

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON MPUMALANGA YOUTHS ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: Synopsis of several research outcomes on entrepreneurship development in Mpumalanga province empirically revealed there are several factors responsible for seemingly lack of entrepreneurial behaviour among youths in the province. There seems to be a nexus between ambivalent political environment and psychological factors on youths' entrepreneurial behaviour in Mpumalanga province. Meta-analytic result from research outcomes assert the importance of fostering entrepreneurial interest among youths to serve as solution to high unemployment, and reduction of poverty. Creating enabling political environment is of high importance to foster positive vibe among youths in order to encourage entrepreneurial spirit. The need for youths to understand and 'buy-in' into various government policies may impact interest in entrepreneurship in the province. This paper tend to find if there are relationships between these factors and how it impact on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour. The justification for this study stem from the seemingly dearth of nexus in research on the relationship between political environment and psychological factors on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour as well as the ability to scientifically explain each factor influence on youth entrepreneurial behaviour to assist government apply strategic systems which might address both factors simultaneously. Analytical research design was adopted through regression analysis to find causal relationships and relative contribution of each factor's influence on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour. The result from analysed data shows there are causal relationships of constructs (independent variables) on entrepreneurial behaviour (dependent variable), in furtherance, the outcome of relative contribution of the independent variables showed psychological factors have marginal influence on entrepreneurial behaviour than political environment. In conclusion it is recommended that government should deploy optimum resources in addressing psychological needs of the youths by ensuring full integration of youths into all phases of formulation, development, and implementation of policies and programs aimed at boosting entrepreneurship in the province.

Keywords: youth enterprise development, youth national policy, fiscal policy, political environment, Psychological Factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship development attracted much uncertainty among youths in South Africa, a factor that could be responsible for abysmal low entrepreneurial interest in the country [1]. There seems to be lack of interest in entrepreneurship among youths in South Africa, an assumption backed by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report [8], which showed marginal movements in most entrepreneurial indices compared year on year basis. Established business ownership reduced to 2.2% from 2.47%, perceived capacity reduced to 39.9% from 45.4%, while perceived business opportunities showed a marginal improvement to 43.2% from 40.9%, the result of which causes rate of business discountenance to exceeds rate of business start-up causing a net loss in new business development [8].

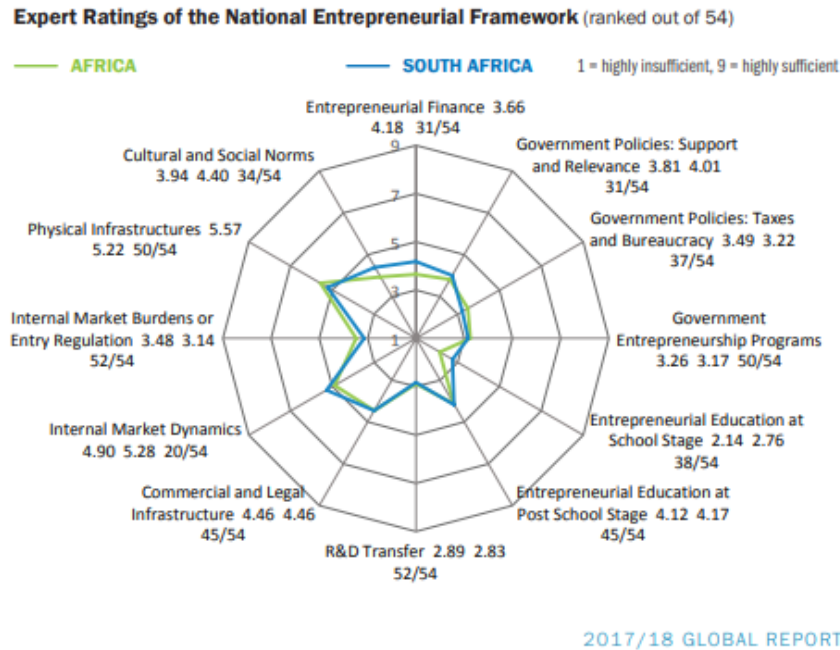


Figure 1: Ratings of entrepreneurial framework

Source: *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018)*

In view of these, it is obvious South Africa has some catching up to do among countries ranked by GEM as shown in figure 1 on entrepreneurial indices, we can infer from the ratings of political affiliated indices that a lot has to be done by government to improve entrepreneurial behaviour, indices such as, Government entrepreneurship programs got a ranking of 50 out of 54 an evidence of government level of contribution to entrepreneurship programs or perhaps how it is viewed, likewise other indices recorded similar rankings such as research and development transfer (technical partnership), internal market burden/ entry regulations and entrepreneurial education which are all linked with political environment [8]. Political uncertainty and racial undertones are believed to further complicate challenges facing creation of enabling political environment as policies are looked at with racial bias in some quarters; furtherance to this, is corruption and the residual negative consequence of 2008 global economic crisis which altered the scenery of global economy as no country is entirely immune to the harsh effect of the meltdown.

There is likelihood of measured swing on global economic view and philosophy as globalisation is seemingly giving way to protectionism, though this is not yet a world-wide phenomenon; however, recent happenings are evidences of this crusade. The United Kingdom's plan to exit the European Union termed (Brexit) and the election of Donald Trump with a message filled with protectionism rhetoric is seemingly an indication of the new world economic direction.

Aforementioned series of events may have some effect on the political landscape and psychology of youths, in Africa, especially South Africa. In addition, the residual effect of negative economic policies of apartheid has put daunting challenge on a country with huge part of its population in the age bracket of between 15 years and 34 years. Report shows that this age group constitutes 36% of the total population [29].

By way of response, emerging economies are assiduously working against further slip while others are preventing an all-out meltdown. Therefore, emphasis is placed on fiscal policies, government expenditure, budgetary policies, international politics and most importantly growth in entrepreneurship and small businesses with active youth participation, which is considered as the growth engine of the economy [17].

In addition, the irony of government intervention through investment in infrastructures and promulgation of policies to encourage youth's entrepreneurial behaviour which has witnessed unprecedented attention in the last decade; seem to be counter-productive as youth unemployment continue to increase in the country [36].

On this premise, it is believed that a province like Mpumalanga will realise its entrepreneurial potentials, if there is a positive participation of youths in policy making and implementation to create a sense of belonging among youths as well as removing incongruous effect in building enabling political environment.

II. OBJECTIVE

This paper main objective is to investigate and determine the relationship between political environment and psychological on entrepreneurial behaviour among youths in Mpumalanga province with a view of providing suggestions to assist government improve relationship with youths in implementing its policies to boost entrepreneurship.

The theoretical framework of the study enabled by General Efficacy Scale (GES) as a measuring instrument explain youth's self-efficacy in relation to psychological issues, and responses to political environment. This may also explain youth's pattern of behaviour in relation to the events outside their immediate control. Also, it serves as a sensible prediction of their level of tolerance and ability to adapt to the dynamics of stressful life challenges.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Related literatures on political environment and psychological factors effect on entrepreneurial behaviour among youths were discussed with focus on government effort in addressing youth's entrepreneurial interest.

[26] Posit that there are correlations between ability to start and sustain nascent enterprises with enabling political environment and positive mind-set, which are crucial to economic development, survival, and poverty decline in South Africa. An assumption supported by other authors that entrepreneurship serves as solution to the challenges of unemployment and the determination to make small and medium sized businesses succeed [19]; [13]. It is reasonable therefore to assume that government allocation of optimum resources and political-will in ensuring sustainable and stable political environment might foster entrepreneurial spirit among the youths in the province, whilst removing all hindrances obstructing accelerated growth in small businesses and entrepreneurship. Youths' involvement in the process is essential for a country with vast part of its population in youth's age bracket [9].

Youths' entrepreneurship in Mpumalanga and South Africa at large has obstructing factors which has a common denominator in political environment such as difficulty in securing finance, low availability of necessary skilled labour and technical know-how [40]; [9]; [3]. In view of this, more successes are needed to enhance the small business sector in South Africa facilitated by enabling political environment [10]; [12]; [19].

Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) 2018 report ranked South Africa 57 out 137 countries on health of entrepreneurship ecosystem. Encouraging as this may seem, it has not translated to reduction of poverty and unemployment among youths in Mpumalanga [29]. In order to have a better understanding of the seemingly conflicting vibes coming from the same country, one can critically examine the undertones by asking questions- what could be responsible for low youths entrepreneurial engagements and persistent high unemployment if South Africa health of entrepreneurship ecosystem is above average. Perhaps youths in the province are not psychologically prepared to become self-independent despite government inability to provide adequate employment opportunities.

To put relationship between political environment and psychological factors into perspective; two specific youth-related government policies are reviewed.

A. Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (YEDS) 2013-2023

The unambiguous statistics on persistent youths' high unemployment rate and minimal participation in the economy stirred the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) come up with YEDS as a response of government initiative to identify the cause of the anomaly and to proffer appropriate solutions.

YEDS statistics put unemployment rate in South Africa at 25%, this significantly rose to 36% considering discouraged job seekers and youth unemployment is put at 73% of the total unemployment in the country [43], comparing this with [36] where unemployment rate stood at 27.1% which equally rose to 31.1% with the inclusion of discouraged job seekers and youth unemployment put at 54.7% is an evidence of persistent high unemployment rate in South Africa. Factors adduced to this anomaly includes, high income inequality, low GDP growth, youths' improper economic integration and lack of technical-skills. There is also a likelihood of mismatch in the exponential growth rate of the population compared to the ability of the economy to absorb the growing job seekers.

Pragmatic response to change the anomaly compelled the development of this policy document, emphasising the intention to provide support, structures, and enablement to young entrepreneurs; to create workable and efficient businesses capable of providing decent and long-term jobs. Other mediations included training and guidance, business gestation, removal of bureaucratic-red-tape in business registration and regulations, infrastructure supports, youth entrepreneurship collateral fund and development of system capable of tracking progress for evaluation purposes [27]; [20].

The policy document highlighted some factors responsible for youths' seemingly lack of interest in entrepreneurship:

Income inequality measured by generalised inequality index (*Gini coefficient*): World Bank report on South African Gini index stood at 0.67 reported in 2017 making South Africa one of the countries with highest inequality index in the world. The effect of high Gini index is compounded by the parallel growth between GDP and Gini, translating to an uneven wealth distribution among South Africans, despite economic growth. This income inequality may be an impeding factor on youth economic integration and development as large percentage of youths believe government policies favours the rich, therefore creating psychological uncertainty [42]; [39]; [15].

Unstable GDP growth: Unstable economy is another factor contributing to youth's low participation in entrepreneurship. An analysis of South Africa GDP growth in the recent past as shown in figure 2 revealed a growth rate of 1.4% in the last quarter of 2017 a decrease from the third quarter of 2017 1.6%. The decrease could be attributed to factors of things, one of which is the dispersion of initial euphoria that accompanied president Zuma's ouster. GDP growth rate be in the region of 2.6% from 1994 to 2018 topping at 7.10% in the last quarter of 2016. The instability in the last couple of years is believed to have contributed to youths' ambivalent entrepreneurial behaviour [36].

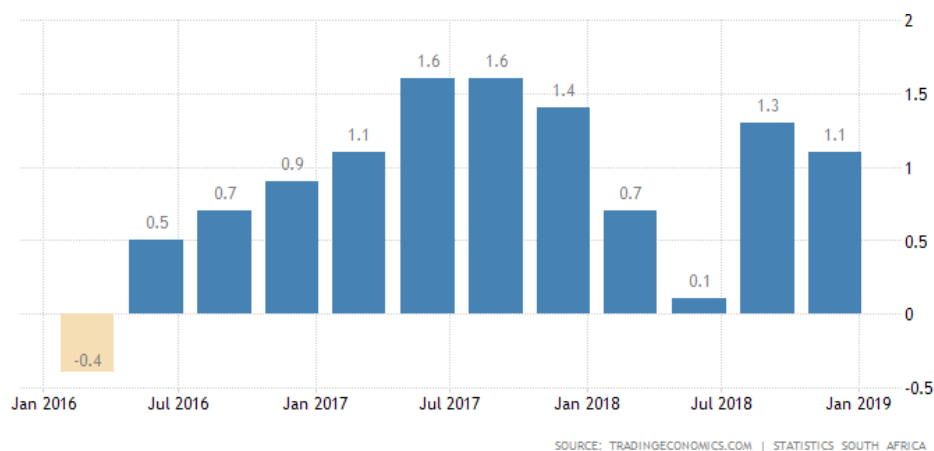


Figure 2: South Africa GDP growth rate 2016-2019

Source: www.tradingeconomics.com/Stats SA

Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity Index for youth (TEA index) and youth unemployment rate are the two main factors used in measuring youths' low level of economic participation. Although TEA index increased from 8.9% in 2010 to 9.2% in 2015, and witnessed unprecedented growth rate up to 11% in 2017/2018 [8]. As encouraging as this is, it is believed that it will take some years before this will have effect on the economy as a result of lack of administrative, technical know-how and business skills.

This assumption was supported by apartheid policy on Bantu education [23]. Offering of deliberate inferior education contributed in no small measure to black youths' lack of interest in entrepreneurship. Lack of exposure to entrepreneurial activities at the formative stage is another contributing factor. African youths do not have the opportunity to learn the rudiments of entrepreneurship from home, unlike their white counterparts that gained these necessary skills by assisting folks in the family business. The lop-sidedness in entrepreneurship education has been largely addressed post-apartheid era, as entrepreneurship has been added to the General Education and Training (GET) curriculum, however, business skills is far more learned by practical engagement [6].

B. National Youth Policy (NYP) 2015-2020

This is a document in orthodoxy with the South African constitution. Ratified by the United Nations World Economic Programme for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, supported by the African Youth Charter 2006, and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2012 to assist in creating enabling political environment to boost entrepreneurship among youth populace in South Africa. In a bid to build a country that is all-embracing, prosperous, autonomous, non-prejudiced and equal society by the year 2030, with a plan to produce a capacity and competence building citizenry; National Youth Policy was developed to ensure that the projection of 2030 is realisable bearing in the mind, the huge percentage of youth population in the country.

The policy seeks to build competence as a long-term solution among youths to foster economic participation. The major impetus driving NYP is the ability to create youth-targeted intervention programmes required to encourage active participation in the economy.

The psychosocial effect of youths' inability to secure decent jobs has put enormous burden on the society, and the economy at large. Parents are saddled with responsibilities of taking care of young adults who are supposed to have attained economic independence, a situation that prevents economic active youths from starting a family of their own. This breeds many social vices as a way of expressing their frustration, resulting to indiscriminate and unprotected sexual relationships, drug addiction, violent behaviour, diseases, poverty and general menace to the society [6]; [25].

Institute for Security Studies [11] report gave credence to how unemployment contributes in no small measure to youths' social ills, putting crime rate at its peak between the age of 12-21, 69% of death due to assault and 59% self-harm is believed to occur mostly among 15-34 years, HIV prevalence at 36.8% most especially among women between age 30-34; transport related accidents and deaths among youths at 2515 of the total 5698 representing 44%; assault related deaths at 69% and self-harm at 59% among age 15-34 [11]; [25]; [5]. It is a thing of concern considering that youth unemployment has increased to 54.7% in 2019.

In view of the enormous challenges youths are confronted with on daily basis, NYP strives to respond to the many psycho-social and health related issues concerning youths by providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged youths, through inclusion by empowerment and second-chance policies to assist them overcome the conditions that initially put them in that situation.

National Youth Policy 2015-2020 is an improvement on the 2009-2014 policy in that active involvement of private-sector driven youth development strategy was initiated [24]. In a bid to correct the ineffectiveness of previous policy which had some impairment which led to lack of impact, factors which includes (a) prevalence of HIV/AIDS, increase in substance abuse, violent and risky behaviour which undermines government effort in re-directing youths into the productive sector of the economy (b) inability to finalise the Integrated Youth Development Strategy, assigned to provide blue-print for public sector, civil society and private sector to implement youth development programmes (c) South African youth's orientation and treatment of political and economic participation as a prerogative of older people contributed to the minimal success of the policy [18]; [22].

The aforementioned factors led to the National youth policy 2015-2020 which aim to achieve the following: (a) to define and develop more effective interventions by coordinating government's strategies with private-sector and civil society participation, (b) to consolidate the core of youth development programmes in the country, (c) to develop evaluation procedures to monitor progress (d) and to develop improved interventions [24]; [18]; [22].

IV. METHODOLOGY

a. Research approach

The relationship between political environment and psychological factors was analytically researched, through regression analysis of primary data to find causal relationships and relative contribution to determine the effect on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour.

The significant inference is the effect of the relationship of the independent variables on dependent variable (entrepreneurial behaviour). Statistical analysis and interpretation of numerical data collected through survey necessitated the adoption of quantitative research methods for this study [4]; [37]; [41].

b. Respondents and sampling

The three districts of Mpumalanga province were covered: Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala. [14] Sample size population table employed with 355 samples of unemployed youths within the age-group of 18 to 34 years was determined and questionnaires were distributed among selected participants using simple random technique.

c. Data analysis

Relationship between Political environment and psychological factors on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour

Analysis of research question – *does political environment have more influence than psychological factors on youths' entrepreneurial behaviour?* This is analysed based on the outcome of the survey conducted among the selected youths in the three districts of Mpumalanga.

The measuring instrument was drawn based on the meta-analysis discussion on readiness for entrepreneurship which considered critical elements such as convergence of personal qualities, recognition of politically motivated openings towards entrepreneurship and capacity to evaluate the environment in such a way to harness creative and industrious potential.

The questionnaire was designed to extract information from youths based on their perception of political environment influence on entrepreneurship as compared to influence of psychological factors.

d. Result and Discussion

The matter for discussion in this section is based on the results from the appropriate inferential analysis.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Political Environment and Psychological Factors on Entrepreneurial Behaviour (N = 355)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.022	2	9.011	31.779	.000 ^b
	Residual	99.812	352	.284		
	Total	117.834	354			
R = 0.391^a		R Square = .153		Adjusted R Square = .148		

Table 2: Relative contribution of Psychological Factors and Political Environment on Entrepreneurial Behaviour (N = 355)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	3.226	.221		14.604	.000
	Political Environment	.318	.053	.300	6.037	.000
	Psychological Factors	-.229	.038	-.301	-6.066	.000

Analysis was done to ascertain the causal relationship of constructs (independent variables) on entrepreneurial behaviour. The outcome shows both political environment and psychological factors jointly influence entrepreneurial behaviour ($R = 0.391$, $F_{2352} = 31.779$, $P = .000$). In furtherance to this, we can infer from the table that political environment and psychological factors jointly accounts for 15.3% of the total variance in entrepreneurial behaviour. In furtherance to this the study investigated the relative contribution of the independent variables to determine which is more influential on entrepreneurial behaviour and the outcome shows psychological factors ($\beta = .301$, $t = -6.066$, $p < 0.005$) have a marginal influence on entrepreneurial behaviour than political environment ($\beta = .300$, $t = 6.037$, $p < 0.005$). In summary judging from the adjusted r square psychological factor and political environment explained 14.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial behaviour (Adjusted r square 0.143, $p < 0.001$).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings from the study showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between psychological factors and political environment on Mpumalanga youth entrepreneurial behaviour. It was also established that though there is enormous interest among youths in the province towards entrepreneurship, however, ambivalent political environment may have contributed to lack of entrepreneurial interest.

Therefore, the following recommendations should be given due consideration to influence positive entrepreneurial behaviour through enabling political environment and psychological reorientation of Mpumalanga youths on entrepreneurial behaviour:

- a. Youth political and economic engagement – the first step is to orientate and prepare youths’ mind towards entrepreneurship. It is pertinent to allow youth’s inputs in policy making as they are in better position to determine possible solutions to psychological factors affecting them.

- b. Give youths' political power – it is essential sometimes to replace old politicians with more youthful generation that are possibly more in tune with digital world. A good example is Canada Prime Minister Justine Trudeau who through his youthful policies transformed Canadian economy.
- c. Reward Mechanism – successful young entrepreneurs should be given National recognition through awards and funding.
- d. Replicable training system – it is imperative to inculcate a training system that is easily replicated. This will avail the youths the opportunity to undertake similar trainings, which might accelerate proper entrepreneurial orientation.

e. Limitation and further studies

The result of this study is limited to finding the relationship between the effect of political environment and psychological factors on Mpumalanga youths entrepreneurial behaviour. Data was collected from the three district of the province; one location was selected from each of the three districts, adopting simple random sampling method to select participants from each of the chosen locations. To this end, a longitudinal approach to data collection could be employed as opposed to cross-sectional approach adopted in subsequent research, as this will give the opportunity to compare the result of the studies over extended period of time to ascertain any possible changes in the influence of the independent variables measured on entrepreneurial behaviour

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