

LEARNERS' VIEWS ON THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN DURING PRACTICAL WORK IN CONSUMER STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The apparently intractable youth unemployment in South Africa has been partly attributed to lack of necessary skills. Young people are not acquiring the relevant marketable skills they need to secure employment opportunities or, alternatively, to develop their own businesses. The shortage of skills that are in demand can be partly attributed to the lack of exposure to entrepreneurial skills. Recent research on this topic has shown that there is a growing need for learners to acquire appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge and the skills from the early foundational years through to secondary education. This paper explores the entrepreneurial activities that learners engage in during practical work as part of the secondary school curriculum in Consumer Studies. A qualitative case study research design using semi-structured focus group interviews and reflective journals was adopted to explore Grade 11 learners' views on entrepreneurial activities undertaken during their practical work in Consumer Studies in one secondary school. Findings revealed that Consumer Studies exposed learners to a variety of entrepreneurial activities including production and marketing of small-scale products, application of costing calculations, and knowledge of costing strategies. Such activities are needed in inculcating entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that are necessary for making youth resourceful and enterprising. The findings of this study also confirm the conclusions of previous researchers that practical activities in school subjects can stimulate acquisition of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills that could increase employment opportunities among youth and assist in the preparation of learners for their future careers.

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INTRODUCTION

South Africa faces a huge challenge of youth unemployment. One of the contributing factors to the startling youth unemployment figures is the shortage of skills that are in demand. The skills that youth possess are often not compatible with the needs and demands of employers. According

to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report, youth unemployment can be attributed in part to low entrepreneurial activities emanating from a lack of entrepreneurship skills among young people in South Africa (Herrington, Kew & Mwanga, 2017). The government has put in place numerous initiatives like the Entrepreneurship Development Programme which is offered by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to nudge people towards self-employment and to support young entrepreneurs. However, such interventions do not seem to be making a considerable difference as very few young people actually benefit from them. The people who are meant to benefit from the initiative do not have the relevant skills to take advantage of what is being offered. This is because of a lack of information about the opportunities that can be acquired through entrepreneurship education. The suggestion generally is that entrepreneurship skills should be encouraged and entrenched in education from early foundational years through secondary education (Nicolaidis, 2011; Tengeh, Iwu & Nchu, 2015; Mbanefo & Eboka, 2017).

It has been argued that more direct efforts should be made to shift the focus toward fostering entrepreneurship among youth by integrating entrepreneurship into education curricula (Nchu, Tengeh & Hassan, 2015). While there is a growing need for learners to acquire appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge and the skills necessary to enhance employment opportunities, South Africa's education system is still facing challenges regarding entrepreneurship skills development in schools. Therefore, early exposure to entrepreneurial activities like the production and marketing of products in schools is believed to be essential in supporting and promoting development of functional skills among youth that would make them self-reliant and sufficient in combating unemployment (Gwija, Eresia-Eke & Iwu, 2014; Tengeh *et al.*, 2015). This is the argument of this paper, which uses as an illustration one subject that supports the development of foundational entrepreneurship knowledge and skills by engaging learners in activities pertinent in exposing them to entrepreneurship in schools, namely, Consumer Studies.

Research has shown that Consumer Studies as

a school subject provides learners the opportunity to become engaged in entrepreneurial activities in schools (Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013; Du Toit, 2014; Du Toit, 2016). Consumer Studies focuses on the development of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills that create a great opportunity for self-employment. This implies that Consumer Studies as a subject is contributing positively to South African society and the economy, in various ways, including providing learners with opportunity for entrepreneurship development (Booyse, Du Randt & Koekemoer, 2013).

Since the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in 2006 and the revised curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), in 2012 in South Africa, very few studies have been undertaken into Consumer Studies. Studies that have been conducted adopted a qualitative document analysis approach to analyse the Consumer Studies curriculum. Booyse *et al.* (2013) investigated the quality of Consumer Studies as a designated subject in the National Senior Certificate (NSC). While Du Toit (2013) explored pedagogical guidance for teachers in Consumer Studies curriculum. A further study was conducted (Du Toit, 2016) to explore the prior knowledge learners ought to have regarding Entrepreneurship Education (EE) when they enter the FET Phase and whether such prior knowledge was structured to support the construction of further EE learning in Consumer Studies. There is a shortage of studies in relation to learners' voices on the practical work in the school subject Consumer Studies.

This scarcity makes the findings of the study reported in this paper particularly noteworthy as the study contributes to knowledge by addressing the gap in the existing literature on Consumer Studies, particularly on learners' views on the entrepreneurial activities they engage in during practical work. The question that guides the research is: What are the learners' views on entrepreneurial activities they engage in during practical work in Consumer Studies in one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal? This paper presents a literature review, thereafter describing the methodology used, the

results and analysis of the findings. It concludes with recommendations for the development of entrepreneurial activities within the school curriculum and implications for future research in Consumer Studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First, it is important to outline Consumer Studies as a school subject and practical work in the subject, then to focus specifically on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities.

Consumer Studies as a school subject

Consumer Studies focuses on the “development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in learners to become responsible and informed consumers of food, clothing, housing, furnishings and household equipment” (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011: 9). It includes entrepreneurship and the production and marketing of quality products (Umalusi, 2015). Since entrepreneurship is essential to Consumer Studies, the subject equips the learners with entrepreneurship experiences for small businesses which create opportunities for future entrepreneurial projects (Ndedi, 2009). The subject therefore, gives learners exposure to the small-scale production of marketable products (Umalusi, 2015). It contributes to entrepreneurship through the effective implementation of its curriculum in schools and tertiary institutions. The subject contributes also to the creation of job opportunities or self-employment by providing learners with the skills and knowledge for self-reliance (Fatoki & Oni, 2014).

Consumer Studies is divided into theory and practical tasks. This division provides learners the opportunity to practice what they have learned in the theory of practical options and to be self-reliant. The inclusion of additional practical options in the CAPS for Consumer Studies implies an expansion in the scope of the practical skills that learners could develop in the subject (DBE, 2011). Practical capability that learners need to have in order to enhance entrepreneurial knowledge and skills is regarded as one of the competencies underpinning Consumer Studies.

Practical work in Consumer Studies

As Consumer Studies aims to equip learners with entrepreneurship knowledge, the CAPS curriculum emphasises the importance of practical lessons (Department of Education (DoE), 2008; DBE, 2011; Ifeanyiuche & Chima, 2013). The implication is that the practical component of the subject is vital to adequately engage learners in entrepreneurial activities that could contribute to the development of appropriate knowledge and skills. Therefore, during the practical task, the learner must be able to demonstrate his/her knowledge and the application of the practical skills required in producing products that are suitable for sale (DBE, 2011). In this way practical work in Consumer Studies offers learners the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills for small-scale production of marketable products (DBE, 2011; Booyse *et al.*, 2013).

In the practical component, Consumer Studies strives to develop learners by providing them with knowledge of small-scale production and marketing of quality products in the five different practical options: food production, clothing, soft furnishing, knitting and crocheting and patchwork quilting by hand (DBE, 2011). Practical work encourages a managed experience of production and marketing of products which is integral in the development of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills (Luiz & Mariotti, 2011; Umalusi, 2015). Consumer Studies teachers, therefore, are expected to adopt a more hands-on approach to their teaching by providing learners with activities that will expose them to real life situations to reinforce the acquisition of entrepreneurship knowledge (DBE, 2011).

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities

Numerous studies (Luiz & Mariotti, 2011; Nicolaides, 2011; Chibuzor, 2014; Fatoki & Oni, 2014; Nchu *et al.*, 2015) affirm that entrepreneurship can be taught and learned through entrepreneurship education, largely attainable at an early age from a schooling environment. From the scholars cited above, early exposure to entrepreneurship education has influence on learners' attitude towards entrepreneurship.

According to Van Zyl, van Wyk, Ontong, & van Der Linde (2012:235), "entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value, by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence". Entrepreneurship is the knowledge, skills and mind set to create jobs by conceiving and starting up new business (Ogbene, 2006; Chibuzor, 2014). Kiggundy (2002:240) defines entrepreneurship as the "willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities". In this way entrepreneurship is about changing ideas into commercial opportunities. As such, entrepreneurship enhances self-employment and skills acquisition through exposure to entrepreneurial activities.

As entrepreneurship is progressively being accepted as an important means and useful strategy to create jobs and encourage self-employment of young people, early exposure to entrepreneurship education influences the attitudes of youth towards entrepreneurship (Nicolaidis, 2011; Fatoki & Oni, 2014; Kruger & Mudau, 2014; Nchu *et al.*, 2015; Mbanefo & Eboka, 2017). Although secondary education does not equip learners with enough knowledge to enter the labour market directly, it is argued that basic entrepreneurship skills can be nurtured at an early stage. For an entrepreneurship education to equip learners with basic entrepreneurship skills that prepare students for the world of work after leaving school, learning processes should provide learners with appropriate activities (Umunadi, 2014; Mbanefo & Eboka, 2017). These activities can foster and nurture students' intention for self-employment thereby giving them experience of starting small businesses (Cheung, 2012; Kruger & Mudau, 2014). Therefore learners should be engaged in entrepreneurial activities that promote active learning, including hands-on learning, real life learning and experiential learning.

Ondigi (2012) argues that entrepreneurship activities which are based on real-life situations and a problem-solving approach can be used to expose learners to knowledge and skills to

generate income or create employment opportunities. In Ondigi's (2012) study students were given projects where they were required to develop business ideas and develop and market new products. In line with Ondigi, Negash & Amentie (2013) suggest that entrepreneurship courses should incorporate a variety of learning experiences that promote the development of entrepreneurial skills. They assert that engaging students in various entrepreneurial activities, such as business plan writing, case studies and exposure to entrepreneurial modelling provide experiences that increase their confidence in starting a new venture (Negash & Amentie, 2013).

According to Akpan, Unung, and Usoroh, (2014), practical activities should allow students to practise what they learn and learn from their own hindrances. In their study Home Economics learners were given a practical activity to prepare confectioneries. During the process they were acquainted with technical and procedural knowledge and skills like manipulation of equipment like the mixers, egg whisks, gas, electric and microwave ovens. In Amubode & Goriola's (2015) study, for crocheting, knitting and weaving, manipulation of needles to produce various designs was an important skill to learn. Learners were also given other activities like fabric dyeing, embroidery, beading and producing hand-made items including hats, beaded bags, accessories, hand-made scarves and sandals. In Osita's (2013) study, woodwork students were given practical projects which required them to sell their products to the public during market day. They were required to market their products by pricing them and selecting appropriate advertising strategies. These practical projects nurtured students' knowledge and skills for personal developments and giving them experience of starting small simulated business (Osita, 2013; Chibuzor, 2014; Amubode & Goriola, 2015).

As indicated above, the purpose of this paper is to explore the Grade 11 learners' views on entrepreneurial activities they engage in during practical work in Consumer Studies in one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. This paper contributes to the subject knowledge by addressing the gap in the existing literature on Consumer Studies, particularly on learners' views on the entrepreneurial activities they

engage in during practical work. The following section presents the research methods used to examine Grade 11 Consumers Studies learners' views.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an interpretivist qualitative research methodology because one of its foundational and defining principles is that there are multiple, socially-constructed realities in which the researcher's judgements are considered in the interpretation of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researchers sought to understand the views on entrepreneurial activities carried out during practical work in Consumer Studies as interpreted and understood by the learners who knew what it is like to execute such practical activities.

Research described in this article collected data for a qualitative case study of Grade 11 Consumer Studies learners from one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. The case study deals with a specific context which may not represent the generalised experiences of the whole population. The secondary school located in King Cetshwayo District in KwaZulu-Natal was purposively selected. While there were three high schools in the ward, only one school offered Consumer Studies as a subject. Grade 11 learners taking Consumer Studies were purposively selected to participate study, with the choice of Grade 11 learners was based on their experience of Consumer Studies Grade 10 practical work.

Focus group interviews and reflective journals were used to elicit learners' views on the entrepreneurial activities they used in during practical work in Consumer Studies. According to Creswell (2014), the focus group interview is a process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people. In this study focus group interviews were regarded as the main data source, while reflective journals were used as supporting evidence. There were two Consumer Studies Grade 11 classes with 38 learners in Class A and 40 learners in Class B. Each class was divided into five groups of eight learners, which totalled to ten groups when both classes were combined. Groups were labelled with group numbers from one to ten to avoid

disclosing the learners' names and maintain confidentiality. The interviews took place during break to avoid disturbances during the teaching time. Grade 11 learners and their parents gave consent to be interviewed and tape-recorded in order for the researchers to obtain learners' views, and allow flexibility in probing (Creswell, 2014). The duration for the interviews was 35 to 40 minutes.

Hubbs and Brand (2005) argue that the reflective journal is commonly used in educational research because it gives learners the opportunities to express their views. Reflective journals were used to gather data from the participants on their views and experiences of each practical task. Learners were required to reflect after each practical lesson for two weeks. They were given the journal after each practical task by their teachers, and these were handed back to the teachers once they had completed reflecting on the specific task for the day. The Consumer Studies teachers kept the journals safely. To ensure anonymity, only group names were written on the journals.

The data set obtained from focus group interviews and reflective journals was analysed using thematic analyses (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The researchers began the process by familiarising themselves with the data through transcribing audio-data to textual-data, and reading the transcripts several times. A process of open coding was used, and categories were established, reviewed and clustered into specific themes to report the findings. Focus group interviews and reflective journals were used to triangulate the data; this allowed the researchers to verify from the reflective journals whether what learners were saying took place in practical lessons. Themes that emerged from the focus group interviews were used to analyse reflective journals.

All ethical considerations such as securing permission to conduct the research from the university at which the authors are based and from the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, the protection of participants' identities and obtaining informed consent from learners and parents, were respected. Learners were also informed that participation in the study was not compulsory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questions asked were relevant to the entrepreneurial activities that Grade 11 learners engage in during practical work in Consumer Studies. The responses from interviews with learners, provide some fundamental insights into the types of entrepreneurial activities learners partake in in regards to Consumer Studies in one selected school. Discussion of the findings in this paper were drawn on two themes that emerged during data analysis: (1) small-scale production of marketable products; (2) marketing of products. Verbatim quotes are provided in the discussion of each theme to ensure that in the presentation of findings the views of learners (from groups 1 to 10) are not lost, as they provide supporting evidence.

While there were five options for practical work, the school opted to do food production practical work. The choice of this practical option was informed by the infrastructure and available school finances.

Small-scale production of marketable products

Consumer Studies provided learners the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in the production of marketable products. During practical work, learners were exposed to the small-scale food production as specified in the Grade 11 curriculum. They acquired knowledge of cooking and baking different types of marketable products according to the needs of their target market. For learners to be able to produce saleable products, during practicals they were obliged to follow a succession of preparation techniques or steps and understand specific terminology by making sense of recipes, adhere to health measures and handling and operation skills of kitchen equipment by following the safety precautions.

Interpretation of recipes

In Consumer Studies, learners were given a recipe each time they did the practical work which they were required to read and interpret in order to follow the relevant steps to produce certain products. Learners were expected to follow multiple steps while identifying what needed to be done by reading and interpreting

recipes. They were further required to prepare products based on instructions given, using the required equipment for that particular task.

Findings revealed that during practical work, reading and understanding of recipes was the fundamental requirement for production of quality marketable food products. Learners indicated that it was crucial to clearly understand what was required in the recipe. Learners stressed the importance of reading instructions thoroughly during practical work before embarking on a given task.

We were asked to read and understand instructions. Without paying attention and reading instructions you cannot do anything. (Group 2)

It is important to read a recipe all over again before you start cooking and baking because if you fail to follow the recipe, you make a mess. (Group 5)

I had to read the recipe many times to make that I understand what is needed. (Group 10)

Learners saw the importance of following the recipe to prevent messing up the products that they had prepared. The learners believed that the production of good quality products relied heavily on paying careful attention to instructions by reading them thoroughly with understanding. As they were scared of producing inferior products, they spent more time carefully reading and interpreting the recipes.

During practicals learners were exposed to specific new terms which were important to understand when cooking different dishes. They indicated that they were expected to master various culinary terms that they had never come across before.

We know the meaning of the words proofing and fermentation when baking. (Group 4)

We did not know that the other word for brinjal is aubergines or eggplant. (Group 8)

Knowledge of different baking and cooking techniques was critical for the production of saleable product. Learners were expected to

acquaint themselves with preparation techniques, mixing and cooking methods. They mentioned that they learned the process of preparing dough for different cakes and bread which involved a series of alternating work and rest periods. They also learned methods of cooking different types of stews and pies:

We know that meat need to be first seared or browned, when making brown stew. (Group 4)

We did not know that there are so many types of stews. (Group 7)

Learners sometimes failed to produce the required product due to numerous factors.

When baking Chelsea buns we forgot to add yeast and our dough never risen, the end product was flat and did not look like a bun. (Group 2)

We collected wrong ingredients assuming icing sugar was flour, we noticed very late. (Group 6)

Moemeke (2013) emphasises the importance of connecting entrepreneurial learning to real-life situations. In this study learners were required to produce marketable products. In this way learning was made more relevant for learners. Exposure to practical work gave learners an opportunity to identify and rectify mistakes as they knew where they went wrong. In this way they were learning from their mistakes. This helped them to understand the importance of adding all the ingredients accurately when baking or cooking and the consequences of leaving out or adding some wrong ingredients. This concurs with Akpan et al. (2014) that practical activities should allow learners opportunities to learn from faults. For the learners to be able to produce marketable products, they were expected to utilise knowledge pertinent to cooking and baking acquired during theory component. Learners learned and used culinary terminology and preparation and cooking techniques for different dishes. They were further required to prepare products based on instructions given, using suitable equipment for that specific task.

Adhering to health measures

Learners also mentioned the necessity of conforming to the correct techniques in order to

maintain health precautions during practical work. It was imperative for learners to apply the correct health procedures when handling food.

We learn more about safe food handling practices when preparing food. (Group 10).

Once we are done, we have to store food in the fridge. There is a way of storing perishable and non-perishable food to keep them for a long time. (Group 5)

Learners knew that they had to comply with the adequate food storage procedures to prolong quality of food.

Practicals reminded learners about food contamination:

We know that when we use a chopping board for meat we need to rinse it thoroughly before we use it for vegetables so that there will be no salmonella bacteria. (Group 6)

Learners saw the importance of thorough washing of their chopping board when preparing different food items so that one type of food would not spoil another.

Adhering to safety measures

Learners were expected to conform to safety measures to avoid dangers in the kitchen. They were obliged to adhere to correct techniques of handling pots to avoid accidents.

We have to use correct positioning of the pot on the stove plate that the handle should not be facing on the way because it will fall and the food will spill if not positioned correctly. (Group 8)

They also emphasized proper handling of knives when chopping or peeling; wearing rubbery shoes and wearing gloves when using the oven. They also mentioned the following safety measures:

I know that when there is fire I have to use the fire extinguisher. (Group 7)

We know that we had to dry equipment after using water since it may pose danger to use with electricity if wet. (Group 4)

Appropriate use and handling of kitchen equipment and utensils was crucial during practical work.

It is important to know how to set the stove. If you do not set it correctly you burn the cakes. (Group 7)

These responses revealed that learners were aware of the importance of adhering to the safety precautions when they were in a practical class.

Another element of great significance that emerges from the learners' views is the aspect of exposure to procedures and processes they needed to master in order to produce quality marketable products. This is in line with Onuoha (2010) in his claim that in Home Economics instructions are performed by following a sequence of steps in order to accomplish certain objectives. Learners mentioned that they cautiously followed all steps involved in producing the required product which confirms the view of Onuoha (2010). Learners stressed the paramount significance of reading and having a clear understanding of instructions to avoid inferior final product. Measures to ensure food hygiene and safety were central during practicals (DBE, 2011). The appropriate use and handling of equipment was also crucial to produce accurate products.

Marketing of products

Marketing of quality products is part of each of the five different practical options as prescribed in the curriculum (DBE, 2011). Once learners were done with the production of different items, they knew that they had to market their products. Learners mentioned that there were certain marketing procedures that they should remember before selling a product. During practicals, learners were expected to apply the marketing process of products and core principles of marketing they had learned in theory for practical option.

Although learners knew their target market, they had to promote their products using different strategies to make their products known to the learners and teachers. Appropriate packaging when preparing to sell the products was regarded by learners as a fundamental

marketing strategy. Learners mentioned that their products were to be packaged and branded to make them distinctive and differentiated from others. Unique packaging was used by learners as way of advertising their products.

Because there was competition, our products were packed in colourful boxes so that the learners would buy from us at school on market days. (Group 7)

We were taught that products should be packaged in beautiful packs so that consumers will see them. (Group 3)

We packaged our products with our choice of packaging suitable for that product. (Group 6)

We created our own brand label and small boxes to pack our products. (Group 1)

After they had produced certain products as per instructions, they used their creativity in packaging so that the product would be attractive and suitable for marketing to other learners at school. Distinctive packaging was used by learners as an innovative marketing strategy to sell their products.

Apart from unique packaging, they also used other creative strategies to make their products exclusive and appealing.

Our products needed to be eye catching and different so that the learners would buy from us at school on market days. (Group 7)

We were proud of the final product as the whole school got to see our creativity on products in sale. (Group 5)

Learners were required to produce products where they were given an opportunity for a small individual variation to express themselves through art in food.

Innovation in production of new strategies was encouraged during practicals. Learners were given the same recipe with an opportunity for a small individual variation.

Through practical we were able to express ourselves using our hands. (Group 5)

Practical enabled me to be creative. I got to think out of the box about how I wish to style my product at the end. (Group 8)

Practical work was enjoyed as it created spaces for them to be creative and innovative in food styling. Autonomy during practical work enabled learners to demonstrate their diverse techniques in food styling.

Although learners had to take into consideration that their customers were learners, they were constantly reminded about the cost of production. When marketing their products, they had to determine selling price by adding a suitable mark-up percentage to cover production costs and make a profit. Therefore, pricing of their products was also very important:

We know that one should have basic knowledge about the mark- up percentage in order to be able to make profit. (Group 5)

We learnt that there are calculations in practical work for Consumer Studies to avoid making a loss. (Group 4)

Before selling we know that we need to decide on an acceptable mark-up because we have to make a profit. (Group 10)

Learners' responses showed clear understanding of the need for a mark-up percentage so that a profit was made. The knowledge of determining reasonable mark-up was viewed by learners as important. Knowledge of how much a product costs to produce was essential when pricing the products to determine if they were making a profit or loss.

In Osita's (2013) study, students were given practical projects to make products from wood. In this study, apart from producing marketable products, learners were expected to promote their products. In addition, understanding costing calculations and costing strategies was central to determining the selling price (DBE, 2011). Learners revealed that in practical work there were pricing calculations they needed to perform to avoid making a loss when selling. Learners revealed that knowledge of calculating profit mark-up was invaluable in allocating acceptable prices to avoid making a loss.

Learners used exclusive packaging and creative food styling to market their products. This gave them an opportunity to use their ability to be creative and to arrive at concepts, products and services slightly or completely different from the existing norm, thereby distinguishing their products from others (Chell, 2014).

CONCLUSION

In a country that is plagued with high levels of unemployment, this article sought to explore the entrepreneurial activities engaged in during practical work in Consumer Studies from the view point of learners. Based on a case study of one school in KwaZulu-Natal, the findings revealed that practical work in Consumer Studies exposed learners to different entrepreneurial activities. Learners were engaged in the production and marketing of small-scale products which influences the development of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. For learners to be able to produce marketable products, interpretation of recipes and adherence to health and safety measures was of great significance. Marketing of products augmented knowledge of costing strategies which helped learners to sell their products profitably and efficiently; it taught them what is cost-effective and worth doing. Learners used creative marketing strategies to distinguish their products from others thereby showcasing the creative instincts engrained in every entrepreneur. Participation in practical work created spaces for learners to be exposed to the practical activities in Consumer Studies which would equip them with skills needed to start their own small entrepreneurial enterprises and thrive as entrepreneurs in the future.

The findings of this study highlights the potential of Consumer Studies in exposing learners to entrepreneurial activities that can influence the development of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills at an early stage. It is therefore believed that practical work in the subject Consumer Studies can assist in tapping into the latent entrepreneurship potential of our youth, a resource that has been neglected. The findings of this article affirm the conclusions of previous scholars (Booyse *et al.*, 2013; Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013; Du Toit, 2014; Du Toit, 2016) that Consumer Studies does encourage the development of entrepreneurship knowledge

and skills. While primary education cannot thoroughly prepare young people to become successful business owners, it initiates knowledge and skills which are pertinent to entrepreneurial activities.

Stemming from the rather significant impact the subject has in developing entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, exposure of more schools and learners to it could make room for development of more self-employment opportunities, other than enhancing the skills the subject fosters anyway. While this may require more funding from government, it is believed that the benefits outweigh the cost in the light of growing youth unemployment and associated social vices. Consumer Studies can also be introduced in Grade 8 to avail more learners opportunities to engage with the subject and develop the necessary skills at an early stage. Furthermore, it is recommended that Consumer Studies teachers be pragmatic, innovative and committed to the teaching of Consumer Studies to enhance the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills of learners during the practical production sections. Other subjects should review their curricula to find ways to integrate entrepreneurial activities into theory and practice, to equip learners with entrepreneurship experience they need to succeed in self-employment later.

Finally, being a case study, the results of the article cannot be generalised to an entire population. The conclusions are based on the views of Consumer Studies learners in two Grade 11 classes from one school. As such, the outcome derived from a wider sample may differ. Moreover, as an interpretive study, the meanings derived from the data by the researchers may not necessarily align with that obtained via other lenses. Nonetheless, sufficient examples have been provided in the discussion to support the interpretations given.

This context therefore paves the way for subsequent researchers to consider increasing the sample size to include all three FET grades (10 to 12) or to include more schools in their study. Given sufficient resources, it would also be of interest to contact graduates of Consumer Studies to ascertain the extent to which knowledge and skills inculcated in their earlier academic years are aiding their entrepreneurial

pursuit and labour market engagement.

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