



## Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Intentions of Students in a Rural-based Technical and Vocational Education and Training College

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### Abstract

In an environment with unprecedented unemployment levels, entrepreneurship is promoted as an approach that has a potentially positive effect on the economy through innovation and employment creation. The objective of the current study was to determine entrepreneurial interest and intention among college students. This study examined the entrepreneurial tendencies of students registered for an entrepreneurship module in a college. The study was quantitative and used Caird's General Enterprising Tendencies Questionnaire to collect information from students registered at the local college. The theory of planned behavior was utilized to explore whether, if the students have an interest in business, they are also inclined to act on that desire to participate in business undertakings. The results suggested that the students in the study possessed the tendency to be entrepreneurial and were keen to start businesses at some point in their lives. Yet, they mostly do not intend to start business ventures for several reasons, including fear of failure. The study contributes to the knowledge that underprivileged still contributes to a lack of entrepreneurial inclination, and support is paramount in nurturing that entrepreneurial interest. The study recommends that the college's entrepreneurship education emphasizes information about reasonable small business prospects in the area; provide relevant information such as funding or registration, for the encouragement and advancement of especially youth-owned businesses; and host dialogues that should be delivered by young successful small business owners or managers.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Tendencies; Entrepreneurial Ventures; General Enterprising Tendencies*

### INTRODUCTION

South Africa is confronted with unparalleled levels of unemployment. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), the country's overall unemployment rate will be 32.9% in the third quarter of 2022. As recorded by Statistics South Africa (Maluleke, 2022), the unemployment rate is especially high for those aged between 15 and 24 years at 63.9%, followed by those aged 25 to 34 years at 42.1%. The country classifies these two age groups who are hardest hit by the high unemployment levels as youth. Rural communities are also worse off than their urban counterparts, while women bear the biggest brunt of the weak economic state of the country. Although the unemployment rate in Limpopo Province, the province where the study was conducted, was recorded as 35.4% in the first quarter of 2022, it increases to 50.9% when using the expanded/broad definition of unemployment. The expanded definition includes those people who are economically active but are not actively looking for jobs because they have lost hope and are discouraged (Maluleke, 2022). The high expanded rate of unemployment highlights the hopelessness experienced by the youth in this province.

High unemployment highlights the fact that something needs to be done urgently to support and promote activities that can create employment opportunities like entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses. It has been documented that entrepreneurship, as well as resultant small business ventures, is one of the approaches that can be used to alleviate the problem of unemployment (Kumar & Raj, 2019; Paşnicu, 2018; Rwigema et al., 2010). Entrepreneurial ventures create employment opportunities for themselves and others, and they influence the overall performance of the economy through the innovation of new products as well as by

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influencing productivity, competition, and structural change (Gamede & Uleanya, 2020; Kritikos, 2022).

South Africa, like many countries, acknowledges the challenge of youth unemployment and the role entrepreneurship can play in alleviating this challenge. Therefore, efforts have been made to support youth entrepreneurship. Thus, the government and the private business sector have initiated various support programs for promoting youth entrepreneurship and ownership of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The problem is that although all these support and promotion efforts are in place, youth business is still not enough in South Africa to make a significant impact (Bowmaker-Falconer & Meyer, 2022). Furthermore, it has been reported that only six (6) per cent of the total youth population in the country is involved in entrepreneurial activities (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (2013 – 2023). Kelley et al. (2016) have also remarked that even though the country has all these support agencies in place, the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity rates continue to be low. Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer (2022) further reported that the entrepreneurial intentions of South Africans are lower than the average for Africa, with South Africa at 20%, which is lower than the 40.6% average for Africa. Therefore, a study whose purpose is to investigate the entrepreneurial tendencies of youth in the country, their awareness of the country's youth SME promotion programs and their intention to start entrepreneurial ventures cannot be emphasized enough.

The purpose of the study was to explore whether participants have entrepreneurial tendencies and whether they intend to start their own businesses. The research questions of the study were as follows: 1) do the students who are enrolled to study entrepreneurship at a rural-based college have enterprising tendencies? 2) do these students know of the support initiatives offered by the country? and 3) do they have intentions of starting their own businesses, i.e., creating employment instead of being employed? This study, which focused on college students, envisaged that the results would support the institution in revising its entrepreneurship curriculum.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Significance of entrepreneurship

Prince et al. (2021:26) define entrepreneurship as a process that involves "business/organization creation, uncertainty, innovation, value creation and opportunity recognition/creation." An entrepreneur is described as a person who has the traits of being innovative, optimistic, a risk taker, with an entrepreneurial intention, and an internal locus of control, i.e., a preference to be in control (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Entrepreneurial potential can be defined as the ability that an individual possesses that points out the possibility that they might initiate a business venture (Carland et al., 1984). Entrepreneurs are drivers of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are deemed crucial to the economies of many countries, including South Africa. Researchers have reported that entrepreneurs and small business enterprises create employment and make a significant contribution to the economy (Bignotti & Myres, 2022; Gamede & Uleanya, 2020; Morina & Gashi, 2016).

According to Chiromo and Nani (2019), the SME sector is a major employer and a source of income for many South Africans. The SMEs in South Africa are believed to be capable of addressing the high unemployment rate as they are capable of absorbing a lot of the unemployed labour (Bowmaker-Falconer & Meyer, 2022). Naidoo and Urban (2010) reported that in South Africa, SMEs make up 43% of the overall salaries, wages, and remunerations of the country's workforce and employ at least 54% of its employees in the private sector. Recognizing the contributions entrepreneurs make to the economy, the Department of Small Business Development was established to focus on enhanced support to small businesses, with an emphasis on programs to advance entrepreneurship among the youth. It is thus essential that this SME sector be developed

and supported as a way of enhancing the economic performance of the country.

### **Theory of planned behaviour**

Heydari et al. (2020) suggested that the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is a forerunner of entrepreneurial behaviour. The theory contends that people play a part in events as a purposeful feat that is repeated following their intention to perform that behaviour (Ajzen, 2015). This intention suggests that prior to participating in any action or behaviour individuals engage in deliberate, rational consideration, prudence and thorough planning for that act, i.e. people make coherent decisions on whether to engage in certain behaviours or not. The decisions they make to participate in certain behaviours are affected by behavioural intention. Behavioural intention, in this case the intention to be entrepreneurial, drives an individual towards self-realization and the need for independence. "TPB suggests people's attitudes toward starting a new business, their subjective norms, and their perceived behavioral control (perception of ease or difficulty of entrepreneurial activity) may underlie intentions or actual behaviors" (Maleki et al., 2021:3). Souitaris et al. (2007) define entrepreneurial intention as a mindset and attitude that results in individuals being interested in self-employment instead of relying on finding employment. It is the willingness of an individual to participate in entrepreneurial projects and to create employment opportunities (Dohse & Walter, 2012).

Behavioural intention itself is determined by three factors that work together, viz. "subjective norms, attitudes toward the behaviour and perceived behavioural control" (Suntornsan et al., 2021:334). Furthermore, the factors are "claimed to capture how hard people are willing to try and how much effort they are planning to exert in order to perform the behaviour" (Tsordia & Papadimitriou, 2015:25). Attitude toward the behaviour talks to the level to which a person has a positive or negative judgment of the behaviour that is expected to be performed. That behaviour may be entrepreneurial behaviour or starting a business. "Attitude toward entrepreneurial behaviour refers to the difference between the concepts of a personal desire to become self-employed and the desire to work as an employee" (Tsordia & Papadimitriou, 2015:25). Subjective norms denote being monitored by others, which constitutes social pressure on individuals to accomplish action. Therefore, in this context, subjective norms suggest that whether an individual chooses to be entrepreneurial or not, the sentiments and views of people in their life are important. Perceived behavioural control describes how much people manage their convictions about whatever it is they wish to perform, (Ajzen, 2015; Tsordia & Papadimitriou, 2015; Tsai, 2010).

### **Entrepreneurial tendencies and intention**

Entrepreneurial tendencies can be described in many ways. Some of the factors that describe whether a person has entrepreneurial tendency or potential include examining individual or environmental/contextual factors (Erkoç & Kert, 2013). Individual factors encompass several psychological aspects such as the tendency to take risks (Carland et al., 1999; Hongdiyanto, 2018), creativity and initiative (Baum et al., 2011), desire for independence and autonomy (Audretsch, 2012), achievement motivation (Lange, 2012), self-confidence and internal locus of control (Hidayat & Veronica, 2022; Samjess et al., 2022). According to Adhikari and Ghosh (2022:1) the "Need for achievement", which is followed by 'Self-confidence', 'Risk-bearing capacity', 'Creativity' and 'Adaptability'" are important traits for entrepreneurs. In addition, other researchers have stated that the locus of control is important for entrepreneurial interest (Annisa et al., 2021; Hidayat & Veronica, 2022). Samjess et al. (2022) consider the need for achievement and locus of control as essential traits of an entrepreneur.

The importance of contextual factors in shaping entrepreneurial potential cannot be emphasized enough. Bernhofer and Han (2014) contend that the resolve to embrace an

entrepreneurial life is complicated. It is more than simply evaluating personal and psychological traits. This perspective places more emphasis on the need to understand the connection between a person's entrepreneurial tendencies and interests and their social background. [Cardella et al. \(2020\)](#), as well as [Annisa et al. \(2021\)](#), point out the importance of family background and support, role models, and cultural dimension in harnessing entrepreneurial potential and tendencies in youth. Considering this and all likelihood, individuals will partake in entrepreneurial undertakings if they have some point of departure or base, which can cultivate a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship, i.e., if they feel like they are in control of their behaviour and have emotional backing and otherwise from significant people in their social structures. The entrepreneurial intention can thus be challenging to realize for people without outstanding, thriving entrepreneurs who are accessible and available to serve as role models. In the same vein, support in any form and from anywhere might just be what the youth need to ignite or promote their entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurial tendencies are highlighted to support and promote entrepreneurial ventures. Research has shown that entrepreneurial tendencies, together with interest, are related to the favourable outlooks of venturing into entrepreneurial undertakings as well as the profitability and growth of such ventures ([Bowmaker-Falconer & Meyer, 2022](#)). Thus, entrepreneurial tendencies are perceived to promote entrepreneurial intentions through the promotion of feelings of self-confidence and a strong desire to be entrepreneurial ([Eltari & Mulyaningsih, 2017](#); [Jakopec et al., 2013](#); [Qamari et al., 2022](#)).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study targeted students who were registered for the entrepreneurship module in the Faculty of Business Management in the selected Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in the final year of their studies. As stated by [Kuehn \(2019:227\)](#) "technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is essential to create the skills needed by the economy and thus for a country's sustainable economic development". The students from the college were selected for the current study to specifically establish, through research, if what they have learned has translated into skills that they use in the entrepreneurial ventures. At the time of the study, 170 students were enrolled for the entrepreneurship module, and all of them participated in the study. Self-administered questionnaires were handed out to the participants during their classes. The questionnaires had three sections; 1) a section on demographic information; 2) a section that was made up of the General Enterprising Tendencies (GET) test; and 3) an open-ended section that asked participants whether they had intentions of undertaking any entrepreneurial projects and whether they were aware of the development and support programs available in South Africa for the promotion of small businesses in the country, especially those owned by youth.

The GET test is a standardized evaluation tool that measures the enterprising tendencies of individuals. The test was developed by [Caird \(1991\)](#). It was designed to measure several traits that are generally characteristic of an enterprising person. The traits include risk-taking, the need for achievement, creative tendencies, and the need for autonomy; as well as drive and determination, which are in line with what researchers have documented as important traits for entrepreneurial behaviour. The GET has been validated by multiple researchers who have presented research results from different populations. According to research by [Stormer et al. \(1999\)](#), the GET has a Cronbach's rating of 0.86, thereby showing that the test is credible and reliable. In addition, studies found that the GET is valid with good internal consistency and is a sufficient and reliable measure of entrepreneurial intent. The test has also been reported to have sufficient potential for assessing enterprising tendencies ([Stormer et al., 1999](#)).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Data collected using the questionnaires were analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The presentation of results starts with the demographic information of the participants.

**Demographic information of the participants:** The total sample was 170 respondents.

**Gender of the participants:** A total of 170 participants from the selected TVET colleges were involved in the study. Of these, 56 (32.9%) were males and 114 (67.1%) were females.

**Age of the participants:** The age ranges of the participants are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Age Ranges of the Participants

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
18-21	74	43.5
22-25	81	47.6
26 -29	12	7.1
Over 30	3	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100.0</b>

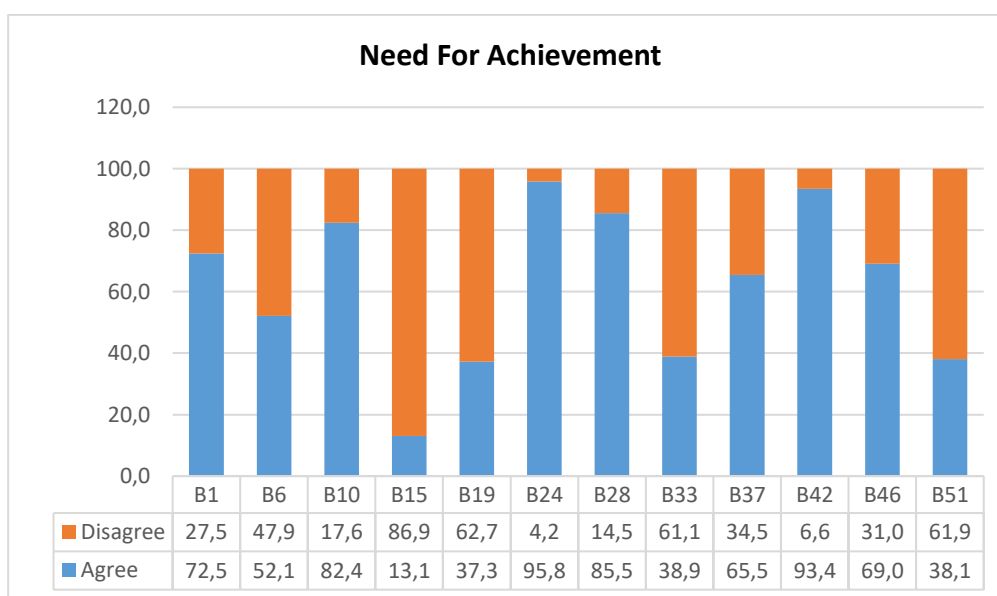
According to their age range, 43.5% of the participants were in the age range between 18 and 21 years, and 47.6% of them were between 22 and 25 years. In addition, approximately 7.1% of them were in the 26 and 29 years age range and only 1.8% were above 30 years.

**Whether students studying entrepreneurship at a college have entrepreneurial tendencies**

In line with the first research question of whether the students who are enrolled to study entrepreneurship at a rural-based college have enterprising tendencies, the results are presented in terms of entrepreneurial tendencies, i.e., the need for achievement; need for autonomy; creative tendency; calculated risk-taking; and locus of control, which were measured using the GET.

*Need for Achievement*

The current study, as exhibited in Figure 1, suggests that generally, the participants exhibit the need to achieve.

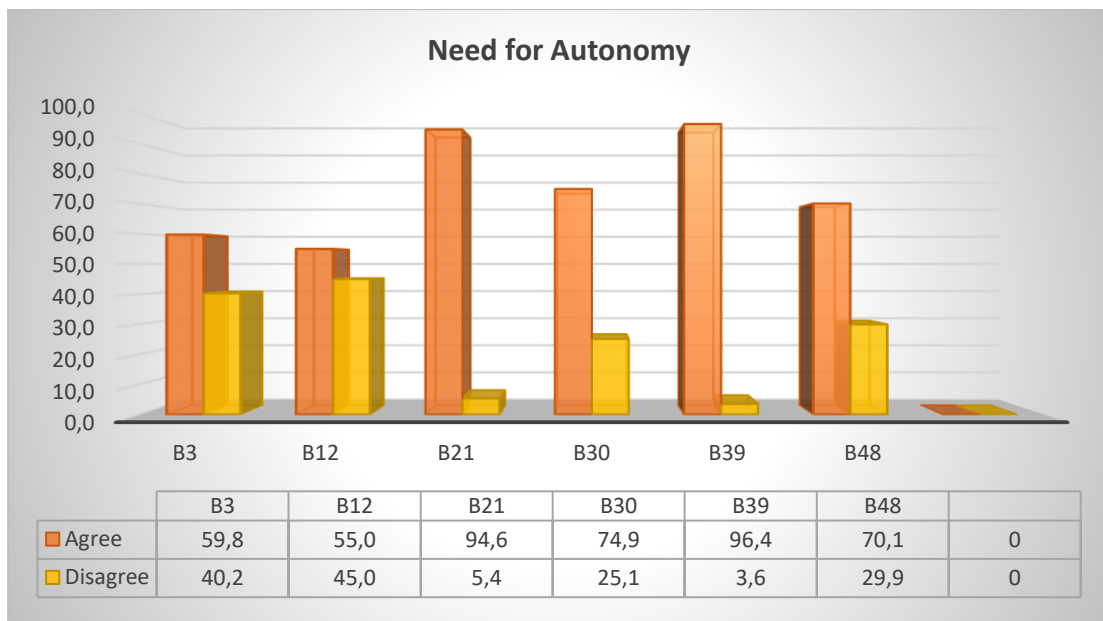


**Figure 1.** Responses to the Need for Achievement

As presented in Figure 1, at least 82.4% of the participants suggested that they are not afraid of challenging circumstances; they do not achieve their goals to just please people but to develop themselves; they prefer punctuality in themselves and colleagues; they are goal-driven, open-minded, and willing to consider different ways of thinking. However, there were a few participants who indicated a preference for: secure jobs that provide the guarantee of pension benefits; teamwork rather than working on their own and thus not assuming individual responsibility for required tasks. Preferences for relying on others are factors that are not beneficial for independent achievement. Therefore, there are a few who are afraid of the individual pursuit of achievement but need approval from others. This may suggest a lack of trust in themselves. A lack of self-confidence is also not conducive to individual achievement.

*Need for Autonomy*

Figure 2 shows an exhibition of the results on the need for autonomy. The results from the participants as presented above suggested that the majority of them prefer to have guidance and instructions to accomplish tasks at work. This preference suggests that they do not feel equipped to function autonomously or independently. Only 40.2% indicated their tendency to be unconventional and stand out; not needing constant guidance or assistance when tasks need to be accomplished; preferring to lead and steer projects; and preferring to make a mark in projects that are achieved.

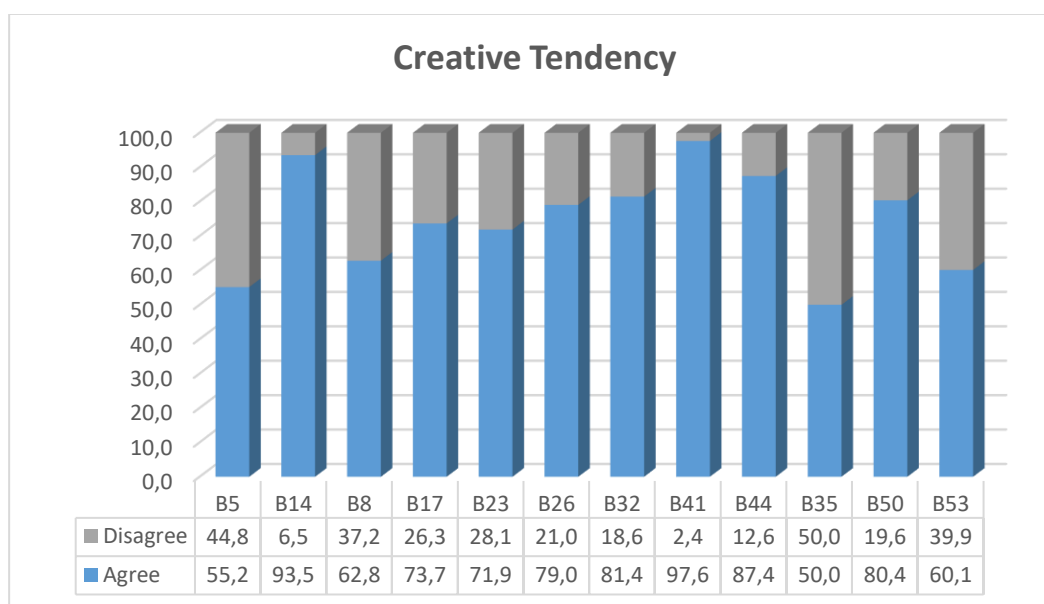


**Figure 2. Responses to the Need for Autonomy**

*Creative Tendency*

Figure 3 reveals a split in the creative tendency trait. The split in perceptions as presented in Figure 3 suggests that some of the participants have the creative tendency trait, as indicated by their responses that tend to think intensely and analyze available information to inform new ideas and solutions; from time to time they have distinct ideas; they are not averse to making changes in the spaces they occupy and are open to trying out new ideas. Moreover, they indicated that they prefer to interact with people who have diverse ways of thinking.





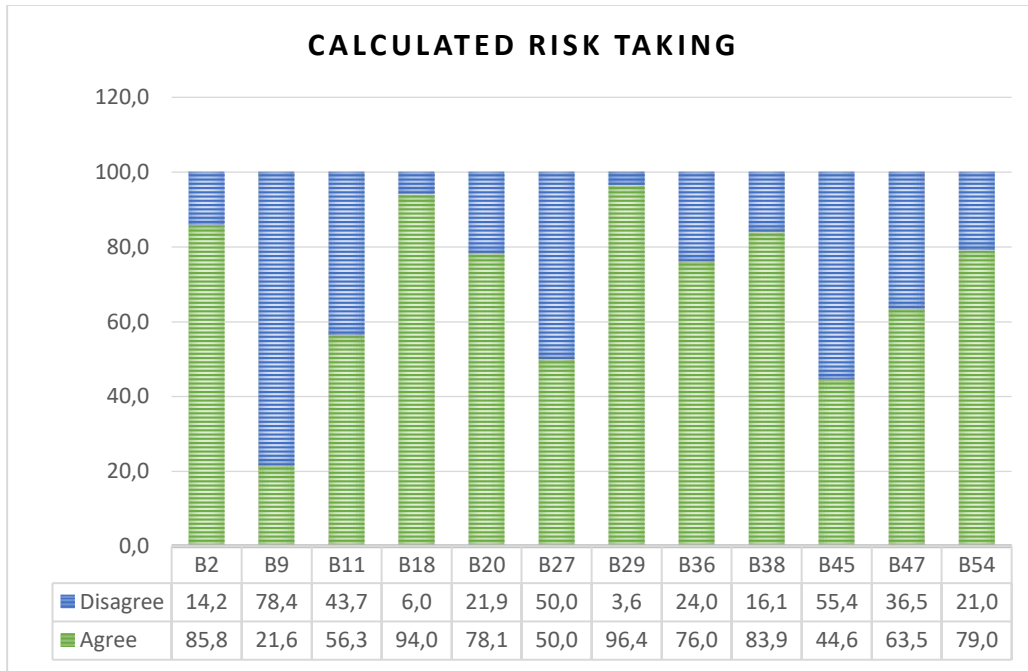
**Figure 3.** Responses to Creative Tendency

Then again, an equal number of responses suggest that an equal percentage of the participants also do not have traits that do not contribute to creativity that may encourage them to enter into entrepreneurial ventures. However, awareness and teaching and development programs might sensitize the participants to a different way of thinking. For instance, they pointed to the fact that they find it hard to adapt to changes, they prefer long-established ways of doing things instead of trying new methods, and they prefer certainty and structure in their lives with well-defined routines. Traditional, established, and structured situations are not typical of entrepreneurial ventures, the notion of constant turbulence and change that modern-day organizations face on a daily basis.

#### *Calculated Risk-Taking*

The results for the willingness to take calculated risks are presented in Figure 4. The results suggest that the participants are willing to take calculated risks. The traits are that they are not opposed to testing their limits and going into new areas. Additionally, the majority of the responses suggest that the participants prefer to collect all facts and weigh the pros and cons to be able to make informed decisions. They are prepared to take chances and are not averse to risk-taking even when the success odds are 50:50 or less. Furthermore, the results suggest that the participants would be prepared to spend time and borrow money to investigate new ideas for making money.

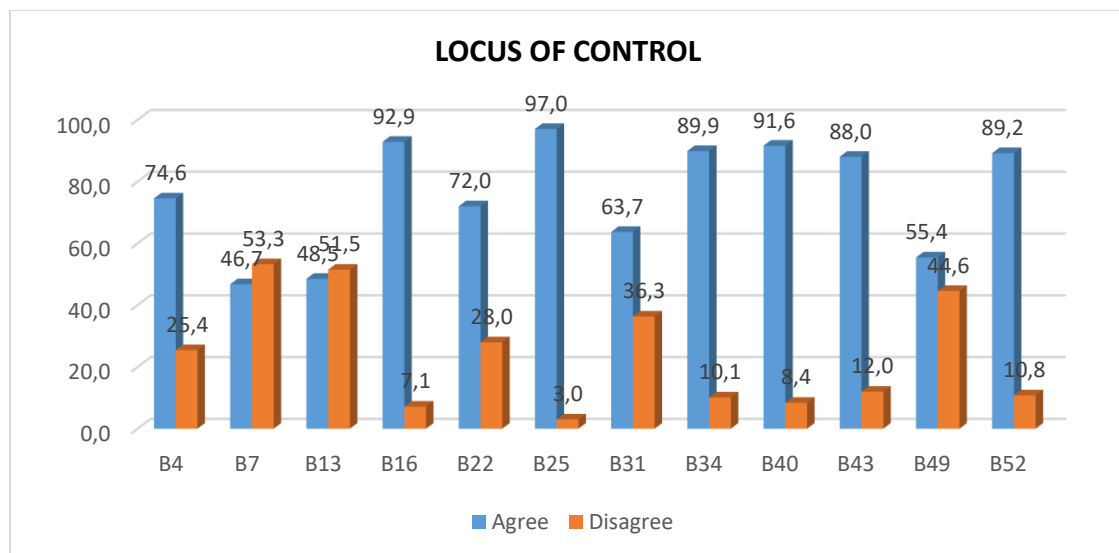
However, despite the above trend of risk-taking tendencies, some participants would be unwilling to leave their comfort zones to pursue new opportunities. They also indicated that they would prefer to stay with the tried and tested instead of the unfamiliar. Again, some responses indicate the preference for a secure job with a secure income rather than a higher income that is not as secure but is dependent upon an individual's performance. The entrepreneurial environment is often uncertain and unpredictable; therefore, highlighting that a preference for a secure job is not entrepreneurial.



**Figure 4.** Responses to Calculated Risk-Taking

*Locus of the control*

The results displayed in Figure 5 suggest that the participants have an internal locus of control to some extent. The participants' responses suggest that the majority of the participants believe that whatever happens to them in life is for a reason. They also indicated that whatever they achieved was due to hard work and not necessarily luck. Furthermore, their responses suggest that they are continuously seeking new opportunities and taking advantage of them; they are self-confident and believe that they have control over what happens to them or the direction that their lives take instead of feeling controlled by fate.



**Figure 5.** Responses on the Locus of Control



*Performance on Entrepreneurial Traits according to Gender*

Results on gender differences in entrepreneurial traits indicated that males performed better than females on all traits except for the need for achievement. The t-tests were computed to find out any significant differences between the genders on the measures of entrepreneurial traits. The results of the comparisons are exhibited in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Performance on Entrepreneurial Traits according to Gender

<b>Entrepreneurial Trait</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Need for achievement	-.510	150	.610
Need for autonomy	1.181	161	.239
Creative tendency	.623	153	.534
Calculated risk-taking	2.307	156	.022
Locus of the control	-.311	157	.756

These results suggest that although there were some differences with some of the variables, those differences were not significant except for the trait of aversion to taking calculated risks. Females tend to be more risk averse than their male counterparts, according to the results of this study. The difference in the inclination to take calculated risks was significant at a 5% level of confidence ( $p=0.022$ ). Other researchers reported similar results, stating that males tend to take more risks as compared to females (Goktan & Gupta, 2015; Ndofirepi, 2022). Risk-taking behaviour was especially observed in initiating entrepreneurial endeavours, which tend to come with high levels of uncertainty.

*Performance on Entrepreneurial Traits according to Age Group*

Further t-tests were calculated to investigate whether the age of the participants made any difference in their entrepreneurial tendencies. As exhibited in Table 3, the current study shows no significant differences in all measured entrepreneurial dimensions when evaluated per age group.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Performance on Entrepreneurial Traits according to Age Groups

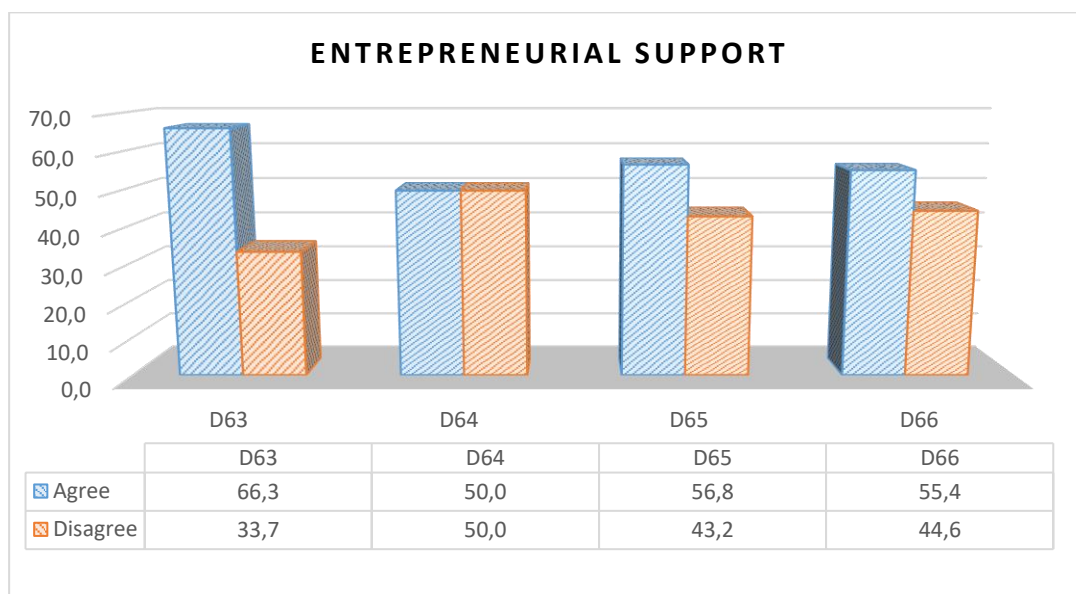
<b>Entrepreneurial Trait</b>	<b>value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Need for achievement	1.186	3	.317
Need for autonomy	1.523	3	.211
Creative tendency	.144	3	.934
Calculated risk-taking	.853	3	.467
Locus of the control	.458	3	.712

**Participants' Knowledge and Awareness of Entrepreneurial Support**

A second research question of the study was to investigate whether the participants were aware or had knowledge of the numerous entrepreneurship and SME promotion and development programs that the country has put in place to support entrepreneurs, especially youth. Figure 6 shows the study findings. These findings suggest that most participants (66.35%) are aware of government support initiatives and believe that these initiatives deliver decent support to individuals who desire to initiate business enterprises. At least half of the participants (50.0%) knew about these various support programs from both the private and public sectors that are available specifically for youth entrepreneurs. Yet, despite the fact that at least half of them indicated their knowledge of these support programs at least 56.8% of them suggested a lack of confidence in the accessibility of these programs as they stated that they feel it is still easier to seek support from family and friends rather than approaching those programs. In addition, at least

44.6% of the participants reported that the location of the offices of these available programs as well as information on how to access their support are not easily accessible. Their responses suggested that the support programs were not user-friendly.

The study further explored whether the attitudes of the participants toward access to government support differed according to gender. There were no significant differences in the opinions on the availability and ease of access to entrepreneurial support programs between males and females.



**Figure 6.** Responses to Entrepreneurial Support

*Comparison of Different Age Groups with regard to Opinions of the Availability of Entrepreneurial Support*

The results when comparing the participants, per age category, on their opinions on the availability of entrepreneurial support are displayed in Table 4.

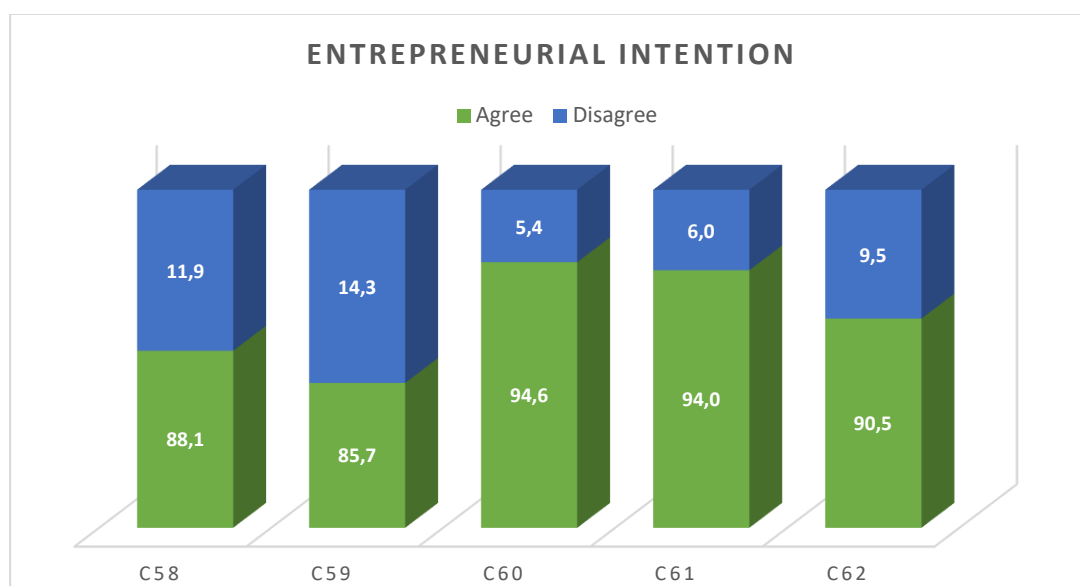
**Table 4.** Comparison of Age Groups on Opinions of Availability of Entrepreneurial Support

	Value	Df	p-value
Entrepreneurial support	3.212	3	.025

As exhibited Table 4, there are significant differences in the participants' opinions and awareness of whether there is adequate entrepreneurial support or not in the country. The differences suggest that those participants who are older than 30 years are confident that the country has adequate support for young people who desire to enter into entrepreneurial ventures. The results of the current study are consistent with those of previous research (Kautonen et al., 2014).

**Entrepreneurial Intention of Participants**

The last research question of the current study also aimed to assess the intentions, or not, of the participants to initiate and enter into entrepreneurial undertakings upon completion of their studies. Figure 7 displays the findings. The responses in Figure 7 were to questions regarding whether the participants had any intention to start businesses upon completion of the studies.



**Figure 7.** Responses to Entrepreneurial Intention

The study findings suggest that at least 94.6% of the participants have the resolve and are determined to initiate their business enterprises, while at least 94.0% of them state that they are willing to exert as much effort as is needed to initiate those businesses. Additionally, at least 90.5% have given starting their business enterprises serious thought in the future and 88.1% prefer self-employment rather than being employees in a company. Over 85.7% of the participants indicated that they plan to concentrate on entrepreneurship as a profession, thus highlighting that they appear to have entrepreneurial intentions.

The results, of whether there are any differences in the intentions to start businesses when the participants are compared per their age groups as depicted in Table 5, suggest that there is no significant difference in entrepreneurial intention when the participants were compared per their age categories.

**Table 5.** Comparison of Gender Performance on Entrepreneurial Intention

	value	df	p-value
Entrepreneurial Intention	1.343	136.010	0.182

### Summary of the Results

The study utilized the GET test to determine entrepreneurial tendencies. These tendencies include the need for autonomy, calculated risk-taking, the need for autonomy, the tendency to be creative, and the internal locus of control. The results suggest that most of the students have a need for achievement, calculated risk-taking, and internal locus of control. They also have traits of the need for autonomy and a creative tendency. The current results are, therefore, encouraging as they suggest that most students in the study have entrepreneurial traits. The results further showed no differences between the entrepreneurial tendencies of males and females except in the trait of risk-taking, which suggests that males are not as risk-averse as their female counterparts. These results are similar to those of other researchers (Sandvik, 2011) but different from others who found no significant difference between the risk-taking tendencies of males as compared to those of females (Agustina & Pradesa, 2020; Hillesland, 2019; Mabunda & Rachidi, 2019) as well as Jetter and Walker (2018) who reported that women have a higher propensity toward risk-taking behaviour than their male counterparts. Concerning age, the current study found no significant difference among the age

categories for the measured entrepreneurial traits.

Another finding of the current study is that the participants reported the intention to start businesses upon completion of their studies. Apparently, most of the participants considered entering entrepreneurial enterprises as a viable opportunity for creating employment for themselves and possibly other people. A good number of the participants indicated that they have seriously considered starting their own businesses. The results did not reveal any differences in participants' intention to start entrepreneurial ventures when comparing the participants by gender or age group. According to [Annisa et al. \(2021\)](#), entrepreneurial intention is important because it promotes a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship and the desire to turn that intention into entrepreneurial behaviour, i.e. individuals with entrepreneurial intention who are not averse to risk-taking are likely to establish a business venture in the future.

When the participants were asked about what would make it difficult for them to start their own businesses, they gave several reasons that include: lack of funding, lack of confidence that they would succeed if they started their businesses, inadequate knowledge about business, and lack of business skills on how to run a business. Their responses and fears are consistent with findings by previous researchers who also reported issues of start-up capital as well as lack of business management, financial management, and marketing skills hinder the start-up businesses as well as contributing to the failure of SMEs in South Africa ([Baidoun et al., 2017](#); [Fatoki, 2014](#); [Mabunda & Rachidi, 2019](#); [Ndebele et al., 2022](#); [Wu et al., 2022](#)). As a result, due to fear of the abovementioned factors, individuals are weary of starting businesses. In addition to the fear of failing, the participants are also of the opinion that government support is not easily accessible despite its availability. Previous researchers have also documented the challenge of research participants not being aware of the country's entrepreneurship support programs ([Herrington & Kew, 2017](#); [Mabunda & Rachidi, 2019](#); [Malebana, 2014](#)).

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes in line with the interpretation of the theory of planned behaviour as described by [Maleki et al. \(2021\)](#) that "TPB suggests people's attitudes toward starting a new business, their subjective norms, and their perceived behavioral control (perception of ease or difficulty of entrepreneurial activity) may underlie intentions or actual behaviors". In the current study, the youth exhibited entrepreneurial traits of risk-taking, the need for achievement, creative tendencies, the need for autonomy; as well as drive and determination. In addition, they expressed an interest in entering entrepreneurial ventures. However, because of several factors that they saw as obstacles, there is a high chance that they might not venture to start their own businesses. Such perceived obstacles include their fear of failure due to their understanding that they do not have management skills, which highlights the importance of including such obstacles in their curricula. Another obstacle is that they identify money issues. This relates to their not knowing much about the government support programs offered to youth entrepreneurs that could help with such dilemmas only if they have proper business ideas and plans.

South Africa has recorded low total entrepreneurial activity (TEA) rates ([Bowmaker-Falconer & Meyer, 2022](#)). As such, efforts should be exerted to convert entrepreneurial traits and intentions into action, i.e., into starting new businesses, to alleviate the challenge of unemployment. This suggests that observing that participants have entrepreneurial traits and are interested in starting their own businesses is not enough if that intention is not put into action. Thus, there is a need to exert effort to convert entrepreneurial interest and potential into reality. The need to convert potential into reality is highlighted by the fact that previous research has indicated that SMEs have enormous potential to develop the local economy and consequently alleviate poverty ([Bignotti & Myres, 2022](#); [Gamede & Uleanya, 2020](#); [Herrington & Kew, 2017](#)).

For the entrepreneurial intention to thrive and translate into entrepreneurial ventures, there are both 1) personal and 2) environmental/contextual factors involved (Tseng et al., 2022). On a personal level, entrepreneurial traits and interests are important and need to be supported. Therefore, the study recommends a multi-pronged approach to support the participants' entrepreneurial traits and encourage their entrepreneurial interest and intention, i.e., the planned behaviour and/or intention can come to fruition.

- 1) On an individual, personal level, personality traits are important in whether the individual is interested in entrepreneurial ventures or not. In addition, some people would also be interested in learning about entrepreneurship either formally or informally. Researchers have also highlighted the importance of an individual's self-esteem. It has been established that the self-esteem of people with entrepreneurial intentions is enhanced by observing successful entrepreneurs or listening to narratives about how others made it. Self-esteem plays a significant role in entrepreneurial intention and behaviour (Khurshid et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2019; Ndofirepi, 2022; Pheaha & Schachtebec, 2020).
- 2) The environment of an entrepreneur or aspiring one is made up of several elements that start with family and friends, teachers and/or the education system, religious communities, and all other figures that play the role of role models for that entrepreneur. Therefore, the study recommends that the mentioned role players and the broader community support potential entrepreneurs as follows:

**Support of family, friends, and/or the community:** Annisa et al. (2021) documented the significance of family and friends in supporting the individual. Therefore, the current study recommendation is for family and friends to be there for the individual to support them emotionally and financially where possible. Emotional support is particularly important when an entrepreneurial individual goes through several life cycles of business ventures. Researchers have indicated that with the support of family and friends, the likelihood of giving up when the business is down is unlikely (Annisa et al., 2021; Maleki et al., 2021; Manolova et al., 2019; Ndebele et al., 2022). Moreover, the current study indicated that the participants would rather borrow money from friends and relatives than use the available support initiatives, thus highlighting the importance of this support system. This narrative underscores the importance of family and friend support.

**Education and training:** Given the current study participants' low level of knowledge about the country's small business support institutions/initiatives and the services that they offer, the colleges could perhaps help. The class learnings at the colleges could include information that raises awareness of such support initiatives and information on how to access them. The college, and other similar institutions, could also invite government departments that are responsible for SME support programs to address the students about such initiatives. These government institutions can show college students, or rather aspiring entrepreneurs, the kind of business opportunities that are available, how to register new businesses, and how to access finance for start-ups and later business growth (Mabunda & Rachidi, 2019). Besides, the more knowledgeable young people are about the different types of entrepreneurial support and perceive them to be easily accessible, the greater their interest and intention of being self-employed (Rankhumise & Masilo, 2018).

This study also shows that the students fear starting their own businesses because they are not sure of their knowledge of business management skills. Therefore, it is recommended that more training and development be given in business management areas, for instance, marketing management, financial management, communication, crafting business plans, as well as the skills of presenting those business plans to potential funders. The importance of education and training

for people who intend to enter into business ventures or who are already there has been emphasized by several researchers (Deaprida et al., 2021; Gano-an & Gempes, 2022; Pyper, 2016; Suntornsans et al., 2022; Tseng et al., 2022). Therefore, research has shown that an increase in entrepreneurial education and training, especially in developing countries, cannot be emphasized enough (Franzke et al., 2022; Ndala, 2023). Training and development can be conducted in an informal setting other than a formal college. It can be through executive education programs, which can be offered in one specific skill at a time, e.g. a course in marketing or finance. The authors have reported that engaging in or receiving entrepreneurship education is instrumental in increasing the business knowledge of individuals and their self-confidence. Self-confidence facilitates individuals' daring attitudes and eventual interest in weighing feasible entrepreneurial options and pursuing them.

**Role models:** An additional way of neutralizing the uncertainties that students might have about establishing businesses can be by getting successful entrepreneurs to be their role models and talk to them. Finding entrepreneurs who come from similar backgrounds to the students might just be one of the greatest catalysts or motivators for them to enter entrepreneurial ventures. These inspirational dialogs can probably inspire students to start thinking positively that starting a business and creating employment opportunities is not a castle in the air but a possibility. Several researchers have shown the importance of having entrepreneurial role models, especially for those people who have an entrepreneurial interest and/or intention (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021; Liu et al., 2019; Malebana, 2016). Liu et al. (2019), as well as Malebana (2016), further put emphasis on the need to highlight narratives about those entrepreneurs who are perceived to be role models to encourage entrepreneurial intention. Abbasianchavari and Moritz (2021) underline that exposure to role models at an early age is crucial to entrepreneurial intentions.

**The SMME support programs:** the importance of entrepreneurial support of especially youth by both the public and private sector has been emphasized by research (Lontsi, 2023; Mabunda & Rachidi, 2019; Ndala, 2023). Additionally, support programs in the country and province specifically from both the public and private sectors should be publicized more widely with especially the use of networks and social media, which are more popular amongst the youth. The publications can mention their mandate and how to access them.

This study contributes new knowledge by showcasing unique entrepreneurial tendencies embedded and obscured yet untapped among rural-based technical students. The contribution of this paper is unique because it presents one of the first rural-based studies within the locality of study, which unravels untold international attributes in young technical students, which government entrepreneurship policy makers may avail toward enabling the empowerment of future young entrepreneurs. The attributes uncovered in this paper are somewhat rural-based attributes, which may differ from city- or urban-based attributes in young people's entrepreneurial intentions. This also contributes to the theory and practice of rural-based entrepreneurship.

#### **LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH**

The findings of this paper may not be wholistically applicable to all technical students because the paper is rural based; this limitation thus offers an opportunity for replicating this study in urban areas. Again, the period of coverage of the study was limited within a space of one year; hence, there was no repeat sampling of opinion of the students after a year to ascertain if their intention had oscillated or not; hence, the researchers also suggest that future research may carry out a repeat survey after a year to see if the intentions remain the same.

The major goal of this study was to evaluate the entrepreneurial traits and intentions of students studying entrepreneurship at a college. As the current research conducted the study in only one college in one province of the country, it would be difficult to generalize results although



the results can be used as a guide in similar situations. Therefore, the study recommends that more studies be conducted in different areas and colleges to bolster such findings and recommendations. Therefore, there is a need for more research on the factors influencing the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, further research can perhaps employ the entrepreneurial intention models that research has already put forward to evaluate how entrepreneurial traits, support, and entrepreneurial intention eventually encourage the increase in new businesses.

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