

Revisiting Curriculum Change and Youth Development for Entrepreneurship through School Counseling

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the scholarship of youth career counseling for entrepreneurship within the school system. The aim is to advance the meaning and rationale for youth development through curriculum change in schools, discussing teaching practices to create employment opportunities and to improve the economy of the country. The paper will contribute to the debate on youth career counseling for entrepreneurial skills within schools. Among others, the author argues that the concept “youth career counseling” is not universally agreeable and that the composition of entrepreneurship is influenced by the curriculum, context and circumstances within schools. This paper employed a descriptive research methodology wherein an analysis of literature documents was done from secondary sources of information. This conceptual paper used the accountability theory to explain and describe the phenomenon, youth career counseling for entrepreneurship within the school context. The author argues that positive youth career counseling for entrepreneurship should meet employment needs and requires consideration of several curriculum factors to ensure learners achieve the desired employment skills. It is impossible to discuss career counseling without referring to quality teaching and learning as a school accountability framework. Career counseling requires teacher competence, relevant curriculum, appropriate learning environment, and, effective and efficient learning processes to achieve employment skills. Factors such as stakeholder collaboration are critical for the achievement of entrepreneurial skills.

Keywords: youth career counseling, curriculum change, entrepreneurship, teaching and learning, economic development

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore youth career counseling for entrepreneurship within schools simply because of the many facets of entrepreneurship that are not well researched, articulated, or understood (Zahra, 2007). The fundamental attempt by practitioners and academics to arrive at a universally agreeable definition and composition of entrepreneurship in itself has been foggy and inconclusive at best. Too many elements of the concept of entrepreneurship are simply misunderstood or little is known about them. There are also too many misconceptions about youth entrepreneurship going far beyond itself into other related areas of study such as sociology, anthropology, and the concept of

management itself. The following questions are posed: Are some curriculum contents relevant for improving youth entrepreneurship for some societies and communities more than others; if so, how did that come about? Is developing youth career for entrepreneurial skills an important element for the sustenance of communities; if so, how will the community measure the adequacy of these entrepreneurial skills? Does entrepreneurship relate only to commercial enterprises or businesses or can it refer to several other not-for-profits and not for business organisations and activities? Is entrepreneurship similar to management or is it a concept completely devoid from other forms of management? These and many more questions bring about the uncertainties in teaching, learning, and understanding youth development entrepreneurship. These questions and the quest to gain answers provide the impetus for this paper.

Understanding entrepreneurship

According to Kreft and Russell (2003), an entrepreneur is an agent of change, who organises, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise, while entrepreneurship is the process of discovering new ways of combining and using resources to increase the market value generated through the combination of resources. The aim is to ensure resources can generate elsewhere, individually or in combination, for the youth entrepreneur to make a profit (Brush, Greene & Hart, 2001). In schools, an entrepreneur is the teacher who has to develop a curriculum that will ensure career counseling for youth development by using the school counseling resources for employment and for the creation of employment in the community. In so doing, the youth will be improving the economy of the country, and continuously employing and developing members of the society, to become competitive in the global world. The more people are developed, the better the size of the economic pie for everyone. A supporting observation to this is the example of Bill Gates, who as an undergraduate at Harvard developed BASIC, for the first microcomputer. He went on to help found Microsoft in 1975 (Lowe, 2001). During the 1980s, Gates IBM was contracted to provide MS-DOS operating system for its computers. Gates procured the software from another firm, essentially turning resources into a multibillion-dollar product. Microsoft's Office and Windows operating software now run on 90 percent of the world's computers. By making software that increases human productivity, Gates expanded our ability to generate output (and income), resulting in a higher standard of living for all (Boettke & Coyne, 2003). Another similar observation is that of Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, another entrepreneur who touched millions of lives in a positive way. His innovations in distribution warehouse centres and inventory control, allowed Wal-Mart to grow in less than thirty years, from a single store in Arkansas to the nation's largest retail chain.

Along with other entrepreneurs such as Ted Turner (CNN), Henry Ford (Ford automobiles), Ray Kroc (McDonald's franchising), and Fred Smith (FedEx), Walton

significantly improved the everyday life of billions of people all over the world (Reynolds, Hay, and Camp, 1999). By using the same principle of entrepreneurial spirit, South African school counselors can alleviate the economic pressures into a good fortune the whole of South Africa can benefit from. Two notable twentieth-century economists, Joseph Schumpeter (1942) and Israel Kirzner (1997), refined the academic understanding of entrepreneurship. Schumpeter stressed the role of the entrepreneur as an innovator who implements change in an economy, by introducing new goods or new methods of production (Schumpeter, 1942). The Schumpeterian view is that the entrepreneur is a beneficial but disruptive force called “creative destruction”, in which new products are introduced to render the failure of others. The introduction of the compact disc and the corresponding disappearance of the vinyl record, is one of the many examples of creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1942). In contrast to Schumpeter’s (1942) view, Kirzner (1997) viewed entrepreneurship as a process of discovery. Where a person discovers previously unnoticed profit opportunities. The entrepreneur’s discovery sets into motion a process in which these newly discovered profit opportunities are then acted on in the marketplace until market competition eliminates the profit opportunity. Unlike Schumpeter’s disruptive force, Kirzner’s entrepreneur is an equilibrating force. An example of such an entrepreneur is someone who discovers that a recent increase in college student enrolment has created a profit opportunity in renovating houses and turning them into rental apartments. Economists in the modern Austrian School of Economics have further refined and developed the ideas of Schumpeter (1942) and Kirzner (1997) (Boettke & Coyne, 2003, p. 67).

During the 1980s and 1990s, state and local governments across the United States abandoned their previous focus on attracting large manufacturing firms as the main focus of economic development policy and instead shifted their focus to promoting youths for entrepreneurship (Eisinger, 1989). This same period witnessed a dramatic increase in empirical research on entrepreneurship. Some of these studies explored the effect of demographic and socioeconomic factors on the likelihood of a person choosing to become an entrepreneur. Others explore the impact of taxes on entrepreneurial activity. This literature is still limited by the lack of a clear measure of entrepreneurial activity at the US state level. Scholars generally measure entrepreneurship by using numbers of self-employed people; the deficiency in such a measure is that some people become self-employed partly to avoid, or even evade, income and payroll taxes (Bates & Bates, 1997). Some studies find, for example, that higher income tax rates are associated with higher rates of self-employment. This counterintuitive result is likely explained by the higher tax rates encouraging more tax evasion through individuals filing taxes as self-employed. Economists have also found that higher taxes on inheritance are associated with a lower likelihood of individuals becoming entrepreneurs.

Youth development for economic development

The focus of economic development in the country has shifted more heavily towards youth career counseling for entrepreneurship. Youth development for entrepreneurship may be affected by the worth of the education system in terms of quality of learners (their personal circumstances, knowledge, family support, etc.); the quality of the learning environment (size of classes, facilities in the schools, positive teachers behaviors, etc.); the quality of the content of the curriculum (relevance to the local needs, etc.); and the process of attaining quality (competency of teachers and support given to teachers and learners) (Wei & Zhou, 2019). This increased interest in the youths' entrepreneurship role in the economy has led to a growing body of research attempting to identify the factors that promote entrepreneurship. The level of entrepreneurship differs considerably across countries and over the time. The absence of job opportunity for youth and the lack of skills in entrepreneurial efforts to uplift the economy and the problems of present day living, is viewed by some as indicating a needed change in the curriculum. A change in the curriculum, however, has certainly been observed in schools as addressing the question of whether the curriculum in schools still matches the changing competition, innovation, economic growth, job creation and well-being of the citizens.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (Bosma & Harding, 2008), there is a wide agreement on the importance of youth entrepreneurship for economic development. Through entrepreneurial curriculum, youth can be provided with accurate information about the current state of the economy in South Africa (AlKutich & Abukari, 2018). Now more than ever, with the economic decline across the globe, caused by the new pandemic of the coronavirus, it is imperative that schools across the world revisit their curriculum to ensure youth development results in employment and job creation. Youth development is not easy, nor will it happen without education to ensure success. After an economically costly lockdown, National Treasury anticipates that the country's unemployment rate could reach 40% and that young people will in all likelihood continue to bear the brunt (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2020). More than 60% of South Africans who have applied for government's special COVID-19 relief grant, are young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years (RSA, 2020). Current literature on youth development includes numerous general or specific recommendations for change. There is also, renewed attention to the methods by which curriculum change for youth entrepreneurship can be brought about. Whereas earlier attention to methods for change tended to centre on steps in the revision of courses of study or sequential stages in the organisation of curriculum improvement programs, more recent efforts have focused on defining the process of career change and exploring or studying some aspects of it (Chigunta et al., 2005).

Curriculum change for future employment

Change is learning, and undermining this characteristic of change has led many education developers in general, and curriculum reformers in particular, to

adopt over-simplistic approaches in trying to change the existing practices and modes of thinking in schools. The economic changes in the country are challenging the existing curriculum realities that the country's youths are experiencing. A vibrant, growing economy depends on how well the process by which new ideas are quickly discovered, acted on, and labelled are successful or not (Hughes, 1986). According to Gwartney, Lawson and Clark (2005) entrepreneurial success can be attained by ensuring that failures are quickly extinguished, and poor resources are used elsewhere. This is the positive side of business failure. When the economy is going down, crime goes up, and the frustration among the youth dependent on family and parents, are a few of the signs showing that curriculum needs a change. The history of educational reform and innovation is replete with good ideas or policies that fail to get implemented or that are successful in one situation but not in another. Policy-makers, education leaders and teachers need to know more about the drivers of successful curriculum change in schools, which requires better use of "change knowledge" to address failure (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2009, p. 9). Curriculum change should be a learning process for teachers and for school counselors. Good understanding of change and clear conception of curriculum are necessary conditions for improved implementation of a new curriculum for youth development. Critical issues in curriculum change are successful curriculum development, re-conceptualising curriculum and changing the way teachers teach and learners learn.

Curriculum change geared towards entrepreneur training is necessary for improving economic opportunity for youth, if properly implemented. The new entrepreneur curriculum and teaching standards have to match the needs of the South African economic environment and address South African problems. Re-conceptualising curriculum needs revisiting how the curriculum was traditionally organised. Usually the problem with curricula is that it is overloaded, confusing and inappropriate for the time, resulting in the challenges of youth unemployment. Curriculum should be transformed from a purely technical document to a more comprehensive idea that leads to school improvement, societal change and economic reform (Sahlberg, 2005). It should result in education that supports entrepreneurial skills training in schools. Therefore, teachers need support in developing approaches for creating professional learning communities, youth development, and learning from one another. Curriculum change is now a much more complex problem than the predominant curriculum literature of the 1920's or 1930's. Curriculum discussions often reveal dissatisfaction in results of earlier efforts at change, and thus requires the urgency for making changes speedily. Curriculum change is thus an indispensable condition for youth development and for sustainability of any society (Roesken, 2011).

Youth development is key to improving performance, economic growth and skills in entrepreneurship, and, requires supervision and support by educators, government and policy makers (Karimi et al., 2010). What is worrying is that twenty-six years since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, we still have one of the world's highest unemployment rate, accounting for around 6.7 million people. These

staggering figures are expected to continue rising as the effects of COVID-19 further cripples the economy and compromises prospects of employment for many people. The unanticipated economic and social upheaval of COVID-19 across the world, and to South Africa already vulnerable, has worsened youth unemployment. The privileges of economic freedom and self-determination, for which the youths of 1976 sacrificed, is not benefiting the youths (Marx, 1992), who still face major unemployment struggles in 2020.

Youth unemployment

There has been persistently high youth unemployment rate in the history of South Africa. This has long been one of the most pressing socio-economic problems country wide. Some of the youth seeking work, are not well educated and they do not possess sufficient skills and previous work experience required by employers in the labour market. The economy demands skilled and experienced work-seekers, which makes it difficult and lessens the chances for young people to find employment, this ultimately results in some losing hope of ever finding a job (thereby becoming discouraged work-seekers, and rather starting criminal activities to make ends-meet (RSA, 2020). This further spiral them into having criminal records and further disadvantaging them from acquiring jobs. In the first quarter of 2020, 1,9 million of the young people without work were discouraged from looking for work. Some of these young people have disengaged with the labour market and they are also not building on their skills base through education and training – they are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The NEET rate, seen in conjunction with high rates of unemployment, suggests that South African youth face extreme difficulties engaging with the labour market (RSA, 2020). Certain factors such as lack of experience and length of unemployment may increase the vulnerabilities of these young people in the labour market. Most often employers prefer to employ those with previous work experience and a higher level of education. Unfortunately, for the youth, lack of work experience is a stumbling block that results in them finding it hard to secure employment. Those with jobs are often employed on unspecified or limited contract duration, and consequently do not have access to employee benefits such as medical aid, pension fund, paid sick leave and permanent employment (Benach, Muntaner & Santana, 2007).

Challenges of youth development for employment

Although there are various reasons for youth unemployment such as population growth, lack of experience, inappropriate ways of searching for a job, and lack of career guidance in schools, the unemployment rate for first-time youth job-seekers in South Africa, is unacceptably high (Cloete, 2015). In 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in South Africa was at 55.97 percent (Jul 21, 2020). While Statistics South Africa states that the unemployment rate among young people with

tertiary education is getting lower, there is very little comfort to youths about to graduate. They are realising that going to school to acquire education will not sustain them in the changing world. The apartheid inequalities are abolished; however, the economic participation of Blacks is still low because of the impact of the previous inequalities which left them behind, and their current contextual situation (Western & Pettit, 2005). Most whites still have the privilege of residing near areas of economic opportunities, while most Blacks still reside far from work places, in the township, and away from economic opportunities. Their situation makes them struggle more as they have to pay more to reach workplaces. The township residential areas are still underdeveloped and are still living areas for Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians. This context, unfortunately, still affects the Black youths of today, leaving them with considerably few opportunities to excel in the economic environment (Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2011). The hub of the economy is mostly in urban areas, far from the youths' abode. Part of the solution to the South African economic divide may probably be the development of the youth in knowledge and skills in the entrepreneurial field, to help struggling youths find employment, and to improve the economy.

Implications of youth development and entrepreneurship

Youth development through creativity is important to organisations' efforts to maintain a competitive edge. Through creativity, employees are able to generate value for multiple stakeholders and contribute to the survival of organizations (Amabile et al., 2005). Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in creating value and in generating wealth and jobs. Although entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial creativity/innovation are said to be related, entrepreneurs like Henry Ford, who was uneducated, ended up being a creative force behind an industry of unprecedented size and wealth that in only a few decades permanently changed the economic and social character of the United States (Lewis, 1976). He built a farm locomotive, then a tractor that used an old mowing machine for its chassis and then a homemade steam engine for power. Entrepreneurial innovation is explicated as "mental orientation (desire, wish and hope), inducing the selection of entrepreneurship" (Wu & Huarng, 2015). "ESI" is defined as one's confidence in one's capability and skill to achieve the start-up advancement of any business. Evidently, there are numerous factors, e.g. personal attributes, traits, background, experience and disposition, that can stimulate individuals' intentions to become entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Youth unemployment is a major national challenge that needs urgent and coordinated responses to address it. Considering that self-employment is partially a measure to improve the youths' economic wellbeing, it is important for institutions to train and skill the youth in the school system. This can definitely be done through

curriculum change that will equip the youth with entrepreneurial skills. While curriculum change may be one aspect of the total problem of youth development, there are other far reaching implications of the idea of curriculum change (Arogundade, 2011). The curriculum, depending on its nature, may be an important means for bringing about wider social change, for maintaining the status quo, for facilitating adjustment to new conditions or for leading in the definition of new goals for the attainment of economic growth, however, the research on principles underlying the process of curriculum change is still limited. The youth career counseling problem, and the importance of economic growth, suggest that review and analysis of youth employment may help to clarify this dynamic aspect of the curriculum field. It is thus vital that institutions develop a comprehensive strategy for youth counseling for employment, as part of a broader focus in schools to expand employment in South Africa (de Jongh & Meyer, 2018; Flynn et al., 2016). Most studies on the contribution of entrepreneurial activity to economic growth are done internationally and are published annually in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. These studies indicate that the differences in economic growth across countries can be explained by the type of career counseling activities allowed in institutions. Economic growth requires youth development through innovation and creativity, for economic growth. Government's curriculum policies should focus on ensuring institutions' teachings encourages creativity in individuals, to promote the economy of the country. Especially if the government allows for unlimited creativity (Bruce, 2002). Promoting individual entrepreneurs is more important than providing financial support. While financial support can help acquire resources, it does not create new ideas. Funding follows ideas, not vice versa. Governments should therefore monitor schools to ensure the successful achievement of curriculum change for career development in schools, to achieve economic growth.

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