepreneurial knowledge. I can draft a business plan but I never got a chance to practically run a proper business.' (Participant B7, female, aged 21)

The preceding view stresses the point that entrepreneurship knowledge is a significant but insufficient condition for successful entrepreneurship as practical orientation is equally critical.

Theme 4: Social influence on entrepreneurship career choice

Another theme which emerged from the research data is the role of social influence on entrepreneurship career. From their responses, participants indicated the various facets of their social life that affected how they viewed pursuing entrepreneurial careers. These aspects were grouped as social approval, social ambivalence and environmental dynamism. These are dealt with individually in subsequent sections of this article.

Social approval

When asked about whether those close to them would approve their interest in entrepreneurial careers, the ensuing views were affirmative. It seems there was a general acceptance of entrepreneurship as a worthwhile career path in the participants' community as evidenced by the following quotes:

'Definitely, those close to me will support me even though they may be sceptical of my business capabilities. In our community, successful entrepreneurs are admired and enjoy high status.' (Participant AS9, female, aged 22)

'Yes, there are many people who have done well in our local vicinity. People socially close to me often make positive insinuations about self-employment.' (Participant E9, female, aged 34)

The view expressed in the preceding quotes is a departure from the traditional belief in pursuing a high profile paid job as compared to being an entrepreneurial career.

Social ambivalence

Although participants expressed a sense of acceptance of entrepreneurship among those within their social circles, some comments revealed an element of mixed feelings. The following quote is a case in point:

'Those close to me will approve even though my family members often say that they sent me to school so that I can get a high paying job.' (Participant B1, female, aged 21)

The preceding comment can be interpreted as a case of social ambivalence. This refers to a situation where an individual's mind is in a state of conflict which may lead to indecisiveness. In the context of the current study, a conflicted state of mind may undermine entrepreneurship intention.

Environmental dynamism

Another important sub-theme which emerged was the role of environmental dynamism in shaping social acceptance and intention to engage in entrepreneurship. What emerged from the respondents' comments is that a conducive environment fosters a positive psychological disposition for entrepreneurship exploits. This influence can be observed in the following comment which captures the effect of the affirmative action legislation in Zimbabwe.

'They will obviously approve of it given the current indigenisation and black economic empowerment drive. Entrepreneurship is currently the in thing!' (Participant E6, male, aged 23)

Theme 5: Pedagogical approaches

Another theme that emerged from the examination of the participants' experiences of entrepreneurship education is related to pedagogical approaches. During the interviews, the research participants revealed their perceptions of the teaching and learning methods used in conducting entrepreneurship education at their institution. The meanings attached to these perceptions included passive learning methods, transmission pedagogies and an ambiguity of learning outcomes, thereby uncovering a lack of authenticity and lack of practical orientation.

Passive learning methods

The study findings revealed that participants were not exposed to much practical experience in running a business during the course of their entrepreneurship education programme. They complained about the drudgery of going through lectures in which they would only listen to the lecturer and take notes. The following remarks made by one of the participants provide the evidence to that effect:

'While our lecturers always emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial careers, we were never attached to any mentors to learn how entrepreneurs operate. Neither were established entrepreneurs ever invited to give talks nor motivational lectures on the merits of pursuing entrepreneurial careers.' (Participant E6, male, aged 23)

The preceding quote insinuates that when adult learners embark on an educational course of study, they usually have specific expectations about the nature of the learning content and methods which they will be exposed to. If other factors are unchanged, one would expect that students' frustration in the classroom may undermine the attainment of learning outcomes such as the development of positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship.

Transmission pedagogies

Participants pointed out a disgruntlement with the manner in which entrepreneurial knowledge and skills were transmitted to them. The following quote serves as an illustration:

'Yes I learnt how to prepare a business plan, but I am not sure if I can put it into practice. All that I know about entrepreneurship is limited to the notes I got during the lectures.' (Participant B6, male, aged 23)

The sentiments expressed here are intricately connected to those noted in the previous sub-theme and they seem to reflect the potentially alienating effect of existing learning methods. However, these sentiments are somewhat a contradiction given the participants' overwhelming intention to engage in entrepreneurship upon graduating. Possibly, other factors like the harsh economic realities could have exerted a greater influence on swaying participants to articulate a positive inclination towards entrepreneurial careers.

The ambiguity of learning outcomes

A key requirement for meaningful learning to take place in a higher education context is the need to communicate clear learning outcomes to learners. This is particularly relevant in an adult learning context where self-directed and autonomous learning is encouraged. However, the sentiments expressed by some participants in the current study portrayed a picture of ambiguity and learner disinterest. This can be observed in the following quote:

'I am not sure of what innovative activity I can engage in on graduation. After all, I am only doing secretarial studies. I only did entrepreneurship studies because it is a requirement that I complete the subject as a condition for graduation.' (Participant B2, male, aged 23)

The preceding quotation is a classic case of a disengaged and coerced learner whose goal is to graduate and find the available means to achieve that. It would be surprising if such a student would eventually go on to become an entrepreneur as evidenced by an apparent lack of a clear entrepreneurial goal. If anything, the self-professed intention to engage in entrepreneurship in the future may turn out to be not authentic.

Lack of authenticity

An important sub-theme which also emerged during the course of the study is related to the perceived lack of entrepreneurial authenticity in the entrepreneurship education programme which students underwent. The respondents felt that what they learnt did not reflect the reality prevailing in actual entrepreneurship practice. The following remark is an example of such a sentiment:

'While we learn about what is required to start and run a small business, there are just too many risks involved in running a real business that is not emphasised by our lecturers. I have heard some people, including those already in business, complaining about many risks and challenges associated with operating a business entity. In our case, why can't the college commit resources towards assisting interested current and former students with setting up new businesses?' (Participant AS2, female, aged 21)

The remark presented above reflects how adult participants in entrepreneurship education are problem-centred in their perspective. Evidently, adult learners are more interested in acquiring knowledge and skills that adequately equip them with the tools to cope with the harsh realities of an actual business environment rather than accumulating basic knowledge about entrepreneurship. It is possible that the entrepreneurial intention expressed by the participants may not be realised if they feel a sense of entrepreneurial inadequacy.

Lack of a practical orientation

The last sub-theme that emerged from the responses is related to the lack of practical orientation. Participants mentioned how their entrepreneurial learning was confined to the

lecture room and textbook content. What was evident from their sentiments was a desire to experience actual entrepreneurship as part of the learning process. One participant aired the following view:

'Why can't our lecturers arrange for formal field visits to established entrepreneurial business so that we can visit some established entrepreneurial businesses in our locality. There are plenty of those around. If such trips are too costly for the institution, I don't think that it would be that expensive to invite some entrepreneurs to come and explain to us how they went about setting up their businesses, the challenges they faced and how their businesses continue to survive.' (Participant AS5, male, aged 24)

The preceding statement insinuates a need for entrepreneurship educators to depart from the orthodox, passive pedagogies to more engaging, action-oriented and student-centred teaching and learning. In such instances, students learn by doing or experience and are afforded the opportunity to practically develop their skills.

Discussion of findings

The findings section unveiled the various themes that emerged from the study participants' responses. In this section, these themes are discussed in relation to existing literature on the topic.

On the conception and value of entrepreneurship themes, the findings of this study revealed that participants had a constricted and reductionist outlook which limited the appreciation of entrepreneurship to small business ownership and self-employment. The deficiency of this perspective is underscored by some scholars who highlighted the differences between small business ownership and entrepreneurship (Carland et al. 2007; Cuervo, Ribeiro & Roig 2007). Others highlighted the possibility of large firms and their employees also being able to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour (Sharma & Chrisman 2007). The source of the simplistic interpretation of entrepreneurship may be traced to the widely distributed publicity messages accompanying some of the Zimbabwean government's recent economic empowerment initiatives. The pitch of most of these communications emphasises only the self-employment and small business ownership aspects of entrepreneurship. As a result, by virtue of being consumers of such communications, the students embraced a similar narrow understanding. Against this background, a cautionary tale would be that probably the participants' professed entrepreneurial intentions were essentially plans to start small-scale survivalist activities as opposed to innovation-driven enterprises.

Turning to the entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy themes, most polytechnic students interviewed in the current study who had undergone entrepreneurial education demonstrated a positive entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy. This suggested that exposure to entrepreneurial education through polytechnic lectures and business plans

had attracted the students to consider entrepreneurial careers. This finding corroborated Robinson et al.'s (1991) claim that positive attitudes could be reinforced and entrenched through educational processes. More so, the findings resonate with previous findings that attitude explained between 30% and 50% of intention to engage in a particular behaviour (Autio et al. 2001; Packham et al. 2010). Moreover, Schwarz et al. (2009) also confirmed the significance of attitudes in strengthening the entrepreneurship intentions of university students.

Nevertheless, researchers should be cautious when interpreting the influence of attitude on entrepreneurship intention. Dohman et al. (2011) warn that sometimes individuals (including students) deliberately alter their articulated attitudes because of self-serving biases, lack of serious attention and other strategic motives. Against the troubled economic context of Zimbabwe, the attitudes expressed by participants in the current study could have been a reflection of desirable aspirant sentiments influenced by the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the country rather than a genuine intention to create new ventures. Hence, situated socio-political circumstances such as lack of decent employment, desire for political correctness towards the indigenisation and black economic empowerment programme the Zimbabwean government is peddling could have influenced participants' positive sentiments towards entrepreneurial careers.

One of the themes to emerge from the study was entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This relates to individuals' belief in their own abilities to work towards a targeted goal (Bandura 2006) of pursuing entrepreneurship. According to Bandura (1994), self-efficacy beliefs reflect the degree to which one is committed to a goal regardless of obstacles encountered on the way. A substantial number of participants in this study expressed some degree of self-belief in their ability to launch and run their own businesses. It is possible that the college students' exposure to entrepreneurial education at polytechnic level could have provided a displacement event (pull factor) which cemented self-belief about their entrepreneurial capabilities. This corroborated the claims of Shapero's (1982) MEE that people could be pushed towards considering entrepreneurship careers if they experienced an eye-opening event, which shook them out of their comfort zone, and convinced them about the feasibility and viability of venturing into entrepreneurship. It is plausible to expect that entrepreneurship education experiences coupled with a hostile economic environment could have exerted pressure on the participants to consider an entrepreneurial career.

Furthermore, a close analysis of the study findings revealed the emergence of the social valuation theme. In line with some past studies, the results affirmed the roles of the socially close in influencing student expectations to participate in new venture creation in the future. However, such effect depends on the willingness of participants to comply with the significant others' expectations (Souitaris Zerbinati &

Al-Laham 2007). Some studies confirm that the nature of the entrepreneurship education acquired plays a critical role in shaping normative beliefs and the willingness of respondents to comply with the expectations of the socially closed. This finding contradicts previous research that has shown that compared to the other antecedents of entrepreneurship intention, normative beliefs exert the least effect on intentions and consequently have weak predictive power (Autio et al. 2001; Fini et al. 2009). However, social approval does not, in the practical sense, translate students' sentiments into the actual new venture creation. In view of this, the overwhelming social approval of entrepreneurship which was insinuated by participants must not be uncritically affirmed. What is important is the willingness of the participants to comply with such expectations.

Although the positive role of social approval in modelling entrepreneurship intention is not new (see Entrialgo & Iglesias 2016; Shiri et al. 2017; Thomson & Minhas 2017), the current study uncovered the important role of social ambivalence and environmental dynamism in the entrepreneurship education-entrepreneurship intention interface. Notwithstanding the mixed feelings towards entrepreneurship careers expressed by their socially close participants in this study, the participants were confident of their capacity to succeed in entrepreneurship. This suggests that a supportive environment, just like a hostile environment which increased tolerance for ambiguity and resilience to succeed, can exert a positive psychological disposition towards entrepreneurship.

Another theme that emerged from the study is the nature of pedagogical approaches used in entrepreneurial education. As far as the methods of instructions employed were concerned, this study reported the predominance of theoretical approaches to teaching entrepreneurship and the absence of a hands-on approach to implementing it. Although such methods are a useful point of departure for a jobless economy, they could be counterproductive if no authentic strategies for accomplishing practical entrepreneurship were harnessed to convert entrepreneurial aspirations into reality. This finding buttresses the growing consensus that contemporary entrepreneurship education should have different content and pedagogical foci. It also resonates with Williams and Gentry's (2017:9) proclamation that 'until students are allowed out of their seats to engage in behaviours other than note taking, they will not understand how to act entrepreneurially'. Hence, andragogical teaching and experiential learning via games, simulations or even actual venture creation may improve learning outcomes like entrepreneurship intentions (Rideout & Gray 2013).

It also emerged from the study that the participants were discontent with passive teacher-centred approaches to learning, which were dependent on highly decontextualised theoretical content. In addition, some participants complained about the ambiguity of learning outcomes. Further, they raised concerns about the lack of authenticity of their learning

programmes as demonstrated by what they perceived as the failure of entrepreneurship education to reflect the actual entrepreneurship environment. This revelation highlights the centrality of fulfilling learners' needs and resonates with contemporary learning theories that propagate the adoption of self-directed and student-centred learning approaches as integral to realising learning outcomes (Altinyelken 2011; Bron, Bovill & Veugelers 2016; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2012; Toh 2016). In addition, the findings demonstrate the emergence of critical learners who enrol in educational programmes not only for certification purposes but also for other skills relevant to their lives. Against this background, there is a need to shift orientation from preparing students for examination to transfer of contextualised skills if the meaningful education of future entrepreneurs were to take place.

In addition to what has been discussed, the current study made some subtle contributions to the entrepreneurship education–entrepreneurship intention nexus discourse. While many studies stress the role of entrepreneurship education in shaping entrepreneurial intention (Fayolle & Liñán 2014; Hattab 2014; Iacobucci & Micozzi 2012; Malebana & Swanepoel 2015), they tend to neglect the influence of environmental hostility in shaping entrepreneurship intention and other associated variables. It emerged that harsh economic circumstances with limited economic choices compelled individuals to have entrepreneurship inclinations. Equally important, the study revealed how personal resilience and a tolerance for uncertainty under harsh economic circumstances engendered entrepreneurial intentions.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study provided some important qualitative insights into the influence of students' experiences of entrepreneurship education on their entrepreneurship intentions in a struggling economy context. While statistical validation could have been an alternative to qualitative research to allow for the interrogation of the significance of these antecedent variables as shown by numerous proximal researchers, the current study was concerned about the crystallisation of collective views of students to provide diverse opinions and comparisons of student perspectives. The qualitative findings suggested that the students' perceptions of the teaching and learning process influenced their attitudinal beliefs, normative beliefs and entrepreneurial efficacy and subsequently entrepreneurship intentions. The existing educational practices positively influenced the entrepreneurial intentions of participants given the overwhelming student willingness to engage in business. Though not undermining the explanatory and predictive power of the TPB, it emerged that the participants showed an inclination towards replicative entrepreneurship activities. Only a minority, mostly information technology students, expressed their intention to innovate without doubting their capacity. The explanations for failure to engage in groundbreaking innovative activity included lack of seed funding, the absence of capacity, building support to initiate and deepen venture creation, lack of practical knowledge of

innovation and perception of the risky and adventurous nature of new start-ups.

Following the participants' explicit desire for active learning processes, entrepreneurship education programmes at Zimbabwean polytechnics can be strengthened through a number of ways. For institutions with very restricted budgets to support student entrepreneurship activities, the introduction of business plan competitions for students could be a good starting point. Such competitions give participants an alternative and yet compelling source of motivation for preparing business plans apart from developing them for the purpose of earning course marks. Monetary rewards that participants win in such competitions can constitute start-up capital required for initiating their businesses.

Another way of enriching educational programmes is for polytechnic colleges to set up business incubators for the purpose of providing physical space where entrepreneurship students can meet, engage in creative thinking and generate business ideas that serve as springboards for launching their business ventures. At the same time, such incubators should contract business mentors and industry experts who can provide students with practical business advice.

In collaboration with external stakeholders, polytechnics can establish entrepreneurship mentorship programmes. Networks of experts, captains of industry and successful entrepreneurs can support such programmes by mentoring, supporting and guiding student entrepreneurs with conception, launching and management of their own business ventures.

Lastly, classroom activities can be enlivened through the use of case studies and computer-based programs, which generate simulated business scenarios that unleash students' creative thinking and problem-solving capabilities. Such an approach can reduce the monotony of the teaching and learning process as well as encourage students to engage in authentic entrepreneurship in the future.

Policy implications

The findings from the study have implications for the appropriateness of current teaching and learning methods for breeding innovative entrepreneurs. Precisely, the effect is that there is a need to transform traditional and passive teacher-centred methods of teaching into practically grounded, student-centred approaches to adequately equip and prepare graduates for new and innovative venture start-ups. In addition, curricula developers at polytechnics and other HEIs should put in place institutional support mechanisms that include student venture funding, business incubators and entrepreneur mentoring schemes to give students the requisite practical innovation experiences. Ostensibly, students will get a chance to learn by experimenting in a relatively benign environment before they independently engage in actual and risk-ridden entrepreneurial activities.

Limitations of the study

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered. Firstly, the findings of the study are not transferable to the entire population given that a qualitative approach and convenience sampling were used. Secondly, the study focused on the views of participants sampled from a single institution of higher learning. This means that the findings obtained from such participants represented a localised perspective. Future studies could be usefully extended to include polytechnic students from other geographical locations in Zimbabwe. Thirdly, the study did not consider the influence of a number of factors which are relevant to the link between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions. For instance, there was no specific consideration of whether: (1) participants were studying full-time or part-time, (2) participants had experience in entrepreneurship prior to undergoing entrepreneurship education at the polytechnic and (3) whether participants were already inclined towards entrepreneurship prior to undergoing entrepreneurship education. Thus, future studies should incorporate these factors to get a fuller understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article

Authors' contributions

T.N. conducted the field work and wrote the introduction, literature review, methodology and findings sections, while P.R. wrote the data analysis section, interpretation and policy implications.

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Appendix 1

TABLE 1-A1: Content analysis of interview data.

Main themes	Categories	Excerpts from participants	Researchers' comments
Theme 1:			
(a) Conception of entrepreneurship	Self-employment and self-reliance	'Entrepreneurship is about being self-employed and economically self-reliant.'	A minimalist conception that narrows entrepreneurship to self-employment
	Business incubation	'Entrepreneurs own business entities.'	Reductionist perspective
(b) Value of entrepreneurship education	Entrepreneurial courses	'Our first ESD lecture opened my eyes to an option which I had not seriously thought about before.'	Through inadequate for sustaining entrepreneurship, traditional modes/models of entrepreneurial delivery was conceived to ignite entrepreneurship intention among students
	Environmental hostility	'The economic situation is currently tough. I do not think I will get a job as soon as I complete my studies. I need to find something to occupy myself while I search for job opportunities.'	Influence of difficult environment on entrepreneurship intention
Theme 2:			
Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship efficacy	Procedural entrepreneurial knowledge	'However, I have earned more than what I bargained for. I now know the procedure to follow when I want to register a business. I have an idea about the administrative and monetary aspects of running a business even though I have no practical experience of running one.'	Student grounding in practicalities of entrepreneurship should be complemented by possession of practical experience of entrepreneurship
	Prior entrepreneurial experience	-	-
	Conceptual entrepreneurial knowledge	'I learnt about how to (a) prepare a business plan, (b) conduct market analysis and had the requisite skills to run a business. But I am still considering the most viable opportunities to pursue under the current circumstances.'	Contradiction between the state of entrepreneurship in the country and student claims about the possession of conceptual business skills
Theme 3:			
Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship attitudes	Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty	'The current economic situation leaves me with little choice but to settle for anything to eke a living out even if it means being creative enough by doing what we did not learn at school.'	Economic turbulence breeds thriving entrepreneurship spirit
	Limited job opportunities, personal resilience	'Yes, entrepreneurship education enlightened me to entrepreneurship as a career. Since they are very few good job opportunities available these days, I do not have many options. I have to improvise and do what others are doing to earn a living.'	Consistent with Displacement Theory, when confronted with limited opportunities for self-sustenance, improvising becomes the only plausible option
	Lack of practical entrepreneurial exposure	'Yes, the entrepreneurship education that we get at college has enhanced my entrepreneurial knowledge. I can draft a business plan but I never got a chance to practically run a proper business.'	Entrepreneurship knowledge is significant but insufficient condition for successful, sustainable entrepreneurship as practical experience is equally critical
Theme 4:			
Social influence on entrepreneurship career	Social approval	'Those close to me will approve even though my family members often say that they sent me to school so that I can get a high paying job.'	Traditionally held view that elevates high profile career over entrepreneurship
		'Yes, they are many people who have done well through in our local vicinity. People socially close to me often make positive insinuations about self-employment.'	Divergence of views on prospective entrepreneurship career
	Social ambivalence	'Definitely, those close to me will support me even though they may be sceptical of my business capabilities. In our community, successful entrepreneurs are admired and enjoy high status.'	A conducive environment fosters a positive psychological disposition for entrepreneurship
	Environmental dynamism	'They will obviously approve of it given the current indigenisation and black economic empowerment drive. Entrepreneurship is currently the in thing!'	-
Theme 5:			
Pedagogical approaches	Passive learning methods	'While our lecturers always emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial careers, we were never attached to any mentors to learn how entrepreneurs operate. Neither were established entrepreneurs ever invited to give talks and motivational lectures on the merits of pursuing entrepreneurial careers.'	Limited mentoring opportunities
	Transmission pedagogies	'Yes I learnt how to prepare a business plan, but I am not sure if I can put it into practice. All what I know about entrepreneurship is limited to the notes I got during the lectures.'	Dependence on highly de-contextualised theoretical content
	Ambiguity of learning outcome	'I am not sure of what innovative activity I can engage in on graduation; after all I am only doing secretarial studies. I only did entrepreneurship studies because it is a requirement that I complete the subject as a condition for graduation.'	A examination performance orientation towards entrepreneurship where focus shifts from skills transfer to meeting graduation requirements
	Lack of authenticity	While we learn about what is required to start and run a small business, there are just too many risks involved in running a real business that are not emphasised by our lecturers. I have heard some people, including those already in business, complaining about the many risk and challenges associated with operating a business entity. In our case, why can't the college commit resources towards assisting interested current and former students with setting-up new businesses?'	Failure to conscientise students about the risk oriented nature of entrepreneurship
	Lack of a practical orientation	'Why can't our lecturers arrange for formal field visits to established entrepreneurial business so that we can visit some established entrepreneurial businesses in our locality. There are plenty of those around. If arranging such trips is too costly for the institution, I don't think that it would be that expensive to invite some entrepreneurs to come and explain to us how they went about setting-up their businesses, the challenges they faced and how their businesses continue to survive.'	Failure to afford students opportunities for a lived experience of entrepreneurship.