

CONTEXTUALISING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PANACEA TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA



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Abstract

Youth unemployment has bewildered governments across the globe, both in developed and emerging economies countries, with South Africa being no exception. This is captured through the accelerating youth unemployment rate in the country. Considering the positive contributions of excessive youth entrepreneurship policies in other countries, this paper, through the lenses of Schumpeter's 1934 economic development theory, demonstrates that through entrepreneurship, the South African government should strive to accelerate the already implemented and discard the less effective youth policies. Consequently, creating an innovative environment centered around the youth eradicates the exacerbating percentage of inactive or discouraged youth due to unemployment. Longer spells of inactivity threaten their human development and their contribution to the South African economy. Therefore, a youth-driven entrepreneurship economy can assist the government in counter-solving upcoming and persistent negative effects of unemployed youth. Keeping the youth productive, and innovative, creating jobs and incomes.

1. Introduction

Unemployment in South Africa is a conundrum puzzling both the public and private sectors. The South African economy, year by year, is receiving an influx of individuals into its labour market to their weariness of not being able to be absorbed by all sectors of the economy; due to their inability to employ all members of its population (Mzungulu & Ndzendze, 2021); particularly the drop in the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour, with the rise in demand for skilled labour. However, the educated and skilled in recent years have found it rather challenging to secure employment within the South African economy. Similarly, for the youth, securing that crucial first employment is getting more challenging by the year. Whether they hold a matric certificate, higher certificate, diploma, bachelor's or postgraduate degree, most South African youth find it difficult to obtain employment

(Banerjee et al., 2008). This is attributed to numerous trajectories and shortcomings within the South African economy (Banerjee et al., 2008; Makaringe & Khobai, 2018).

According to StatsSA (2022), the quarterly labour force survey, Q2 for 2022 recorded a decline in the unemployment rate, from 34.5% in the first quarter (Q1) of 2022 to 33.9% in the second quarter (Q2) of 2022, a 1.4% decrease. However, worryingly, the South African youth remained more susceptible within the labour market than the other population groupings. With around 4.8 million (46.5%) youth aged between 15 and 34 years were without employment in the second quarter (Q2) of 2022 (StatsSA, 2022), leaving the government with a burden to generate employment opportunities and a supportive environment for businesses to thrive and ensure more demand for labour. Often,

the government fails to provide policies to curb the surge in youth unemployment in South Africa. Therefore, to reduce the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa, this study aims to contextualise how entrepreneurship can be advocated to serve as a panacea to this conundrum (Muftahu, 2022). This can enhance productivity among the youth, moderate the soaring unemployment rate, and warrant economic growth for the South African economy. Since there is a clear indication that policy interventions have been poorly implemented and less effective in impacting youth employment, e.g. The National Youth Desk, National Youth Development Agency, and the National Youth Policy have raised less influence in their implementation. In addition, entry-level job opportunity programmes and short-term employment programmes are not sustainable enough and impactful in creating imminent employment solutions (De Lannoy et al., 2018). This unemployment adversity has the potential for adverse social and psychological effects, such as crime, poverty, depression, prostitution, corruption, and other social ills (Dzomonda & Fatoki, 2019; Mazorodze, 2020; Rathbone, 2020).

While there are many debates around youth unemployment, what stands out is the issue of structural challenges, which are said to exacerbate youth unemployment around the globe, South Africa included. Proper structural reforms have the capacity and potential to ignite labour demands, creating more jobs for the economy and youth to find employment in the economy (Krafft et al., 2018). However, Krafft and Rizk (2021) questioned the success of youth entrepreneurship and creating sizeable employment opportunities, alluding that, in North Africa and the Middle East, there is information failure within the two contexts, thereby yielding inefficiencies in youth entrepreneurship producing success in employment creation in the region. Opposingly, Dzomonda and Fatoki (2019) hold that youth entrepreneurship can solve the adversities of youth unemployment. As a result, this provides proof that entrepreneurship has thrived toward being a panacea to youth unemployment in various contexts. Therefore, this review intends on contextualising entrepreneurship as a potential panacea to the youth unemployment crisis from a South African context. Furthermore, this paper suggests policy recommendations to fast track the potential solutions to the youth unemployment crisis in the economy. To do this, this article critically discusses and appraises previously published works around entrepreneurship and youth unemployment, employing a systematic review of the literature as the method of inquiry.

The article is structured as follows; the next segment depicts the materials and methods employed in this article. It then proceeds to describe the theoretical assumptions the study is based on,

Schumpeter's 1934 economic development theory. It then debates the state of entrepreneurship in South Africa, youth unemployment, and government policy around youth entrepreneurship prospects in South Africa and then concludes.

2. Materials and Methods

This study followed a qualitative research approach in contextualising how entrepreneurship can be potentially the solution to youth unemployment in South Africa. Bansal et al. (2018) uphold that the qualitative research approach offers and introduces new paths and directions within a subject field. Furthermore, adopting a qualitative research approach enabled the researcher first to discern the phenomenon under the lens of this study, opportuning the researchers to identify a new perspective of tackling youth unemployment through entrepreneurship from a South African context. This study followed a systematic literature review as the method of inquiry. Munn et al. (2018) hold that systematic reviews are valuable in confirming current practices, addressing variations, and identifying newer patterns within a phenomenon. Most importantly, it creates a pathway for guiding and informing policy development, which can inform South African policymakers of the possible policy paths to consider in resolving the youth unemployment crisis faced by the country (Munn et al., 2018). In carrying out the SLR, online databases were used to search for the relevant literature, including EBSCO/Business Source Complete, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, ABI—Inform/ProQuest, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Scopus. Peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, and other credible online sources were also used for the latest unemployment statistics and other youth unemployment statistics. The researchers then read through the relevant articles' abstracts to determine whether they were applicable to assist with the objective of this study. Those relevant articles were included in this study (Kraus et al., 2020). The process eradicates deficiencies that may arise in the search, inclusion, and exclusion process (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021). This procedure was maintained to ensure consistency and reduce potential biases (Xiao & Watson, 2019), making this study eligible to guide effective policy decisions that would otherwise influence the country's policymakers to resolve the youth unemployment crisis.

3. Theoretical Assumptions

This study is based on and borrows from the theoretical assertions of Schumpeter's 1934 theory of economic development, who, in his theory, asserts the evolution of the entrepreneur. Where entrepreneurship stands to be an essential tool in solving and forming pathways for economic change within economies (Becker & Knudsen, 2002), within the context of this investigation advocates entrepreneurship as a solution to the

persistent youth unemployment crisis in South Africa. Historically, entrepreneurship is presumed to be critical in revitalising economies through what Schumpeter termed creative destruction within the economy. These creative destructions result from the agents and actors who find the creative destructing opportunities within an economy. Hence, Schumpeter (1942) alluded to the future creative destruction being born from governments and organisation-led programmes to make entrepreneurship more of a developmental process.

According to Schumpeter (1987), cited in Rothbard (1987), in his economic development theory, the rise of entrepreneurs in the economy creates a productive, competitive environment, which gives ascension and creates greater production capacity for an economy. Moreover, it stands to dispense governments with the means of rooting out the surge in youth unemployment across countries. According to the ILO (2022), global youth unemployment trends estimated that, in 2022, 73 million would be without employment, raising fears of an escalation in the numbers of unemployed youth. Therefore, according to Schumpeter, considerations of revitalising economies can create the needed boost for economic development.

Moreover, investment in entrepreneurship is said to accrue benefit reduction in youth unemployment (Knowles & Behrman, 2005). Therefore, to contribute to this prevalent crisis, Adeniran et al. (2020) suggested that a thorough contextualisation of the employment challenges be undertaken to propose viable solutions to eradicate this issue. Solutions will provide a greater impact factor among countries toward realising entrepreneurship as a panacea to youth unemployment.

3.1. The State of Entrepreneurship in South Africa

Entrepreneurship is essential in championing social well-being, creating wealth, and driving economic growth. Stimulating the crucial innovation required to manipulate new prospects, stimulate productivity, and generate employment. On the other hand, entrepreneurship can create employment opportunities and address pertinent social challenges (Ben Hassen, 2022). However, South Africa somewhat has some work to do in championing entrepreneurship as a major driver of a nation's development (GEM, 2022). Despite nearly three decades of democracy, It has been widely reported how unequal South Africa is (Blauner, 2022; Rathbone, 2020). For more than ten years, the South African economy has continuously underperformed; since 2011, real GDP per capita growth has decreased.

Entrepreneurial intentions between 2001 and 2021 show a positive upward trend over time. According to the GEM (2022), the emerging entrepreneurial figures rose from 7.3% in 2019 to 10.5% in 2021. Furthermore, the newly owned ventures rate rose from 3.7% in 2019 to 7.3% in 2021, and Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) increased by a rousing 6.7% (10.8% in 2019 to 17.5% in 2021 (GEM, 2022). On the other hand, the established business ownership rate also increased by 1.7%. The findings show that these new businesses have survived the start-up phase and will likely contribute to the country's economy. Thus painting an optimistic view of the future of entrepreneurship in South Africa. Although there has recently been growth, this augmented entrepreneurial activity might be partly due to the pandemic, with a number of people being forced to survive and see through COVID-19 (GEM, 2022). The findings indicate that the business termination rate rose from 4.9% in 2019 to 13.9% in 2021, therefore raising concerns. A substantial proportion of businesses (27.4%) discontinued operations because of severe economic difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic brought globally. Amongst the businesses that closed, just 6% did so for favourable reasons, such as a chance to sell.

3.2. Entrepreneurship as a Solution to an Unstable Economy

Creating employment is a key function of entrepreneurship, particularly in developing nations like South Africa, where unemployment is a pervasive socioeconomic issue.

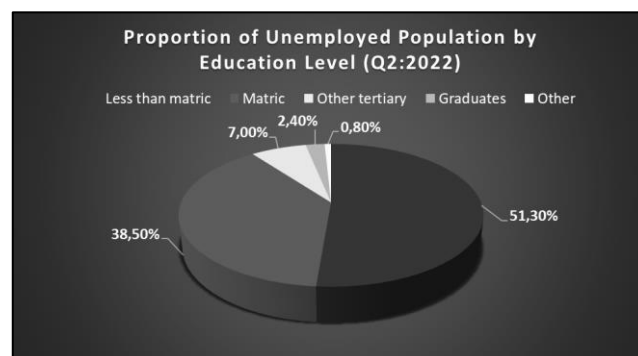


Figure 1. Unemployment amongst youth in South Africa
Source: Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 2 (2022)

In emerging economies, SMMEs firms make up most of all businesses; they are the primary drivers of GDP growth and the creation of new jobs (GEM, 2022). The South African economy's ability to create jobs has been linked to entrepreneurship. This assertion is corroborated by Maziriri and Chivandi (2020), who see entrepreneurship as boosting economic growth and lowering South Africa's high unemployment rate, which stands at 34.5%, during quarter 2 in 2022 (Stats SA, 2022). Academics discussing

the theoretical point contended that creating jobs and eradicating poverty are the main drivers of economic development through entrepreneurship. Among others who have noted the significance and importance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture in social and economic growth are Figueroa-Domecq, de Jong, and Williams (2020). According to Branstad and Solem (2020), entrepreneurs develop new products and services and new technology, markets, and employment opportunities. Echezona (2015) provided credence to the idea that entrepreneurship fosters societal change by means of its extraordinary contributions of new products and services. It also departs from traditional business practices and subtly promotes technology and independence by minimizing dependency on antiquated institutions. Additionally, entrepreneurship is seen as a major economic force that shapes the performance and development of the global economy (Nor-Aishah et al., 2020). Anjum, Farrukh, Heidler, and Díaz Tautiva's (2020) research demonstrates that inventive and entrepreneurial individuals who can seize opportunities and are willing to take chances can greatly contribute to economic advancement.

South African SMMEs account for about 99% of all the economy's businesses. In OECD member countries, approximately one-third of the workforce works for micro-enterprises with fewer than ten employees, accounting for 50 to 60% of value-added production, where SMEs employ two-thirds of the workforce (GEM, 2022). Furthermore, juxtaposing with other contexts in various regions and cities, SMEs have been the main drivers of job creation, often promoting local communities' identity and social development. Statistics South Africa (2020) revealed that SMMEs are the backbone of economic development, not only because they contribute to the gross domestic product (GDP), estimated at 283 billion USD in 2020, but also because they contribute toward job creation. According to Aderibigbe, Mpondo, Gcaza, and Chimucheka (2020), SMMEs in South Africa employ 60 to 70% of the working population. Morris, Santos, and Neumeyer (2020) argued that entrepreneurship brings to life extensive employment opportunities, inspires capital expansion, uplifts gross national product and per capita income, enhances people's standard of living, and encourages global development. Gupta, Chauhan, Paul, and Jaiswal (2020) asserted that entrepreneurship identifies new growth methods through employment creation, encouraging economic activities in various sectors, and social improvement. The authors added that entrepreneurship is useful in promoting economic independence, encouraging capital formation, and lessening socio-economic challenges.

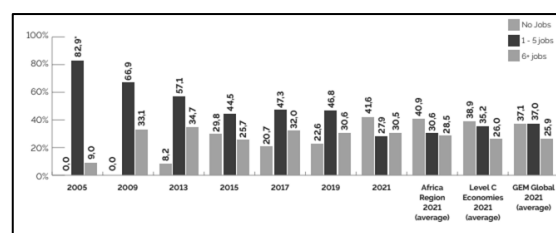


Figure 2. Job growth expectation for early-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa

Source: GEM Report 2022

Figure 2. shows the job growth expectation for early-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa from 2005 to 2021. The findings show that in 2013, 8.2% of South African early-stage entrepreneurs reported that they anticipated creating no new jobs. This figure drastically increased to 41.6% in 2021. This rate is also high for the African region average (40.9%), the level C Economies (38.9%) average, and the global average (37.1%) (GEM, 2022).

Considering those early-stage entrepreneurs who expect to create between one and five new jobs in the future, the rate also went down drastically from 82.9% in 2005 to only 27.9% in 2021. South African rates for this category are similar to that of the African region (30.6%), 7.3% lower than the average for level C economies, and 9.1% lower than the GEM global average. On a positive note, the anticipated number of more than six new jobs being created in South Africa went up from 9% in 2005 to 30.5% in 2021 (GEM, 2022).

3.3. The Thin Line Between Entrepreneurship, Youth Motivation, Economic Development, and Government Policy

While the need and drive to consolidate entrepreneurship as a panacea for youth unemployment has gained traction, one must observe the challenges facing Global South governments that prevent them from ensuring such become realisable. Departing this paper contends that entrepreneurship as a process is vital as it allows for income generation and people to play a meaningful role in economic development. Most importantly, it ensures the improvement of the standard of living of the general population (Kritikos, 2014). However, from a government perspective, implementing entrepreneurial policies alone does not mean the automatic success of one's entrepreneurial venture, consolidating the view that a lot goes into the entrepreneurial venture, more importantly, the support from stakeholders. Building on the above insights, this paper argues that planning, cooperation and coordination, patience, and the willingness to fail are essential ingredients In an entrepreneurial venture's success. However, one cannot isolate the role of the government in consolidating an

adequate environment to support entrepreneurial development. In Southeast Asia, between Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, where there is a sharp rise of the internet economy – including e-commerce, food delivery, and financial services – is expected to approach \$360 billion in gross manufactured value by 2025 (JPMorgan Chase & Co, 2022). Renewed investments in entrepreneurial ventures drive this as there is a growing need for deeper regional integration and development levels. In Latin America, the trend has been the same. As governments realise the importance of entrepreneurship towards inclusive development, the prioritisation of entrepreneurship as a catalyst for development has been consolidated in the developmental policy framework of Latin American states. In 2021, Latin America's start-ups raised a record 19.5 billion dollars in funding. The same year, 18 Latin American start-ups reached the threshold of \$1 billion before going public, marking the achievement of unicorn status (BBVA Open Innovation, 2022). In Europe, Firpo and Beevers (2016) argue that the support for entrepreneurial ventures has seen the region spending as much as €152 billion on business support, underpinning the role of business towards development. In Africa, considerable socioeconomic and, by extension, political challenges still need to be addressed before one can truly see the impact of entrepreneurship on development and youth empowerment. Constant challenges, such as never-ending conflict, poverty, inequality, unemployment, ineffective growth policies, lack of effective regional integration, and limited intra-Africa trade have all hampered the consolidation of entrepreneurship as a viable career choice and developmental process (Okunlola & Okafor, 2022). These factors stifle economic growth. Currently, more than 60% of Africa's population is under 25. By 2030, young Africans are expected to constitute 42% of global youth (Habti, 2022). Therefore, they can play a vital role in development; however, only if they are empowered to realise their best potential.

Returning to entrepreneurship as a solution to youth unemployment in South Africa; we reflect on three crucial elements that should be present for this to be achievable. The paper reflects on youth motivation, economic growth, and government policy. We argue that these are intertwined and independent and are at the centre of entrepreneurship being able to address youth unemployment.

3.4. Youth Motivation

For the entrepreneurship process to succeed in addressing the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa, the youth need to remain motivated and see entrepreneurship as a career choice. They need to see entrepreneurship as something that could change their lives and help them contribute to the greater good, which is

the country's economic development. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this paper argues that if the youth can observe their involvement in entrepreneurship within the context of Maslow's five primary categories of needs being physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation (Kenrick et al., 2010), there is the likelihood they will venture into this process. Reflecting on this, from a physiological perspective, when the youth understand that partaking in entrepreneurship can ensure shelter, food, and water, they may likely involve themselves as they foresee a return on investment. If participating in entrepreneurship can ensure better healthcare and income generation and provide for one's safety needs, the youth are likely to involve themselves so that their safety needs would be cared for (Ndebele et al., 2022). If youth involvement in entrepreneurship can consolidate a sense of love and belonging by increasing networks and immediate business connections, they may likely see themselves involved. Entrepreneurship generates income, creates connections, and consolidates oneself in the entrepreneurial space. For Maslow, this can boost self-esteem, thereby allowing the youth to be the agents of change through entrepreneurial development. Through all the struggle and quest for support and the success from involving themselves in entrepreneurial ventures, this allows for self-actualisation and feelings of achievement. However, while this is easier said than done, the question is what needs to be done to motivate the youth and how the process should be undertaken at a broader level. The ever-increasing youth unemployment rates in South Africa have forced the government to place significant efforts in entrepreneurship as a key to addressing this social dilemma (Zwane, Radebe & Mlambo, 2021). There has since been an increase in awareness of entrepreneurship at higher education institutions, increased funding for start-ups, and support for small and medium businesses, which have been seen as a medium for job creation (Peters & Naicker, 2013). All these initiatives are driven by the need to consolidate entrepreneurship as the key to addressing youth unemployment. Apart from this, this paper contends that there is a need for the South African government not only to focus on boosting entrepreneurship support among our young people but also to market entrepreneurship as a lifelong career path that has spill-over effects beyond the individual. To consolidate youth entrepreneurship, Fotoyi (2021) suggests the following:

“There is a critical need to implement robust policies that reflect social dynamics, for example supporting women entrepreneurs with formalisation processes. This will help bridge the gender gap and dynamics in the sector.

1. There is a need to encourage the youth with tertiary education to be more engaged in entrepreneurial activities

through incentives. This will see more young people with higher education become entrepreneurs.

2. Offer bursaries targeting youth entrepreneurs to graduate many youth entrepreneurs from a lower education status to higher qualifications.
3. Provide tailored support to those operating in the informal sector with the aim of formalisation.
4. Increase the participation of youth entrepreneurs in real sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. This will improve young people's overall contribution to economic development".

The country's worrying statistics motivate the need to support entrepreneurship to address youth unemployment. Mbuya, Diniso and Maphahlele (2016) revealed that South African youth entrepreneurship propensity is the lowest in Africa, with 23.3%, compared to Malawi and Uganda, with 55.2% and 55.4%, respectively. In addition, the GEM (2002) report also highlights and paints a bleak picture of low participation rate in entrepreneurship by the South African youth, being the lowest in Africa. Even though this might be true, this paper argues that background factors always give rise to this, one of which is inconsistent economic growth.

3.5. Economic Growth

Economic growth is critical in consolidating entrepreneurship to address youth unemployment. A growing economy allows investors to invest confidently. It allows for poverty and inequality to be reduced through government policy. It allows people to play a meaningful economic role, thereby promoting socio-economic development. However, when an economy fails to grow consistently, it becomes a burden to the vision and mission of the state, which in most cases is to improve living standards. Mahadea and Simson (2010) reflect that South Africa registered an average growth rate of 3 percent from 1994 to 2003, 5 percent from 2004 to 2007, and 2.8 percent in 2008. The global economic crisis of 2008 to 2009 severely affected the South African economy. Ever since then, the economy has not recovered to pre-2008 growth rates. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) reflected that 2022 GDP was projected to grow by 1.7% in 2022, 1.1% in 2023, and 1.6% in 2024. South Africa has faced numerous challenges in the public sector, which have dented investor confidence in the country. Firstly, the decay of state-owned enterprises estimates that South African taxpayers forked out an estimated R478.5 billion to bail out state-owned companies (SOCs) due to a significant decline in their performances. This has slowed economic growth (Mlondo & Dawood, 2023). Secondly, this paper contends that the local government sector is the closest to the people (compared to the national and provincial) and is

critical to the formulation of local economic development policies that reflect the need of the people. However, this sector is also facing considerable operational challenges. In 2018, only 7% of municipalities in South Africa were fully functional, with the remainder of the 93% dysfunctional, only 31% are reasonably functional, and another 31% completely dysfunctional (Gulston, 2019). The Auditor General revealed that, in the 2019/20 financial year, R26 billion in irregular expenditure occurred at municipalities, further compounding the country's economic growth (Madisa, 2021). Considering the importance of these sectors regarding income generation for the government, it becomes difficult to foresee how the government can prioritise entrepreneurship in the face of many challenges that impact state financial resources. Billions are spent on bailing out decaying state-owned enterprises, and public funds are being abused in the local government sector with little if no corrective action. Recently, the frequency of load shedding has also added to the struggling economy. A country can only ensure sustainable economic growth with a stable supply of power (in this case, electricity). Ngila (2023) notes that, in 2023, the central bank has been on record predicting that there will be 250 days of power blackouts, translating to a historic economic loss of \$12.7 billion. BusinessTech (2023) notes that South Africa's electricity crisis costs the economy as much as R899 million daily. The government's success in facilitating entrepreneurial policies addressing youth unemployment depends on the economy. A growing economy allows the government to have funds to support the implementation of policy and support the local government sector. Unless corrective action is taken to steer the economy towards consistent economic development, the possibility of youth unemployment being addressed through entrepreneurship seems rather farfetched.

3.6. Government Policy

Immediately after 1994, a number of policies supporting entrepreneurship came afore, including the White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa (SA, 1995), the National Empowerment Act (SA, 1998), the Preferential Procurement Act (SA, 2000), the B-BBEE Act (SA, 2003), and the Small Business Act (SA, 2003), were seen as important in the drive to consolidate entrepreneurship (Lebambo & Shambare, 2020). Subsequently, implementing houses were also developed, such as Capacity Developmental Institutions (CDIs) such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), The National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to ensure these policies become effective (Lebambo & Shambare, 2020). However, because the government is central to policy development, implementing these policies in a conducive

environment that allows them to prosper is fundamental. To address this, there is a need to ensure the elimination of red tape (bureaucracy). It is vital to ensure that political misunderstandings do not affect business confidence, and it is important to ensure an environment where entrepreneurs can see worth in their investments. However, one cannot help but observe that the government operates in a difficult, unpredictable, and difficult macro-environment. Market uncertainty and geopolitical events have a bearing on government operations. There have been arguments that the higher education policy in South Africa should make Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges spearhead the government's entrepreneurship drive (False Bay TVET, 2023). This argument is driven by the notion that colleges offer a practical and theoretical aspect of learning, whereas a university focuses more on the theoretical aspect. Another argument has been the need to increase funding for SMEs. The argument reflects the notion that the more SMEs grow, the more they are likely to employ people, thereby helping the government reduce unemployment. Engineering News (2023) supports this and asserts that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are the backbone of economic development in emerging markets like India, South Africa, Kenya, and Colombia. These enterprises contribute up to 40% of the national GDP. In any case, the public authority critically needs to address the absence of a proper business foundation, boundaries to entering new business sectors, absence of industry tutors and systems administration open doors, fierce opposition, the significant expense of administrative consistency, and hindrances in getting to bank advances that keep on subverting business suitability in the provincial region.

3.7. Youth Unemployment and Entrepreneurship in SA: Prospects

From the above deliberation, it becomes essential for one to observe that globally, entrepreneurship has become key in addressing a variety of social ills, one of which is youth unemployment. Governments worldwide have invested billions in promoting start-up organisations and inspiring youths to involve themselves in entrepreneurship ventures. South Africa, a developing country in the global South, cannot be left behind in this race, further stressing the need for the appropriate policy to nurture the love of entrepreneurship among the youth. For its part, the government needs to ensure economic growth and sustainability. However, one ponders how this will be done considering that South Africa needs help to address the widespread decay of critical sectors in the public sector.

Moreover, the fundamental question is how the government will address this decay and whether this will affect entrepreneurship's prioritisation as a catalyst to address youth unemployment.

Additionally, one cannot expect a sustainable and growing economy while the government struggles to keep the light on. SMEs (especially those run by emerging black entrepreneurs) are closing. Therefore, how does one expect the youth to be motivated to become entrepreneurs in challenging operating environments? Nonetheless, the New African (2019) reflects that the future success of South Africa depends on young people who are entrepreneurially aware problem solvers and innovators who are not afraid to venture into self-employment, knowing that it will be difficult. The National Development Plan (NDP) has designated diminishing the country's joblessness to 6% by 2030 through youth-designated mediation, empowering youthful South Africans to effectively participate in the country's economy (New African, 2019). South Africa needs to be deliberate in empowering its youth by investing in entrepreneurship and supporting them to start and run their businesses to create much-needed jobs and boost the ailing economy to get out of the current economic bind. However, entrepreneurship policies alone are only possible with economic growth, corruption, and local government decay (Ndebele et al., 2022; Radebe et al., 2023). While these make time, these are nonetheless important if the country wishes to see the benefit within the context of addressing youth unemployment in the future.

5. Conclusions

This review has brought forward a scoping image of the debacle faced by youth in South Africa: unemployment. In doing so, emergent trends in youth unemployment in South Africa were identified and dwelled upon. This research aimed to identify the conundrum of youth unemployment and how it can be addressed by the public and the private sector through policy intensification and investment in empowering the youth through entrepreneurship.

From this study, through the lens of Schumpeter's 1934 economic development theory, it was concluded that entrepreneurship in South Africa has been on an upward trajectory from 2001 to the present. This being plausible, research proves that entrepreneurship can be a panacea to South Africa's youth unemployment. Hence, most of the studies in this article agree that entrepreneurship can assist in exhilarating young people's economic development and the country's economic growth. Therefore, a need arises to aid youth in entrepreneurship participation. South Africa has one of the lowest participation rates of youth in entrepreneurship. Given the immense potential of youth entrepreneurship in revitalising economies, this raises more questions than prospects. Our findings contribute to the overall youth entrepreneurship research in South Africa. Moreover, creating a basis for youth policy advancement for the

South African government in accelerating solutions to the youth unemployment conundrum.

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