



Balancing the theoretical and practical nature of business studies school curriculum: Towards practical entrepreneurship education

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to foster a more conducive mode of balancing the theory and practical aspects of the business studies curriculum in high schools. A mixed-method approach was used to guide the study. An explanatory sequential research design was employed to gain a deep understanding of the research phenomenon. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The data collected via questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that teachers are informed about entrepreneurship education content and can employ appropriate strategies to teach it; however, practical content delivery is lacking. Moreover, the results showed that learners should be involved in field trips, and invitations should be extended to local entrepreneurs for training and coaching. The findings also revealed that the teaching of business studies should be divided into theory and practical learning. Based on these findings, the study concluded that business studies pedagogy should emphasize more practical entrepreneurship learning than theoretical instruction. The implication of the study is that teachers in business studies should focus on promoting practical teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. Strategies to enhance practical entrepreneurship education should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Contribution/Originality: The study aimed to contribute to the field of business studies education and provide valuable insights into entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. Moreover, this study is significant for curriculum designers, teachers, learners, and all education stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION

Business studies is one of the school subjects that commercial learners in the Further and Training Education (FET) grades 10 to 12 undertake in secondary schooling. The subject is guided by its own designed curriculum stipulated in the Department of Education policy document called Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The subject deals with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values critical for informed, productive, ethical, and responsible participation in the formal and informal economic sectors. Moreover, it encompasses business principles, theory, and practice that underpin the development of entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises, and economic growth (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011). From the above description, business studies aim to develop learners' theoretical and practical entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Primarily, the subject is recognized for promoting business education that prepares learners for the business world. At the school level, business studies lay a foundation of business reality. As a result, the curriculum content provides in-depth information on establishing and managing a business. Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018) argue that business studies is

a vocational subject designed to provide students at the junior secondary school level with a broad understanding of business, including sales skills, bookkeeping, communication skills for roles such as receptionists or telephone operators, or to start their own businesses and employ others. In South Africa, there is a widespread perception that learners who undertake business studies at the school level are business-minded, and exposure to business studies creates greater investment and job opportunities due to the nature of the subject. One significant opportunity that business studies learners acquire is entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a term used to describe individuals who are knowledgeable and skilled in business matters. These individuals are interested in initiating, managing, and controlling a business. Daboer (2011) opines that in the U.S., Colorado education entrepreneurship is a program that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and operation of small-scale businesses, including franchises, to perform all business functions. Due to this fundamental opportunity of entrepreneurship, various scholars, including Barot (2015), Hessels and Naudé (2019), Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018), and Mlambo, Mbongwa, and Khambule (2024) have advocated for entrepreneurship education in secondary education, particularly in business studies. According to Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018), entrepreneurship education plays an important role in economic development by empowering people and producing a self-reliant nation with a dynamic economy. Entrepreneurship education is essential for stimulating an economic development mindset and enhances the skills needed to start and grow businesses (Barot, 2015; Hessels & Naudé, 2019). Entrepreneurship education in secondary schools enables learners to develop their business mindset, generate more ideas, showcase talent and creativity in products and services, and equip them with skills to solve societal problems. Mapaling, Webb, and du Plooy (2023) argue that entrepreneurship education cultivates resilience and adaptability, enabling individuals to navigate economic challenges and seize opportunities in rapidly changing environments.

Although entrepreneurship education is highly emphasized through business studies at the school level, concerns have been raised, including a lack of practical learning of entrepreneurship. Scholars argue that it is impossible to achieve the objective of reinforcing quality entrepreneurship education in business studies since pedagogy in schools only embraces theory and limited practical learning. This is evident in the work of scholars including Azih and Ikelegbe (2019); Akintola and Alao (2015); Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018) and Mlambo et al. (2024). According to Azih and Ikelegbe (2019) business studies subjects in secondary schools are not taught adequately, and teaching equipment and materials available are lowly rated. The authors concluded that public secondary schools should include business skills in business studies, and equipment and materials should be provided to achieve the mandate of the subject for employability skills development.

A similar study by Akintola and Alao (2015) points out that the teaching and learning of business studies at the junior secondary school level has not achieved its aims and objectives. Students are not equipped with self-employable entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that could assist in national economic development. The authors concluded by asserting that technological equipment should be made available in schools so that students can acquire the skills required for self-employment, and curriculum planners should emphasize more practical activities in the business curriculum. Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018) contend that there is a necessity for introducing entrepreneurship education and financial management skills in the business studies curriculum.

Attempts to address the concerns outlined above have been noted in research; however, it is evident that the challenge of ensuring the successful implementation of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools has not yet been overcome. Therefore, this study aims to propose a more practical approach to implementing entrepreneurship education in secondary schools within the business studies subject. The study seeks to provide deeper insights into practical measures for entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. Although previous studies have offered valuable insights into the teaching and learning of business studies, they primarily focus on concerns and some suggest involving entrepreneurship education, rather than on how entrepreneurship education should be reinforced. Consequently, this study is unique in that it introduces feasible mechanisms or practical measures for

entrepreneurship education as a method to balance theory with the practical aspects of business studies. Additionally, the study is unique because it employs bricolage theory, which is predominantly used in entrepreneurship research. The findings, along with the borrowed conceptual and theoretical frameworks, aim to demonstrate how entrepreneurship education can be made more practical in schools. The goal is to propose improvements in the teaching and learning of business studies and to promote a more practical approach to instruction in schools.

The study begins by outlining literature related to the subject, highlighting the employed theory, and the research methodology used. It further presents findings and discusses these findings, followed by concluding thoughts. Additionally, practical implications for business studies are outlined. The central question of this study is how to balance the theoretical and practical aspects of the business studies curriculum in schools. The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance knowledge in business studies, improve curriculum content and delivery, ensure the attainment of relevant skills, and benefit all educational stakeholders. Moreover, this study promotes transformative teaching and learning within business studies classrooms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Business Studies Subject in Schools

South Africa is currently faced with a high youth unemployment rate and a lack of skills. Subjects such as business studies are recognised possibilities of eradicating the issue of lack of skills by providing learners with practical skills. Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue (2018) posit that business studies education intends to produce students with marketable skills that will assist them in their own businesses and employ others. Consequently, business studies was formally introduced in South African secondary schools in 2005 as a non-compulsory subject for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase (grades 10 to 12) (North, 2002). The subject objectives involve providing knowledge and basic skills to initiate and create employment for those who may not be able to further their education (Akpan, 2021). Another objective of business studies is to provide learners with business knowledge, understand its environment, and acquire the necessary entrepreneurial skills and knowledge (Wanza, 2022). Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) point out that the objectives of the business studies subject are geared towards equipping learners with consumer skills and knowledge for clerical and managerial abilities needed to adapt to changing economic and business realities. Hence it is recognised as a subject that could contribute to the reduction of unemployment and be beneficial to economic growth.

Business studies in secondary schools are important for providing youth with the opportunity to identify business opportunities and encouraging learners to consider self-employment rather than seeking employment (Boldureanu, Ionescu, Bercu, Bedrule-Grigoruță, & Boldureanu, 2020). Therefore, the nature of business studies subject includes the understanding of business language, practical business knowledge and skills and solving economic issues. Sithole (2010) regarded the nature of business studies as creative, technical and vocational among secondary schools. Akintola and Alao (2015) argued business studies intend to prepare students for the world of work both as employees and employers. The objectives mentioned and the nature of business studies should be aligned with it pedagogy in schools.

2.2. Lack of Practical Teaching in Business Studies

Currently, the teaching and learning of business studies in schools are carried out through traditional methods, such as textbooks, presentations, and lectures. It is also noted that teachers heavily rely on textbooks to teach business studies. This reliance has resulted in learners depending heavily on textbooks to understand business studies, be theoretically educated, and lacking the expected skills from the subject curriculum. Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) critique this method of teaching and learning by arguing that it lacks the practical skills that learners need to achieve the subject aims and assist with skills they need after their basic education. Azih and

Ikelegbe (2019) stated that instruction in business studies can be challenged by the teaching strategies and educational materials employed by teachers for learners to acquire the necessary skills. These authors further alluded to the fact that inadequate teaching equipment and a shortage of manpower to cope with the ever-increasing business studies curriculum at the secondary school level impact the pedagogy of the subject. Onyemah (2024) mention that availability and utilisation of adequate instructional resources could provide effective instruction in the business studies curriculum.

2.3. Entrepreneurship Education in Business Studies

Previous studies Sambo (2018) and Sithole (2010) have highlighted the significance of entrepreneurship education in business studies subject. Generally, entrepreneurship education involves the knowledge and skills of an individual to establish investment opportunities, generate income opportunities, and create employment opportunities. Ogina (2022) claim that entrepreneurship education involves skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship education which includes self-motivation, finance management, ethics and morals, time management, positive leadership qualities, and hard work. These skills in entrepreneurship education are essential for learners to gain the ability to start businesses or investment initiatives. Currently, entrepreneurship education is vital to empower people for business initiatives. Asogwa and Dim (2016) and Kucel, Róbert, Buil, and Masferrer (2016) pointed out that entrepreneurship skills obtained from business studies teaching are regarded as strategies for eliminating unemployment and crucial economic growth. To concretise the above a conceptual and theoretical framework were employed.

3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study used both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks since it is a mixed study. The conceptual framework was adopted to concretize quantitative data, while the theoretical framework was employed to underpin qualitative data.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

In the works of Koehler, Mishra, Kereluik, Shin, and Graham (2014) on Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge, two elements were used for quantitative data understanding.

3.2. Content Knowledge (CK)

CK refers to knowledge about the subject matter to be learned and the knowledge is contained in the curriculum (Malik, Rohendi, & Widiaty, 2019). On a similar note, Makwela (2019) describes CK as the subject knowledge needed by teachers before they choose the correct technology to implement in their instructional practice. CK in this study measured business studies teachers' subject matter, particularly in the entrepreneurship topic. For instance, teachers in business studies need accurate content knowledge on entrepreneurship to ensure appropriate content delivery. Adequate content knowledge enhances teachers' competencies in using unique teaching strategies that foster quality teaching and learning. In this study, this element provided insight into understanding entrepreneurship education. PK was the second element used in this study.

3.3. Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

Pedagogy refers to techniques of teaching or other factors related to teaching. Therefore, PK may be defined as teachers' knowledge about teaching. Furthermore, it describes teachers' knowledge about a variety of teaching practices, strategies, and methods to promote learners' learning (Koehler et al., 2014). The implication of PK in this study examined business studies teachers' understanding of teaching entrepreneurship education in business studies. This included knowledge about appropriate teaching methods, strategies, and techniques to teach business

studies. It was essential to use this element to comprehend whether teachers are using the correct teaching strategies, methods, and how they teach entrepreneurship in a practical manner.

Bricolage theory was adopted in this study because it is widely used in entrepreneurial phenomena, including the entrepreneurial process, entrepreneurship education, and digitalization (Gbadegeshin, 2019). Bricolage was developed by Lévi-Strauss (1966) who was advocating for making anything with current resources. According to Baker and Nelson (2005) and Fisher (2012) bricolage theory emphasis the creation of something new from little available resources, recombination of resources at hand for a certain purpose of solving the problem, utilising opportunity, influencing existing institutions, understanding the phenomenon, managing crisis, improvisation, tinkering, and sense-making. Therefore, this theory was relevant to this study, as the study advocates for practical entrepreneurship education in business studies subjects to balance theoretical and practical content. Bricolage theory was beneficial in the sense that ideas for implementing practical entrepreneurship education in business studies were obtained from entrepreneurship studies.

For instance, in the business studies curriculum, some sections touch on business plans, entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial key success factors and qualities. Using bricolage, which recognizes the use of available resources, ideas, skills, and time, entrepreneurship education was emphasized through the use of limited knowledge, skills, and ideas. Learners must administer market days, use small school gardens to plant vegetables, and employ hand skills such as hairstyling and haircutting once a month. In organizational research, bricolage theory aims at establishing organizational resilience, sense-making, and improvisation, as well as the use of technical systems and artifacts, and entrepreneurship (Duymedjian & Rüling, 2010). Additionally, Di Domenico, Haugh, and Tracey (2010); Duymedjian and Rüling (2010) and Baker and Nelson (2005) interpret bricolage as a combination of different available tools or methods or practices to get better understanding of a certain phenomenon. In the context of this study, these sentiments guided the assurance that proposed practical measures allow teachers and learners to use any resources, ideas, knowledge, skills, and personnel to reinforce entrepreneurship. This theory also helped to suggest ideas that will be feasible considering the economic status of South African schools, particularly their lack of resources and funds.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

This is a mixed-method study; therefore, the appropriate research design was the explanatory sequential research design. The explanatory sequential research design allows the utilization of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

It instructs the researcher to first conduct quantitative research, analyze the findings, and then gather additional data through a second phase, which is qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data was first collected in quantitative form using a questionnaire instrument, then analyzed. Subsequently, a second phase involving the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data took place. The second phase was qualitative, involving in-depth interviews.

4.2. Population, Sample Size

In this study, the population consisted of commercial FET teachers currently teaching in secondary schools within Umlazi District. Umlazi District comprises 14 circuits, 143 schools offering commercial subjects, and 179 commerce teachers.

All 179 commerce teachers constituted the population. Consequently, all 179 teachers were purposively selected for quantitative data collection. Of these, 129 business studies teachers completed and returned the questionnaires, which were distributed and collected via WhatsApp and email. The response rate was 85.4%.

Additionally, homogeneous sampling was employed to select 14 teachers for individual interviews. The demographic data of the participants in this study are as follows:

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants who responded to the questionnaire.

A2. Gender	A3. Age	A5. Teaching experience	A7. School quintile	A8. Grade
Female 64%	22-30 years old 30%	1-5 years 10.0 %	Quintile 3 83%	Grade 10 31%
Male 36%	31-40 years old 42%	6-10 years 38.0%	Quintile 4 11%	Grade 11 31%
	41-50 years old 28%	11-15 years 52.0%	Quintile 5 6%	Grade 12 38%

Table 1 indicates the demographic characteristics of participants who participated in the quantitative data gathering. To facilitate data analysis, each demographic characteristic listed in the table provides a numerical percentage of those who participated. One hundred and fifty-one (151) questionnaires were distributed; 28 did not show interest in participating, and 129 were returned (response rate of 85.4%). Participants were divided into two broad groups: male and female. Age was categorized into three groups, and years of teaching experience were grouped into three categories. Additionally, participants were classified according to school quintiles in three groups (Quintiles 3-5), and three FET grades were included (Grades 10, 11, and 12).

4.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, ten questionnaires were piloted with teachers before the commencement of data collection. This allowed the researcher to obtain preliminary information, identify any ambiguous questions related to the research topic, and assess internal consistency and reliability. The responses to the piloted questionnaires were entered into SPSS software and analyzed accordingly. The questionnaires utilized Likert scale questions, which included categories such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, and disagree. The questionnaires focused on two elements of TPACK: Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge. Participants were given two weeks to return the questionnaires. An interview schedule was also used as a guide for semi-structured interviews with 14 participants. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes via Zoom in the evenings.

4.4. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used to analyze quantitative data. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were reduced and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were employed to report on independent variables. Inferential statistical analysis, specifically T-tests, was used to analyze dependent variables. Data analysis was documented in tables and supplemented with qualitative findings. To analyze qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted. The researcher followed these steps: first, listening to the audio recordings multiple times; second, transcribing the audio into text and reading the transcripts several times; third, grouping similar data from transcripts to develop themes; and fourth, rereading the data to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected the participants' statements and aligned with the research questions (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017).

4.5. Validity

To ensure validity, content validity was adopted, as it can be achieved when selected participants complete the instrument and selected experts analyze the findings and measure whether participants' responses address the questions related to the researched content (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Three doctoral degree holders were requested to review the questionnaires and findings and provide feedback. Since the study utilized a single test, a split-half reliability test was applied. The first step was to split the odd numbers in half, and a test was

administered. The second half was administered with the even numbers. In qualitative data, validity was ensured through a member check strategy, where data collected and analyzed was sent back to participants to validate the accuracy of the data they provided.

4.6. Reliability

The mathematical procedure was used to calculate the average of all split-test reliability coefficients. The reliability coefficient is measured on a scale from zero (0) to plus one (+1.00). The computer software employed in this case was SPSS version 27, as the test (questionnaire) contained. In the semi-structured interviews, the interview schedule helped ensure reliability. Similar questions were posed to all participants repeatedly, and the supervisor later reviewed the research findings.

All participants' information was kept confidential by assigning pseudonyms, such as Mbali, Allen, Kim, and Thando. Anonymity was also maintained to ensure that participants could participate freely in this research study. Before commencing the research, a proposal was submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Research and Ethics Committee to request permission to conduct the study. The permission was granted with ethical approval number: HSSREC/00004068/2022. Permission was also obtained from the KZN Department of Education (Pietermaritzburg) to conduct research in Umlazi District schools. Subsequently, informed consent letters were issued via WhatsApp and email to inform participants about the study.

5. RESULTS

Results below report on quantitative findings.

Table 2. Content knowledge.

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I have sufficient knowledge about entrepreneurship education in business studies.	0.8	3.1	0	58.9	37.2
2	I have various ways and strategies for developing my understanding of entrepreneurship education.	0.8	0	0	63.6	35.7
3	I keep developing my knowledge in entrepreneurship education.	0	0.8	0	67.4	31.8

The overall findings in Table 2 give a positive overview of participants' responses on business studies content knowledge. It is revealed that participants have a good understanding of entrepreneurship education. This is evident in the fact that, on all items of this element, participants agreed, and none disagreed.

The findings above were confirmed with the Independent Sample T-test, which was conducted to test the following null hypothesis:

- There is no statistically significant difference between male and female business studies teachers' CK.

Statistical results indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female business studies teachers regarding CK, as the significance (2-tailed) was above .05. This confirms that business studies teachers' CK does not depend on gender. The results are displayed in the tables below.

T-test for content knowledge across genders.

Table 3. T-test for CK.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
1. Content knowledge	Female	83	12.87	1.56	0.17
	Male	46	13.11	1.37	0.20

Comparison of Male and Female Business Studies Teachers on Content Knowledge (n = 83 females, 46 males).

Table 4. Comparison on CK.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>D</i>
Content knowledge	-	-	-0.88	127	0.38	-0.24	-0.79 to 0.30	0.01
Females	12.87	1.56	-	-	-	-	-	-
Males	13.11	1.37	-	-	-	-	-	-

Tables 3 & 4 confirm that between the two groups of business studies teachers, there is no difference in the way they understand CK of the subject as females reported $M = 12.87$, SD of 1.56, and males indicated $M = 13.11$, $SD = 1.37$, $t(127) = 0.38$, $p > .38$ (two-tailed). The degree of a difference in the mean (MD) = -0.24, and the Confidence Interval of the difference (CI) was between -0.79 to 0.30. In addition, the magnitude of the difference (d) between the two groups of business studies teachers is 0.01, which is a small effect size according to the guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between the business studies teachers in understanding.

Table 5. Pedagogical knowledge.

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I know how to teach entrepreneurship education in a practical manner.	0	68.2	0	31.6	0
2	I can adapt my teaching based on what learners currently understand about entrepreneurship.	0	0	0.8	65.1	34.1
3	I can adopt various teaching styles to different learners in entrepreneurship education.	0	0	0.8	62.0	37.2
5	I can use a wide range of teaching approaches in teaching entrepreneurship education.	0	0	38.8	61.2	0

The overall findings in Table 5 give a positive overview of participants' responses on entrepreneurship pedagogy. This is evident from the percentages showing that participants agree. However, practical entrepreneurship teaching showed a high percentage of participants indicating that they cannot deliver entrepreneurship practically.

Independent samples t-test was conducted to test the following null hypothesis:

- There is no statistically significant difference between male and female business studies teachers on PK.

T-test findings indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups, as the significance (2-tailed) was above .05. This confirms that business studies teachers' PK does not differ between the two groups. The group's mean and standard deviation are depicted below.

Table 6. Group statistics.

A2. Gender		N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
1. Pedagogical knowledge	Female	83	30.83	2.56	0.28
	Male	46	30.56	2.31	0.34

Table 6 presents a comparison of pedagogical knowledge scores between female and male participants. Overall, both male and female participants had nearly the same average pedagogical knowledge scores, with minor differences in variability and sampling error. These results suggest no substantial gender difference in pedagogical knowledge based on the descriptive statistics alone.

Table 7. Comparison of male and female business studies teachers on pedagogical knowledge (n = 83 females, 46 males).

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>D</i>
Pedagogical knowledge	-	-	-0.59	127	0.56	0.26	-0.63 to 1.17	0.00
Females	30.83	2.56	-	-	-	-	-	-
Males	30.56	2.31	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7 appears to present the results of a statistical analysis, likely a t-test, comparing the pedagogical knowledge of females and males. Overall, the results suggest that there is no statistically significant difference in pedagogical knowledge between females and males.

Based on the PK independent variable, the statistics for both genders remained the same (83 females and 46 males). The findings reported no statistically significant difference between female and male teachers in business studies. Females revealed $M=30.83$, $SD= 2.56$ and males $M= 30.57$, $SD = 2.31$. Further, $t(127) = -0.59$, $p<.56$ (two-tailed). The mean difference (MD)= 0.27 and the Confidence Interval (CI) is between -0.63 to 1.17 since zero is included when counting from -0.63 to 1.17 and there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted, while the research hypothesis is rejected. The calculated eta squared is 0.00, which indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the two genders of business studies teachers is very small (eta squared = 0.00).

Table 8. Correlation of variables.

Means, standard deviation and intercorrelations for content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (N = 129)				
Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Pedagogical knowledge	Content knowledge
Pedagogical knowledge	30.74	2.47	--	0.237*
Content knowledge	19.96	1.50	0.237*	--

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 labelled Means, Standard Deviation and Intercorrelations for CK and PK variables. Spearman's rho was utilised since the questionnaire consisted of Likert Scale questions. According to the descriptive statistics, N is 129, which is the number of participants in these two variables. Table 8 shows that variables were significantly correlated ($r = .2$), which is a small strength according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. The moderate positive correlation, which can be considered a medium according to Cohen (1988), was between TPK and TCK, $r = .31$, $p < .001$. This means that business studies teachers have a better understanding of CK and PK in content knowledge.

To elaborate further, the above interviews were conducted, and the following results were reported.

The theory and practical aspects of business studies should be balanced by reinforcing practical entrepreneurship education.

This was the main theme that emerged from the findings, and from this theme, three subthemes were also developed to explicitly respond to the research question. These themes are discussed below.

5.1. Entrepreneurship Pedagogy must be More Practical

All participants acknowledge that entrepreneurship education should be more practical. It was apparent that, at present, business pedagogy is more theoretical than practical. From the interviews with participants, the first

practical learning activity should be carried out through creating market days, where learners will have the opportunity to design and implement a business plan. Market days should occur once a month for Grade 10 and 11 business studies learners. Participants disclosed that there is a section in the business studies curriculum on business plans for Grades 10 and 11. However, teachers typically use this section solely for grading purposes, where learners are asked to design a business plan, and that is the end of it. Therefore, creating market days will provide practical understanding of entrepreneurship education and help balance theory with practical application. Furthermore, participants proposed that practical entrepreneurship should be embraced by giving learners opportunities to utilize their skills to practice entrepreneurial activities. For instance, utilizing available land in a school to create a garden. Learners can generate capital by buying crops, planting, maintaining the gardens, and selling the produce. This approach offers learners a real-world experience of business studies and entrepreneurship. Participants also acknowledged that learners are skilled in hands-on activities, such as plaiting and cutting hair, and these practical activities should be incorporated once a month within the school context. Schools with tuck shops should allow business studies learners to participate in managing the tuck shop. This is what participants said.

"The first priority is to make business studies more practical; currently, they are too theoretical. Learners should design and implement topics such as business plans to gain entrepreneurship skills and knowledge."

Kim

Mbali added:

"What should be done is to make some sections more practical, similar to what is happening in science subjects. Learners in business studies have market days or run small tuck shops twice a month."

From what Mbali said, Allen commented:

"Yes, entrepreneurship education can balance the theory and practicality of business studies by empowering learners with practical tasks. For example, baking and selling products, where the entire process—from planning and purchasing ingredients to processing—enables learners to apply their knowledge of the subject."

In the above finding, participants advocate for practical methods to implement entrepreneurship as a means of balancing theory and practical aspects of business studies.

5.2. Learners Must do Field Trips Large Business

Field trips are recognized as an effective mechanism for helping learners understand entrepreneurship education. Participants noted that the school environment limits learners' exposure to entrepreneurship, as there are no entrepreneurs available at the school level. During field trips, learners can learn various aspects of entrepreneurship, including starting a business, planning the production process, quality assurance, budgeting, managing customers, ensuring customer satisfaction, stock taking, and overcoming business challenges. Participants suggested that field trips could be scheduled during holidays to allow learners to balance theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Furthermore, they emphasized that learners should actively participate in business operations during these trips to acquire practical skills and knowledge, thereby enhancing their educational experience in entrepreneurship. It was also observed that the focus tends to be more on theoretical aspects because educators lack sufficient entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. Mbali remarked:

"I believe that field trips will increase learners' practical experience of entrepreneurship, and they will also gain more knowledge about entrepreneurship."

Thando and Kim asserted:

"In business studies, learners do not go on field trips, so I think that could be a better way to give them experiential knowledge of entrepreneurship." Thando

"Secondly, let us take learners to nearby businesses during school holidays, and when they are there, they should be actively involved in running a business task." Kim

Findings indicate that granting learners field trips to businesses could provide them with better practical entrepreneurship education, as they would not just visit but also participate in the daily operations of the business. The argument is that schools are not environments conducive to enabling learners to fully comprehend entrepreneurship education.

5.3. Schools Must Collaborate with Local and Successful Entrepreneurs for Training and Coaching

It was apparent that teachers lack expertise in entrepreneurship; therefore, for the feasible implementation of entrepreneurship education, there must be collaboration with local and successful entrepreneurs. Collaboration should involve inviting entrepreneurs to motivate, train, and coach learners in entrepreneurship skills and knowledge. Based on participants' responses, successful entrepreneurs will train learners on business development, assist them in designing and implementing business plans in a meaningful way that provides real experiences. During market days, entrepreneurs could encourage learners by offering support and providing judgments. Entrepreneurs are recognized as relevant stakeholders who can enhance learners' knowledge of entrepreneurship through their experience and skills. Participants felt that farmers or individuals in agriculture could significantly impact guiding learners with farming skills, enabling them to initiate their own businesses. Successful local entrepreneurs will share ideas, assist learners, and offer courses to enhance their practical entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. Participants acknowledged that involving entrepreneurs would be advantageous for learners even after they leave school. Participants elaborated as follows:

"Entrepreneurship education could be better understood if business studies teachers invited local and more successful entrepreneurs to share knowledge, expertise, and advice with learners on businesses." Allen

"I strongly believe entrepreneurs can motivate learners about entrepreneurship. The learning theory in the book provides very limited understanding, but if learners know local entrepreneurs, they can gain a clearer picture of entrepreneurship." Thando

"From my observations, successful entrepreneurs are more relevant in guiding, training, and motivating learners in entrepreneurship. I think that if learners engage with established and local entrepreneurs, they will better understand entrepreneurship education." Kim

Findings above report that local and successful entrepreneurs must collaborate with business studies teachers to enhance the comprehension of entrepreneurship since more ideas, training, and coaching will be shared. It is therefore necessary for schools to invite successful business owners who can act as mentors and role models for learners studying business.

5.4. Business Studies Must Split Teaching Times to Theory and Practical

Findings indicated that teaching time should be divided into two sessions per week: two hours for theory and two hours for practical activities, as the subject is allocated four hours weekly. Participants acknowledged that the business content for grades 10 and 11 is not overly broad, so splitting the time will not affect content delivery. From the interviews, participants advocated for integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum, emphasizing the importance of applying theory practically, similar to hospitality and science subjects. Participants recognized that since business studies are four hours, two hours should focus on content and the other two on practical entrepreneurship learning. In these practical lessons, learners undertake tasks related to entrepreneurship. For example, practicing entrepreneurship among themselves, engaging in financial learning, watching videos about entrepreneurs, inviting and visiting local businesses, and maintaining the garden. These activities will help learners understand entrepreneurship in a practical manner.

"Although business studies content is theoretical when delivered, splitting learning hours, as in hospitality, to focus on practical entrepreneurship will be beneficial." Mbali

"Four hours a week are allocated for business studies teaching, so what if two hours are for practical lessons, such as watching videos, sending learners to the garden, and allowing them to sell something each week." Allen

"I think we should do it like EMS, where content is split according to the teaching and learning hours. Theory must be allocated two hours, and the other two hours for practical; this will help to learn more about entrepreneurship." Thando

From the above findings, it is clear that to balance the theoretical and practical aspects of business studies, entrepreneurship should involve splitting theory and practice. This should be achieved by dividing the teaching and learning hours.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND OVERALL CONTRIBUTION

This finding is supported by various scholars, including [Azih and Ikelegbe \(2019\)](#); [Ikeanyionwu and Ekwue \(2018\)](#) and [Kemunto \(2011\)](#), who contend that business studies content delivery is too theoretical, making practical instruction in schools necessary. According to [Sambo \(2018\)](#) and [Akintola and Alao \(2015\)](#), practical exposure in business studies significantly influences learners' understanding of entrepreneurship and encourages them to start their own businesses. Due to high unemployment, business studies learners, after completing their studies, whether in basic or tertiary education can utilize certain skills and knowledge to start businesses. For instance, those with good cooking skills can open small outlets or catering businesses. The content of entrepreneurship cannot adequately equip learners with relevant skills and knowledge without practical application. [Mei \(2013\)](#) suggests that the entrepreneurship curriculum should focus on business content, skills, values, and practicality. Similarly, [Khoury, Elmuti, and Omran \(2012\)](#) state that the objective of entrepreneurship education is to equip school leavers and aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to start and manage new businesses. To refine this finding, bricolage theory was useful, as it posits that learners should be given opportunities to use available resources or ideas to become critical and creative thinkers. [Sambo \(2018\)](#) supported the above findings by suggesting that in schools there is inadequate exposure to entrepreneurship to improve learners' interest and knowledge to become entrepreneurs. [Kemunto \(2011\)](#) also argues that teachers at the university and school levels are not provided with training on starting businesses; they are only equipped with the Business Studies syllabus. Consequently, when teachers teach the entrepreneurship section in business studies, they follow the educational material and do not make it practical. Additionally, teachers have limited understanding of business information, including starting and managing businesses; therefore, field trips are highly effective. [Govender \(2008\)](#) emphasizes that to promote entrepreneurship education, learners must be exposed to entrepreneurs' environments, such as businesses, which will provide them with entrepreneurial skills and orientation. Demonstrations and field trips play a significant role in providing students with real experiences, mentorship, and networking opportunities ([Akintola & Alao, 2015](#)).

[Rwigema \(2004\)](#) confirms these findings by outlining that successful entrepreneurs share certain traits, product and customer-oriented skills and knowledge, planning, managing, and intelligence in executing decisions. These traits should be shared with learners through involving entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship learning. According to [Sambo \(2018\)](#), in order for learners to adequately acquire entrepreneurial education, there is a need for effective collaboration with people who are already in business, such as entrepreneurs. Since it was mentioned in this study that teachers are not sufficiently trained in business, inviting entrepreneurs for business studies lessons will benefit both teachers and learners. All sections related to entrepreneurship should be addressed by entrepreneurs so that they deliver relevant and practical content. [Akintola and Alao \(2015\)](#) advocate that there is evidence that teachers in business studies are insufficiently qualified, lack business information, infrastructural facilities, equipment, and workshops for practicals, and lack entrepreneurial knowledge and skills ([Akintola and Alao 2015](#)). To implement entrepreneurship education effectively, schools should collaborate with local businesses and entrepreneurs to offer

mentorship and support services (Mlambo et al., 2024). Bricolage theory also provides guidance to this finding, as it advocates for the collaboration of ideas, items, or systems to produce something meaningful.

Mei (2013) confirms these findings by arguing that there is a need for both theoretical and practical exposure in business education for students. Making entrepreneurship education practical helps in developing learners' skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to succeed in an increasingly entrepreneurial world (Swargiary, 2024). According to Mlambo et al. (2024), to ensure success in entrepreneurial education, schools should integrate the curriculum and provide hands-on learning experiences. This integration is necessary because the theory and practice of entrepreneurship education must be balanced. Using bricolage theory, which involves reconstructing something new, can serve as a solution to understanding entrepreneurship education.

7. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to provide valuable insights into how the theory and practical aspects of the business studies curriculum can be balanced in schools through entrepreneurship education. Findings revealed that entrepreneurship education should be more practical, allowing learners to design business plans and implement them through market days, build school gardens, and utilize their hand skills to create businesses. Additionally, it was evident that field trips and collaboration with local and successful entrepreneurs could help learners understand the real-world application of the theory and practical aspects of business. Furthermore, teaching time in business studies should be divided into two content areas, namely theory and practical work, to balance the nature of the subject. Thus, the study concludes with an emphasis on making entrepreneurship more practical in business studies, as it provides essential skills and knowledge that will help learners after school to earn a living, reduce unemployment by becoming self-employed, and contribute to economic growth.

8. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this study was to propose a more effective method of balancing the theoretical and practical aspects of business studies in the school curriculum. The study believed that this goal could be achieved by promoting practical entrepreneurship education. Previous literature advocates that the nature of business studies is imbalanced; there is no equality between practical and theoretical components (Ikeanyionwu & Ekwue, 2018; Mlambo et al., 2024). Studies argue that teachers in entrepreneurship education focus more on theory than the practical part, which makes it impossible to achieve the subject's aims (Sambo, 2018). It is therefore suggested that practical entrepreneurship education in business studies should be emphasized through documenting strategies in the curriculum. Learners should practice more about businesses, as this subject provides knowledge and skills that empower people to use any skill and talent they have to start up businesses. It is also recommended that the entrepreneurship part should be taught by people who are entrepreneurs or are well-informed about business in schools. According to Sambo (2018), learners should be encouraged to participate more in small business activities to gain exposure to the basic elements of entrepreneurship. Within schools, there may be teachers who are not specialists in business studies but run businesses; such individuals should be requested to assist in coaching and teaching learners practical entrepreneurship. Practical entrepreneurship could address major challenges currently facing the country, including poverty and unemployment. Therefore, the findings should be shared with education stakeholders to enhance the implementation of entrepreneurship in schools. Overall, this study contributes to transforming the business studies curriculum, provides valuable insights into entrepreneurship education, and adds to the existing body of literature. It also benefits teachers, learners, and other stakeholders involved in business studies. Further research is encouraged to explore the challenges teachers may face when implementing practical entrepreneurship.

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