

**The influence of social learning behaviour during entrepreneurial
opportunity development**

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Abstract

The sustainability of nascent entrepreneurs remains a critical factor in addressing society's deep-rooted problems and overall welfare. From this perspective, supporting entrepreneurial learning during their entrepreneurial ventures is critical to the entire community's success. This study investigates the influence of an entrepreneur's social learnings, their capacity to cope with new ventures, and the perceptions about their successes or failures during the opportunity development phase.

The study finds that entrepreneurs adopt learning behaviour primarily from their social background, driven by a strong desire to rebel against society's bias, engage in iterative, collaborative engagement with the community. Frequently adopting self-reflection, learning by interpreting and an emotional evolution of their entrepreneurial mind-set relying on the logic of bricolage and emotional cognition to create opportunities that support the communities.

This study is limited to a sample of South African entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial mentors using in-depth semi-structured interviews. The study adopts an exploratory and qualitative methodology.

The study finds application for both all entrepreneurs, policy makers and educational learning programs involved in the mentorship and development of entrepreneurs.

This study provides a deeper analysis of opportunity development phase of a nascent entrepreneur. With a focus on the social learns, emotional cognitions and experiential learning factors that drive and inhibit them and further obtaining an understanding the coping mechanisms that could be adopted for effective and sustainable opportunity development and, ultimately, ensuring that nascent entrepreneurs transition to the final phase of entrepreneurship.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship, opportunity development, social learning behaviours, emotional cognition, coping mechanisms.

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

_____ Date: 02 December 2020

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Chapter 1. Introduction to the Research Problem

“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They’re not fond of rules and they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can’t do is ignore them. Because they change things.” (Rob Siltanen, from the 1997 relaunch of Apple, Inc.).

...“it’s a topic that we never discuss on how society can actually influence and also damage an entrepreneur who is just trying to just make ends meet” (Participant 2.40)

1.1. Background to the research problem

The two citations above, one from an established successful entrepreneur and the second from a participant of this study, illustrates the challenges of social perceptions faced by many nascent entrepreneurs and further highlights the critical role that social learning plays in an entrepreneur's growth and success.

While research into the area of opportunity development is a growing area (Hoyte et al., 2019; Vogel, 2017; Davidsson, 2015; Suddaby, 2015), the influence of social learning and learning behaviours remains an underdeveloped area within this context (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; Jones et al., 2018; Vogel, 2017; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016; McKeever et al., 2015). As such, this research aims to analyse and examine the influence of an entrepreneur’s engagement with the community and the learnings that emanated from those experiences during the development phase of opportunities. This study highlights the influence of social learning behaviour inhibitors and promoters during the development of opportunities and the awareness ability to cope with the emotional impact of developing an opportunity in nascent entrepreneurs in South Africa.

1.2. The research problem

In developing the research problem cognisance of the call for more research into the specific areas of the entrepreneurial processes has been considered, one of which was opportunity development (Hoyte et al., 2019; Vogel, 2017) within the context of social learning (Jones et al., 2018; McKeever et al., 2015; Shepherd, 2015) and learning behaviour (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020). Combined with the concept of social learning behaviours the success of an entrepreneur is affected by their ability to deal with critical events that occur in the uncertain environment. Therefore, the learning behaviours attached to these events are critical to the success of a nascent entrepreneur (Lattacher & Wdowiak, 2020; Lindh & Thorgen, 2016).

These calls for research into opportunity development, and the influence of the social environment on nascent entrepreneurs, as well as their learning behaviour to cope with the development phase led to developing the research question below:

How does social learning behaviours influence entrepreneurial ventures during the opportunity development phase?

This study aims to explore and answer the following specific areas:

- (i) Establish the types of social learning behaviours nurtured within the entrepreneurial opportunity development phase.
- (ii) Investigate the perceptions of an entrepreneur's social learning behaviour during opportunity development and the drivers that influence these perceptions and coping mechanisms that entrepreneur's exhibit during opportunity development phase.
- (iii) Investigate the inhibitors and promoters of such behaviours.

1.3. Research purpose

The disruptions to the world's economies have presented an impetus for entrepreneurs to engage in new business ventures, which is indicative of the job security concerns, with a majority of adults motivating that the creation of new venture is "*to earn a living because jobs are scarce*" (GEMS, 2020a). Despite the commitment of numerous countries to meeting the UN sustainable goals, there is a concern that the paradigm shift called for by the UN, which

supports growth and scaling activities, is not going far enough and may hamper future progress (UNSDG, 2019). Given this urgency, the data supporting an increase in entrepreneurship over the past two decades does not appear to correlate with the pace of new entrepreneurship venture creation (GEMS, 2020b).

These complex challenges demand urgent alternative solutions to the economic dilemmas which is grounded in improving the venture creation initiatives. Within this context, an entrepreneurial opportunity has the potential to contribute towards this paradigmatic shift in understanding the influences of social learning behaviour, and ultimately decision-making and behaviour, under conditions of uncertainty and resource constraints (Fisher et al., 2020; Galkina & Atkova, 2019; Vogel, 2017).

Furthermore, in meeting these complex challenges such as the ability for entrepreneurs to engage with their community; refine the opportunities; learn from the behaviour and the context under which those social learnings occur, this offers fertile ground for improvement in the opportunity development area and the success of entrepreneurial ventures (Jones et al., 2018; Vogel, 2017; Shepard, 2015).

1.4. Significance of research

In answering the call to extend the research of entrepreneurship into other research areas (Jones et al., 2018; Vogel, 2017), this study hopes to contribute by combining the domain of social sciences, through the use of the social learning theory theoretical framework, together with the entrepreneurial learning framework. In addition, it endeavours to extend further insights into the entrepreneurial opportunity development construct (Vogel, 2017). As illustrated in Figure 4, this study's research approach reflects the linking of the social learning theory with learning behaviour (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020), and social interaction by entrepreneurs with the communities that they service within the context of opportunity development (Shepard, 2015).

This becomes especially critical given the wide and varying definitions of the construct of opportunity, including the unit of analysis to the complete opposite (Vogel, 2017). However, some researchers question the validity of the opportunity construct within the entrepreneurial framework entirely (Kitching &

Rouse, 2017).

Therefore, the debate on the validity of the opportunity construct presents fertile ground for exploring the role of social learning behaviour on opportunity development (Hansen, et al. 2016; Shepard, 2015). Markowska & Wiklund (2020) extend this view in stating that further research is required in exploring the potential benefits of learning during engaging in opportunity development where learning behaviours, and ultimately remains an underdeveloped area of research.

Further to this, a more in-depth understanding by entrepreneurs in the domain of how others apply learning behaviours and engage within the context of social learning has been identified as an underdeveloped area of research (McKeever et al., 2015). In addition to the calls to understand the influence of social learnings on an entrepreneur's performance during opportunity development (Shepard, 2015), the ability for an entrepreneur to cope emotionally and professionally is an area that requires further in-depth analysis. This can be achieved with a comparative analysis of an entrepreneur's identity to a critical event, for example, where failure occurred (Lattacher & Wdowiak, 2020).

This study contributes towards the understanding of the relationship between an individual and opportunity development through an established theoretical framework (Vogel, 2017). The deeper understanding of the concept of opportunity development can be drawn-out within the context learning behaviours of entrepreneurs under uncertainty and the relationship on how the community influences an entrepreneurs to increase the quality of knowledge (Jones et al., 2018; Shepard, 2015).

1.5. Business need and benefits

The ability to improve the entrepreneurial conversion rate from an intention to opening a business, which stands at 11, 9% of South Africa's population to successfully developing a business opportunity may well improve South Africa's success rate in entrepreneurship, which stands at 10,8% of the adult population (GEMS, 2020b). In a country that faces one of the highest unemployment rates in the world with a persistent Gini-coefficient of over 60%

in the last five years and with more than half of the unemployed being youth (World Bank, 2018) the real urgency on finding alternative forms of employment becomes urgent.

Despite the high intentions by entrepreneurs to open a business in South Africa, this stands in contrast to the actual conversion rate and may be explained by the fear of failures due to the fact South Africa sits in the top ten countries in the world (GEMS, 2020b). Therefore, the reality that their venture could possibly be an entrepreneurial failure may accentuate their human behavioural reaction. This reluctance to timeously admit to their apparent failure and disinvest from their venture, may further be influenced by their understanding of society's perceptions of failures and as such, may lead to doubt towards their abilities to succeed (McDonald & Bremner, 2020; Wyrwich, 2016).

Furthermore, this reluctance by entrepreneurs to admit to their failures may mean that entrepreneurs stay longer on their failed course which results in the discontinuation of their entrepreneurial journey, or worse simply do not pursue the opportunity. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (WHO; 2019) there is a perceived higher value placed on the professional outcomes rather than the emotional impact of failures of entrepreneurs and therefore there is a higher percentage of burnout in the nascent years as entrepreneurs struggle to reconcile their emotional awareness with their pressurised industry performance norms. As such, this study may assist in providing insight into the coping mechanisms for entrepreneur's during the opportunity development phase (Lattacher & Wdowiak, 2020; Soetanto, 2017).). This will assist in transcending the Rubicon phase of entrepreneurship as they transition from having an entrepreneurial motivation to executing that motivation (Van Gelderen, 2015).

Other areas that may benefit from this study include a better understanding of the entrepreneurial opportunity phases that may encourage the development of more entrepreneurship courses to be offered to budding entrepreneurs and as such, improve their learning behaviour patterns (Jones et al., 2018). This has the potential to improve their business venture success. Of significance this study may assist entrepreneurial teaching institutions and organisations in adapting and changing their teaching methods of entrepreneurs with a closer

alignment to the social conditioning and the stage of mind in their entrepreneurial journey.

1.6. Scope of research

The study explores the influence of social learning behaviours during the opportunity development phase of an entrepreneur's early stage of venture development. This study has adopted a qualitative, explorative research methodology. Semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs who have passed the entrepreneurial idea phase were conducted to meet this study's objectives.

The key areas of this study focuses on the concept of social learning behaviours; an entrepreneur's engagement with the community; and they ability to cope with the development phase of their venture. The focus of this study is on the opportunity development phase of such a venture. However, due to the interrelation between the creation and opportunity development phase (Vogel, 2017), cognition has been made in the study to incorporate the influence of the creation phase. This study will consider the influences of social learning behaviours of nascent entrepreneurs during the opportunity development, the learning transformation and the ability to cope with new opportunities, thus embarking on a combined approach to this study.

Despite the study incorporating elements of the opportunity creation phase, this study will not examine opportunity creation or ideation (Vogel, 2017) nor the opportunity evaluation phases, which is the first step and last step respectively. These areas of the entrepreneurial process are one continuous phase and therefore, is not the approach of this study.

Studies around opportunities and entrepreneurial behaviour include key concepts such as understanding how scarce resources are utilised and the bricolage under uncertain environments (Michaelis et al., 2020; Vasconcelos Scazziota et al., 2020; Fisher, 2012). However, this study will not focus on the concept in detail but rather to use the concepts to draw out the social learning behaviour that emanate from the entrepreneurial actions.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to elucidate the study's theoretical basis by exploring relevant theory and debate on entrepreneurs' social learning behaviours during opportunity development and its sub-concepts, including social learning, learning behaviour, and opportunity development. The gaps in literature (Creswell, 2014) were identified using the context of the influence of social learning and community actors, and entrepreneurial learning behaviour within the opportunity development phase (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; Jones et al., 2018; McKeever et al., 2015; Shepard, 2015). To date, research has largely focused on the entire entrepreneurial journey (Vogel, 2017; Davidsson, 2015),

The opportunity development phase within the field of entrepreneurship has seen much contentious debate on the value of the granular scrutinisation of this phase of entrepreneurial development (Hansen, 2016; Vogel, 2017). Aligned to this is the social learning behaviours positioned within the social science field. Literature reveals that the social factors and motivators through which engagement with the environment occurs add to the creation of value for the market that entrepreneur's service. The discussions then proceed to the social learning behaviours exhibited by entrepreneurs during the opportunity development phase. Various factors inhibiting and promoting are then discussed as well as the key drivers of the social learning behaviour on entrepreneurs. Learning behaviours and influence in entrepreneurship was then explored. The chapter finally explores the ability of entrepreneurs to cope with the development of new opportunities under uncertainty.

The literature review further took cognisance of the research paradox, where the role of pre-literature review plays a factor in influencing the conditioning of the research problem (Kumar, 2019). Therefore, consideration was made in to strike a balance in the development of research problem and the methodology approach to conduct the study and therefore, the body of knowledge within social learning behaviour and entrepreneurial opportunity development is considered.

Each of these focus areas are then explored in more detail, drawing on the relevant literature reading.

2.2. Nascent phase of entrepreneurship

This study aims to understand and explore the nascent stage of an entrepreneurial journey. GEMS (2020a) states that this phase is the three to three-and-half time frame whereby entrepreneurs have started a business or have an established business. The stages of entrepreneurship as defined by the Global entrepreneurship monitor, is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

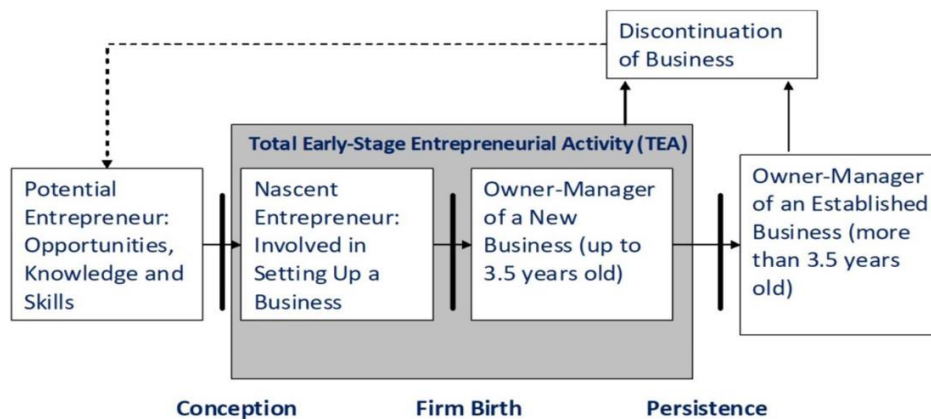


Figure 1: GEMS stages of entrepreneurship (taken from <https://www.gemconsortium.org/wiki/1149>)

A delineation of the entrepreneurial journey phases resulted in a more in-depth exploration of differences in characteristics within each phase of the entrepreneurial process, as illustrated in Figure 2. It is important to note that despite the focus of this study is the nascent phase of the entrepreneurship process, entrepreneurs who have experienced greater than three and a half years were selected to obtain a rich body of data from their experiences during this phase.

2.2. Opportunity development

The opportunity construct has been subject to varied definitions and remains in a nascent stage of study (Vogel, 2017; Suddaby et al., 2015). The difficulty has arisen by the researcher's difficulty unpacking the "puzzle" (Suddaby et al., 2015, p.3). One of these fundamental areas is the question around the origins of opportunities being either from within an entrepreneur or due to the influences

of the world (Shane, 2000; Subbady et al., 2015).

With the prevailing questions on the origin of opportunities, a literature review revealed themes of studies conducted at the individual level of entrepreneurs, with a substantive focus on the variance in the relationship in the creation of opportunities (Kerr & Coviello, 2019). However, what creates the development of these opportunities is not the person himself or herself but the ability to learn and organise these learnings into a manner that provides them with a chance to take advantage of the opportunity presented (Politis, 2005) as well as action that learning (Van Gelderen, 2015).

However, there appears to be a debate on accepting opportunity as a construct within the entrepreneurial domain (Clausen, 2020; Kitching & Rouse, 2017; Davidsson, 2015). Davidsson (2015) almost discards the notion of opportunity as a known fact and argues that the occurrence of unknown factors are not considered in the definition of opportunity. Kitching & Rouse (2017), echo's the conceptual deficiencies observed by Vogel (2017) and Davidsson (2015) but rather on the issue of there being a disconnect between the empirical results of studies and the theoretical frameworks applied centred around the definition of what an opportunity is and its nature. This debate reflects the "*conceptual slippages*" (Kitching & Rouse, 2017, p. 565) around the concept of entrepreneurial opportunity. Kitching & Rouse (2017) furthers this argument in questioning the validity of the opportunity concept being included within the context of entrepreneurial action, given that the varied definitions render empirical testing difficult.

Despite these debates, Vogel (2017) argues that these ambiguities arise largely due to the entrepreneurial phases not being de-lineated in research, preventing clarity in this area (Davidsson, 2015). These ambiguities are especially critical, given that studies have tended to focus on the entire entrepreneurial journey (Selden & Fletcher, 2015). Given this lack of delineation in the entrepreneurial process drawing out the nuances of the entrepreneurial opportunity theoretical framework, this study will focus on a specific phase of the entrepreneurial journey, opportunity development, as illustrated in Figure 2. Furthermore, it is critical to note that there will be an entrepreneurial failure without an opportunity or the resources to achieve that opportunity (Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002). However, despite the inconsistencies noted in the literature on the ambiguities in the definition of

opportunity and concurrently opportunity development, its importance is evident with the increasing focus in this area (Vogel, 2017).

The definition of opportunity development for this study will follow that of Vogel (2017). Vogel (2017) defines opportunity development as a stage where an entrepreneur is constantly reviewing and refining the opportunity with the community, under conditions of uncertainty that either inhibit or promote such development with cognisance of their resource capabilities and the ultimate aim of determining the best value offering.

The various stages of entrepreneurship is illustrated in Figure 2 below. The illustration includes all three phases of entrepreneurship which includes the trigger phase, opportunity development and exploitation. The opportunity development phase includes the three areas of opportunity development as defined by Vogel (2017), that of endogenous and exogenous circumstances; feasible idea to exploit; and the potential value added offering to the market with the inclusion of entrepreneurial learning. The three factors of opportunity development were utilised in the development of the theoretical framework for this study, illustrated in Figure 4.

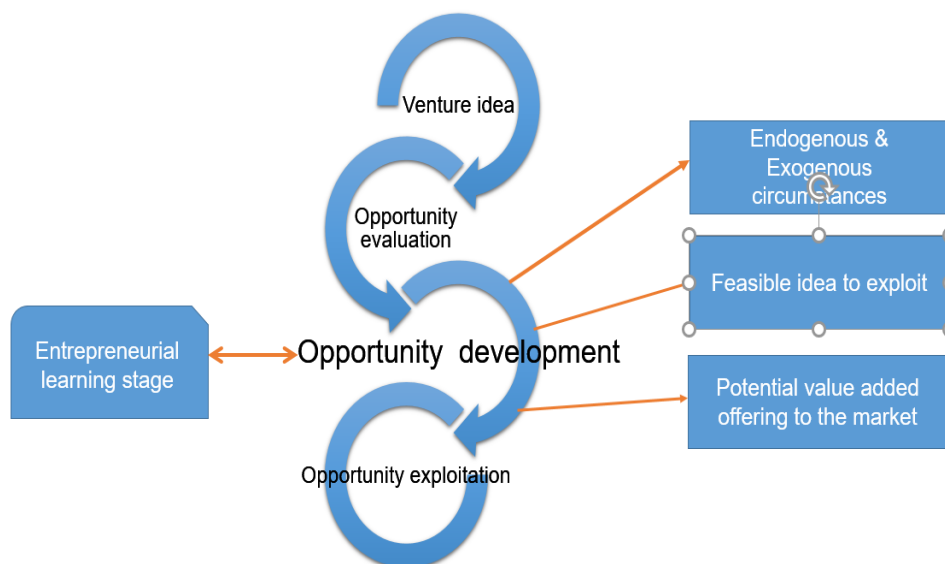


Figure 2: Entrepreneurial process

With the increasing focus on entrepreneurial success or rather the high failure (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018) the opportunity development stage represents a critical phase in the entrepreneurial process; given that it is at this stage,

information about the opportunity is collected together with an assessment of its feasibility to the market (Vogel, 2017).

It for this reason that Vogel (2017) views this stage as the entrepreneurial learning process. This latter point connects with the calls for understanding the influence of entrepreneurial learning behaviours in this area (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; Jones et al., 2018).

2.3. Theoretical frameworks

2.3.1. Social learning theory

Given the increasing importance that context plays within the entrepreneurial domain (Jones et al., 2018; McKeever et al., 2015), it becomes important to understand how social learning influences an entrepreneur's ability to develop their business opportunities.

The qualitative study by McKeever et al. (2015) highlighted the potential of social engagement by an entrepreneur within the external environment, in their case, a purposive selection of a community under economic distress. Outcomes from this research revealed that reciprocal interaction could improve entrepreneurial development as well as the socio-economic outcomes of a community, which means that these social learnings have the potential to provide a pathway in identifying ways to combine their resources in a manner that can improve their business success (McKeever et al., 2015). Markowska & Wiklund (2020), in a similar study approach, extended this further, arguing that social context influences entrepreneurial learning. A supporting study by (Soetanto, 2017) applied Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to a study of entrepreneurial behaviour within networks and found that entrepreneurs learn through a combination of reciprocal, cognitive, behavioural and personal factors in conjunction with the learnings through their interaction with the social environment.

In developing the research problem around the influences around entrepreneurial social learning, the conceptual framework has been drawn from Bandura's social learning theoretical framework (1977); given its core focus is the understanding of why people behave in a certain manner. As illustrated in Figure 4, the three central factors of Bandura's (1977) framework are continuous reciprocal interaction, cognitive capacity, and self-regulating.

These influences were used as the guide in this research study to assess a nascent entrepreneur's opportunity development stage.

2.3.2. Kolb's experiential learning theory

Before assessing the constructs of Bandura's (1977) social learning theoretical framework, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory was considered. One of the study's research problem constructs is that of understanding an entrepreneur's learning behaviour, and as such the seminal work by Kolb (1984) on experiential learning was considered.

Kolb's (1984) key principles of learning theory focus on the entrepreneurs ability to learn from prior experience, reflect on that experience with an active consciousness, capture the learning and then to act on them.

One of the key areas of departure in the learning behaviour theory observed is the impact of an entrepreneur's prior experience. The presence of prior experience was especially relevant since Kolb's (1984) postulation that entrepreneurial learning emanates from an iterative learning process, mirroring Bandura's (1977) assertion.

The four distinct phases of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. The first stage relates to the pre-experience, which includes assumptions, their knowledge and identity that an entrepreneur has the learning experience. The second stage is a purposive action to reflect on the learning experience and with a sense making of the experience performed. The third phase the transformation of the ideas from stages one and two into a learning outcome. The final stage is the application of the learning outcomes from stage three. The four stages of Kolb's experiential learning is illustrated in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Kolb's experiential learning model (1984)

Seminal works by Kolb (1984) and Shane (2000) on entrepreneurial opportunity development assumed that there is a need for the availability of experience within an entrepreneurship context, whereas Bandura (1977) does not retain this as precursor criteria in their theoretical framework.

In support of Bandura's (1977) assertions, numerous subsequent studies have revealed that despite the importance of pre-entrepreneurial experience, it is not a critical promoting factor of success (Jones et al., 2018) given the importance of continuous and iterative learning (Dimov, 2007; Politis, 2005). As illustrated in Figure 2, the opportunity development stage is a critical learning stage (Vogel, 2017); therefore, this study has benefited from exploring this research problem in a non-exclusionary manner. This approach was adopted to enhance the study's ability to draw out the nuances between the internal and external influences that drive this construct (Markoswka & Wiklund, 2020).

Despite the point of departure with respect to the entrepreneur having no prior experience, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model proved insightful towards understanding the various stages of learning behaviours. There is specific reference to the reflective observation and active implementation phase of learning which assisted in understanding the social learning behaviours exhibited by nascent entrepreneurs. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theoretical model was adapted to develop the coping mechanism model for this study, illustrated in Figure 3 above.

2.5. Factors that drive opportunity development

2.5.1. Endogenous and exogenous circumstances and feasible ideas to exploit and

The role of social and entrepreneurial ventures are critical to filling the transforming the economic and social gap left by key stakeholders that demonstrate a lower capacity to fill the needs in a particular area (Cantino et al., 2017). Accordingly, the need to continuously learn about the ecosystem at large becomes critical (Secundo et al., 2017). Another factor that influences opportunity development are the numerous barriers that an entrepreneur faces during their nascent years which may in fact act as a barrier against entrepreneurs carrying on in their business ventures due to their perception about the barriers (Meoli et al., 2020).

A nascent entrepreneur is confronted with multiple market challenges as they develop their opportunity and have to decide on the best possible action towards pursuing an opportunity. Therefore, an entrepreneur adopts an action of sense making, which includes an engagement with the social environment through communication, thinking and interpreting in the search for new knowledge, which often includes feedback (Hoyte et al., 2019). Grimes (2018) found in a study on the impact of entrepreneurial feedback change that, for entrepreneurs that were willing to let go of their attachment to their vision and purpose were more likely to conduct sense-making than the entrepreneurs who were strongly committed to their vision. This may be due to the loss of control when engaging with the wider community was required. The call for combining sense making together with the early phase of the entrepreneurial journal lends credence to the value of sense making in the nascent years (Grimes, 2018).

Taken together, these factors reflect a need to explore the influences of opportunity development and the coping capacity of nascent entrepreneurs.

2.5.2. Value add offering to market

An entrepreneur adopts a culture of learning from their failure to identify their capabilities for future ventures that is resources and capabilities as well as resilience with the view to creating a legacy from the ventures (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). Failure or adversity is seen as a start to creating the legacy (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018).

2.6. Factors that drive social learning behaviours

2.6.1. Continuous reciprocal interaction

An entrepreneur's entrepreneurial journey during the development or "experimentation" (Markoswka & Wiklund, 2020, p.18), phase is positively influenced by the replication of their behaviour and continuous reciprocal engagement with their environment (McKeever et al., 2015). This has the potential to enhance their success during this phase of entrepreneurial development.

2.6.2. Social connections

Shepard et al. (2020) argued that the entrepreneurs who had a connection with their local community possessed a higher propensity to express empathy for

the adversity and suffering of that community. Hence, this led to entrepreneurs pursuing opportunities that were founded on a prosocial motivation. The influence of adversity has the potential to change the outlook of an entrepreneur's self-identity and aid the development of entrepreneurial ventures (Shepard et al., 2020). Further to the empathetic understanding, when an entrepreneur engages with the community and understands the needs and constraints the outcome of those engagements could result in an identification of the areas of adversity, the manner in which those areas could be alleviated and collectively contributed towards the prosocial motivation (Murnieks et al., 2020). A promising area of development is understanding the influence of entrepreneurial action and a willingness by entrepreneurs to empathise and assist the community (Murnieks et al., 2020; Shepard et al., 2020).

In empathising and assisting communities, an entrepreneur may be prompted to trigger learning in to understand the difficulties a community is exposed to which often results in entrepreneurs creating learning networks (Soetanto, 2016). This creates a reciprocal engagement between the entrepreneurs and the community (Bandura, 1977). In two qualitative studies, (McKeever et al. 2015 and Shepard 2015) into entrepreneurial social engagement, it was found that entrepreneurs that were embedded within community's had a strong prosocial desire to contribute towards the community which created a unique understanding and appreciation of the challenges as well as a sense of belonging. In a supporting study by, Busch & Barkema (2020) into understanding the benefits of network embeddedness, it was found that close engagement with the community resulted in a mutual understanding and trust relationship being developed resulting in a natural development of ideas and opportunities, which cemented a symbiotic relationship. In study on trust and family connections, Shi et al. (2015) found that an entrepreneur's willingness to trust outside their established circle was influenced by their background and their social connections.

Reciprocal interaction with the networks may be enhanced by the status and legitimacy of such networks which entrepreneurs may choose as a form of validation (Kerr & Coviello, 2019). The creation of new learning networks provides entrepreneurs with additional information that may be lacking as well as providing links to further connections that may assist their entrepreneurial progression (Soetanto, 2016). The new networks created may lead to

serendipitous exchanges, which may lead to the development of further opportunities (Engel et al., 2017). However, a circumspect selection of the networks may be dependent on the social background and experience of entrepreneurs reducing selection to a level of trust they have with the network (Kerr & Coviello, 2019).

2.6.3. Social perceptions

Nascent entrepreneurs face constant difficulty in entering new spaces due to the questioning of their legitimacy due to the perception of the community of an entrepreneurs high failure rate therefore action is required by entrepreneurs to over-come this biasness (Fisher et al., 2020). For entrepreneurs confronted by challenges it may require urgent non-traditional processes or actions to be implemented to action their plans in the pursuit of an opportunity which may be used as bridge to build trust with the community due to the favourable view of entrepreneurial hustle by communities (Fisher et al., 2020).

Aligned to the concept of legitimacy doubts of entrepreneur is that the policy and educational initiatives may not be effective due to the lower acceptance by society of entrepreneurs because of preconceived norms and values about entrepreneurship (Kuckertz et al., 2020). The preconceived norms and values may require an entrepreneur to unlearn and relearn their traditional practices (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). What may benefit entrepreneurial reputation and overcome this societal bias against entrepreneurship as profession is for entrepreneurs to engage with the community to understand the true beliefs of the community (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). This may be assisted by an alignment of the values of the entrepreneur to those of the community served (Soetanto, 2017). Another area where the societal norms and misconceptions could be alleviated is through learning programs engagement with the community to positively change the narrative of entrepreneurship as a career (Kuckertz et al., 2020).

Another key factor that influences learning during entrepreneurial development is the capacity by an entrepreneur to learn from failure (; Murnieks, 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Caccotti et al., 2016; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016; Singh, 2015; van Gelderen, 2015). In addition, Caccotti et al. (2016) found in a qualitative inductive study, that there are various sources that feed the fear of failure; they extended from fearing financial security, personal accountability, and social

esteem as barriers to promoters with reflective learning and a motivation to work harder. Liu et al. (2019) found that entrepreneurs with a higher ego were less susceptible to accepting critique and feedback on failures therefore the willingness and motivation to learn from such failures were reduced and may therefore require different coping mechanisms to deal with the emotional consequences of failure.

While research has found that the emotional consequences to hinder the future progression of an entrepreneur, Singh et al. (2015) found in a qualitative study of 12 entrepreneurs that failure led to a pivotal moment of realisation self-reflection to the extent that failures were seen as a positive learning experience. The learning experience was followed with the entrepreneurs talking to their nucleus support to break the stigma of the failure (Singh et al. 2015). Failure may be seen in a positive light when an entrepreneur becomes cognitively and emotionally aware of the critical event and may lead to an entrepreneur viewing failure as a reflective continuous learning experience (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). In another qualitative study on failure and entrepreneurial motivation by Cacciott (2020), the study found that the fear of failure was an entrepreneurial journey that acted as both an inhibitor and promoter of entrepreneurial action

Tied into the concept of failure are the emotional outcomes including self-doubt, risk aversion and fear. In a study on action aversion, action fear and action doubt. van Gelderen (2015) found that an entrepreneur's self-doubt hinders their ability to proceed with further opportunity development, whereas fear did not lead to an entrepreneur avoiding future opportunities, which is explained by the higher level of control exhibited by an entrepreneur. With respect to the influence of aversion, this may lead to a learning experience for entrepreneurs and future opportunities being developed (Van Gelderen, 2015). However in a contradictory study by (Kollmann et al., 2017) it was found that the fear of failure and the perceptions by society led to an entrepreneur withdrawing from that opportunity. These contradictory results illustrate that when an entrepreneur is confronted with the experience of failure the perceptions or view about failure may influence their response to those events (van Gelderen, 2015).

The key factor to entrepreneurs understanding of the emotional challenges is to first gain an awareness of the environment and then shape their mind according to that circumstance (Finzi et al. 2020). Considering the immense

disappointment that failure invokes in entrepreneurs it stands to reason to understand the emotional implications of such events on an entrepreneurs mind, which answers the call of De Kock et al. (2020) to investigate the influence of emotions on entrepreneurship. What may be useful understands how an entrepreneur copes with emotions and how it affects their survival as a nascent entrepreneur given that the study by De Kock et al. 2020 indicated that nascent entrepreneur's awareness of their emotions raises the prospect of their survival. In a study by Engel et al., (2019) which built on the call for understanding the coping mechanisms for emotional strength in entrepreneurs, it was found that self-compassion through spiritual meditation promoted an entrepreneurs ability to cope with the emotional consequences of failure and the entrepreneurship journey. These factors then raise questions about whether and under what circumstances do entrepreneurs learn from the experiences of failure as well as how do they over-come them and what influence does it have on their pursuit of opportunities, their success or failure (De Kock et al. 2020; Engel et al.,;Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020).

2.6.4. Continuous reciprocal learning

The continuous learning process assists entrepreneurs in coping with their daily challenges, growing and developing as well raising the alertness to the opportunity (Boso et al., 2017; Secundo, 2017; Shir et al., 2019). An entrepreneur may feel an elevated feeling competence and motivation when the process of continuous learning is undertaken. The search for new information enhances and entrepreneurs learning experience. However, further research is needed into how and why learning influences the growth phase of entrepreneurship, the nascent phase of a business venture (Boso et al., 2017; Secundo, 2017).

2.6.5. Cognitive capacity

Cognitive gaps may hinder an entrepreneur's ability to respond to an opportunity in reasoning to the extent that there is a loss of control (Dimov, 2007). This loss of control could potentially be an inhibitor of future entrepreneurial action. The loss of control could occur due to an environment that has specific norms which may not be receptive to entrepreneurs, therefore it may require an entrepreneur to be agile and pivot away from the unaccommodating environment to a more receptive environment and increase

the opportunities available (Williamson et al., 2020). The ability to pivot may be enhanced by the values, self-introspection and acceptance of their identity which may promote their resilience as an entrepreneur (Brassey & van Dam, 2018; Michaelis, et al., 2020;

In dealing with changes and uncertainty's within an environment a nascent entrepreneur's capacity to deal emotionally with the challenges of failure as well as successes may be a significant contributing factor to their continued progression and survival of their future business ventures (De Cock et al., 2020).

In dealing with the challenges of the environment, an entrepreneurs ability to demonstrate more passion towards their chosen path, the higher the likelihood that an entrepreneur will conduct purposive actions for further opportunity development (Schulte-Holthaus & Kuckertz, 2020). However, a study by Murnieks et al. (2020) found that entrepreneurs that had a stronger understanding of their self-identity displayed a higher level of passion, grit towards their business opportunities, and contributed towards the overall growth of the business. An entrepreneur's capacity to undertake non-traditional actions to confront challenges and take advantage of opportunities under conditions of uncertainty may assist enhancing the legitimacy of entrepreneur's in the perception of society (Fisher et al. 2020). The capacity of an entrepreneur to hustle, which was a coping mechanism to over-come the entry into a particular area, was a signal to the community on their trustworthiness and legitimacy (Fisher et al. 2020).

2.6.6. Self-regulating influences

What remains unexplored understands the drivers that affect an entrepreneur's ability to convert an idea into tangible commercial outcomes (Dimov, 2007). In other words, what makes a person develop an idea but not convert that idea effectively during the development stage. Dimov (2007) found through their empirical study of an experiment run on a group of MBA students that the keenness to explore an idea is not influenced by their knowledge and learning habitats but is affected by a person's ability to react to a situation. These findings may mean that the receptiveness in exploring new insights may be self-regulated by an entrepreneur's level of comfort with new concepts.

Another area is the factor of self-identity. When an entrepreneur has a closer understanding of their self-identity, an elevated level of passion is exhibited during their pursuit of their entrepreneurial pursuits, which leads to entrepreneurial growth. Murnieks et al., (2020). Linked to the concept of self-identity is the idea of self-control. An entrepreneur with a higher level of self-control may demonstrate a higher propensity toward following through with an action to pursue and develop an opportunity, which may mean that entrepreneur's future actions are dependent on their own ability to regulate their behaviour (Van Gelderen, 2015).

Tied into the concept of social perceptions (2.8.2) is that the level of self-reflection that an entrepreneur practices may influence the degree of feedback an entrepreneur is willing acceptance (Lattacher, Wdowiak, 2020; Liu et al., 2019). This may mean that narcissism, which affects the willingness to accept help, may prevent an entrepreneur from accepting assistance in the drive to maintain their reputation, thus not being open to critical self-reflection. This is critical to the learning process of an entrepreneur (Lattacher, Wdowiak, 2020; Liu et al., 2019).

2.7. Factors that drive entrepreneurial learning behaviour

The literature surrounding the entrepreneurial learning behaviour process has seen a plethora of drivers such as embeddedness (Busch & Barkema, 2020; Jack & Anderson, 2002; McKeever et al., 2015), pre-existing knowledge (Dimov, 2010; Shane, 2000), and experiential learning (Markoswka & Wiklund, 2020; Kolb, 1984) being explored. However, this study intends not to explore any factors in-depth but rather use Bandura's (1977) framework to explore an entrepreneur's social learning behaviour on the opportunity development phase. Nevertheless, these factors will be identified and highlighted to understand what and how the various social learning behaviours influence an entrepreneur during opportunity development (Vogel, 2017). It was with this focus that the literature review relating to learning behaviours was conducted.

2.7.1. Cognitive development and predominant logic

An entrepreneur's predominant logic predisposition can influence the development of entrepreneurial knowledge during the early phase of development, including exploitation and opportunity development, and

ultimately affect the success of a new business venture (Politis, 2005). In the empirical study by Politis (2005), an entrepreneur's experience played a central role in enabling an entrepreneur exploiting the available opportunities, however, despite this finding, an acknowledgement on the value of an entrepreneurial experiential process was considered critical in transforming an experience into knowledge to be used for the development of the opportunity. For an entrepreneur to take advantage or identify the prospect of significant opportunity development, enhanced awareness of their emotions would greatly help identify a critical event and take advantage of an opportunity (Lindh & Thorgren 2016). Identifying this critical event means that increased awareness of an event can convert an opportunity into an outcome and contribute to an entrepreneur exploiting the opportunity and increasing its success.

The uncertain environment in which nascent entrepreneurs operate results in entrepreneurs activating their personal skills to deal with the uncertainties (Schulte-Holthaus & Kuckertz, 2020). One of the uncertainties relates to resource constraints, leads to entrepreneurs adopting resourcefulness mind-set in which they utilise their resources (Michaelis, 2017). While the study of Michaelis (2017) explored the role of resourcefulness where resources are not constrained an interesting differentiation, distinction was drawn between frugality and self-control considered critical factors in learning. Self-control requires a restriction to pre-determined action plans according to personal standards. Frugality represents a consideration around the preservation of resources based on an economic rationale linked to their cultural interactions with differing methods of learning and opportunity development. If both are adopted by entrepreneurs, it may present a useful direction towards how entrepreneurs engage with their community where resources are constrained (Michaelis, 2017).

2.7.2. Reinforcement and motivation process

The ability to capture and seize an opportunity is achieved through a culture of proactive encouragement and action in an environment that encourages entrepreneurial learning behaviours (Jones et al., 2018), which encourages a mind-set that is susceptible to change. This ability to adapt to a changing environment may be a learning behaviour that is an enabler for entrepreneurs

to take advantage of opportunities. However, a "person-situation mismatch" (Dimov, 2007:561) may create cognitive and motivational obstacles (Liu et al., 2019) towards the success of a business venture.

The influence of the obstacles that nascent entrepreneurs face during opportunity development may be eased with a strong nucleus support of family, mentors and peers, which may lead to a higher likelihood of entrepreneurs continuing to pursue their path (Arregel et al., 2015; Edelman et al., 2016; Meoli et al., 2020). In a study by Mathias et al. (2015) on the influence of family on entrepreneurs it was found that the entrepreneurial background or motivation towards entrepreneurship is even more passionate and propels the entrepreneur to sustain their journey. A further potential benefit of having strong nucleus support may result in an enduring view of the entrepreneurial career (Meoli et al., 2020).

In addition to the motivational value of the support structures, they may be valuable coping mechanisms for a nascent entrepreneur (Meoli et al., 2020). The entrepreneur's perceptions about the environmental barriers may provide insight into the coping mechanisms that are implemented during opportunity development (Meoli et al., 2020). Interestingly, in a study by Edelman et al. (2016) financial support from family appeared to hinder the future progression of entrepreneurs due to the reduced urgency to prove the business model to external finance providers. In a contradictory study by Mathias et al. (2015) it was found that the involvement of family in entrepreneurial decision making has a positive impact on the future decision making and opportunity development. These two studies highlight the contextual differences when it comes to the benefits of a strong nucleus support system for entrepreneurs.

Despite the benefit of a strong nucleus support for entrepreneurs there may be circumstances where family support may be counter-productive, with family support providing protection from the realities of preparing a business plan or applying for financial support and hinder the progression of an entrepreneur (Edelman et al. 2020). In addition, an entrepreneur's reliance on a closed nucleus support to only close family may reveal a sense of distrust resulting in a reduced level of external support, which may hinder the progress of the opportunity pursued (Arregle et al., 2015).

Another area of external support that an entrepreneur has available to them are learning programs. Entrepreneurs principally enter into such programs to learn more about the business program; however, these educational programs are founded on long-term education plans, which may not meet the demands of current employment expectations (Kuckertz et al., 2020).

Tied into the areas nucleus support, learning behaviour and learning programs is the reinforcement and coping mechanism of identifying and engaging with mentors or role model (Wyrwich et al., 2020; Zozimo, 2017). Wyrwich et al. (2020) found that entrepreneurs fear of failure decreased after they had modelled their behaviour on mentors, which assisted their learning. Entrepreneurs recognise the need for assistance in their nascent years and reach out to role models at various levels, transitioning from family providing the key underpinning the values, to professional connections that act as supporters of the emotional and technical needs of entrepreneurs, with the selection based on the social context of each entrepreneur (Zozimo et al. 2017). Another key supporter may be the willingness of an entrepreneur to learn about themselves, their business and the relationships during the period of opportunity development (Zozimo et al. 2017).

In as much as an entrepreneur is supported by the nucleus support, learning behaviours and programs the ability to cope with the harsh realities of matching expectations to the actual realities of entrepreneurship, may be a hindrance for an entrepreneur during opportunity development (Busch & Barkema, 2020; Kuckertz et al., 2020; Williamson, 2020). The engagement with the community and understanding the social intentions may be assist an entrepreneur in bridging the gap between their expectations and the reality of the environment that they operate within (Busch & Barkema, 2020).

2.7.3. Uncertainty

Markowska & Wiklund (2020) argue that the entrepreneur's learning is influenced by the complexity and uncertainty of an opportunity's feasibility. This means that if an entrepreneur considers a task as complex and are uncertain about their abilities, they are more likely to model their behaviour on others they have observed. This supports Bandura's (1977) theory of social learning in

learning from your surrounding environment. The entrepreneur is then confronted with three questions on uncertainty, which centres around an understanding of what is happening in the environment, determining the impact on the entrepreneur themselves in a personal capacity, and how they will respond to these uncertainties (Ganzin et al., 2020).

The uncertainties in the market leads to an entrepreneur learning fortuitously when difficulties are experienced and raises the spectre of their entrepreneurial limitations (Soetanto, 2017). These limitations exist no more so when there is a failure experienced by an entrepreneur, an area within entrepreneurial research with a rich learning experience that has gained increased focus in literature (Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata; 2020; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016).

Literature indicates that as an entrepreneur is confronted with uncertainty, entrepreneurs are impacted by their ability to learn from the surroundings, which requires a learning mind-set by the entrepreneur to accept these learnings (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020). Therefore, what may benefit an entrepreneur during this period is understanding the how and why the various learning behaviours affect an entrepreneurs during opportunity development (Secundo, 2017).

2.8. Conclusion

The opportunity development phase is an area that has seen considerable debate through the literature review which in itself presents an opportunity for exploration within the entrepreneurial field. Together with this

Here areas such as opportunity risk and the impact of contextual factors are of importance. Further to this, questions remain as to how the principles and/or processes of design thinking and lean start-up can be employed in ensuring the creation of effective and efficient social enterprises.

The literature review has provided an overview of available theory in the field and has highlighted a number of complexities and areas where clear gaps exist in the literature. These questions are further explored in the Research Questions (cf. 3.0).

Chapter 3. Research questions

The lack of clarity and research on the opportunity development phase during the entrepreneurship journey, the influence of social learning behaviour and the coping mechanisms of nascent entrepreneurs is the interest to this study. The research questions were formulated against the background of information distilled from the literature review to clarify understanding of the opportunity evaluation and creation process to address this gap in research.

The following research problem and research questions were developed with the gaps in literature observed from the literature review in Chapter 2, specifically in entrepreneurial opportunity development and social learning behaviours.

3.1. Research questions

3.1.1. Research question 1

What are the social learning behaviours exhibited by entrepreneurs during opportunity development?

The purpose of this question was to identify the type of social learning behaviours that are exhibited by nascent entrepreneurs during the opportunity development phase of entrepreneurship. This question was positioned to gain insight into the perceptions of social learning behaviour, which was instrumental in understanding the influence of these factors during the opportunity development phase.

There exists considerable debate around the clarity on the opportunity development phase due to the lack of an established conceptual framework in the field of entrepreneurship specially in the area how entrepreneurial opportunities are exploited (Vogel, 2017). The debate exists around whether an opportunity due within an entrepreneur or due to the external influences of the world (Shane, 2000; Subbary et al. 2015). There is even further debate on the research into the entire entrepreneurial process or phases within the process (Hansen, Vogel).

The debate on the opportunity construct therefore indicates a lack of clarity which implies that the entrepreneurial opportunity development phase is also

under-researched (Hansen, 2016; Vogel, 2017).

With the debate around on whether an opportunity due within an entrepreneur or due to the external influences of the world and the importance of understanding context within the entrepreneurial phase (Jones et al., 2018) it becomes important to understand the type of social learning behaviours that influence a nascent entrepreneur during the phase.

Social learnings and reciprocal interaction with the community has been found to have the potential to creating additional avenues towards improving the combination of resources in a sustainable manner for nascent entrepreneurs (McKeever et al., 2015). Benefits have been found to accrue to entrepreneurs through reciprocal, cognitive, behavioural and person factors (Soetanto, 2017).

Studies have found several factors over the entire entrepreneurial journey to be sensing the environment, social connections and embeddedness (Shepard et al., 2020) within communities, reciprocal learnings with the communities (Busch & Barkema, 2020), creation of networks (Kerr & Coviello, 2019), emotional cognition (De Kock et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2015), reflective learning (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). These studies have been performed at various points in the entrepreneurial journey. The studies by Boso et al. (2017) and Secundo (2017) have identified that the growth phase to be an area that requires further research into the influences of learning in this phase on nascent entrepreneurs.

These factors raise the question of what are the social learning behaviours that are exhibited in the opportunity development phase. The purpose of this question is to uncover and identify the social learning behaviour factors that are present during the opportunity development phase, the learning behaviours during this stage. In describing these factors and their influences, this research study has sought to provide clarity on what factors influence a nascent entrepreneur during the opportunity development phase.

3.1.2. Research question 2

How do the drivers of these perceptions about social learning behaviours influence the inhibition or promotion of entrepreneurial ventures during opportunity development phase?

This question therefore sought to understand the perceptions that drive entrepreneur's social learnings as well as understand the factors that inhibit and promote entrepreneurial activities during opportunity development. In understanding, the perceptions about these factors and the impact of the inhibitors and promoters, practical expedients may emerge on how nascent entrepreneurs may cope with social learning failings and society's legitimacy issues, which may provide further instructional material and direction on an entrepreneurs progress out of the opportunity development phase.

The purpose of this question was to create a contextual understanding of the environment in which opportunity evaluation is undertaken and the broader learning behaviour perceptions that entrepreneurs have about social factors that influence the opportunity development phase.

Questions emerged surrounding the emotional and social reactions on entrepreneurs due to the prevalence of critical events occurring extent to which influence the emotional cognition and development of opportunities in the nascent journey of an entrepreneur.

Grimes (2018) called for the exploration of the influence of sense making in the early phase. However, the opportunity development was considered an area that was reliant on the wider community, therefore there was a call by Murnieks et al. (2020) and Shepard et al. (2020) into understanding the willingness of entrepreneurs to engage with their communities in an empathic manner. A key barrier to the entrepreneurial profession was the issue of legitimacy therefore the acceptance by the community was critical in understanding the influence of the perceptions of the entrepreneurs around these engagements (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). The success of those interactions were tied into the perceptions of society's biasness towards the failure of entrepreneurs, which varied from fear of failure, financial security, personal accountability and social barriers (Caccotti et al., 2016). What was found that emanating from the entrepreneurs

experiences during the development phase was that failure elicited a multitude of emotional reactions therefore there was a call by De Kock et al. (2020) to explore the influence of emotions on entrepreneurship. Given the role of community and entrepreneurs (Murnieks et al., 2020), there was a call by Shepard (2015) to understand the emotional cognition on the entrepreneurial journey with the interaction with the community at the centre of the potential future research.

The entrepreneurial journey is process of iterative learning, therefore the learning behaviours of an entrepreneur was central to understanding the influence during the opportunity development phase (Markowska & Wiklund, 2019). The ability to learn under conditions of uncertainty become critical to an entrepreneur given the constant resource and capability constraints that an entrepreneur faces (Michaelis, 2017). This therefore becomes critical in ensuring the learnings are converted into action by the entrepreneur, given the high failures of nascent entrepreneurs (Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020). Studies have found that entrepreneurs rely on their support structures whether it is from their close nucleus circle or through networks as these are considered key areas to expand their opportunities as well as receive validation and legitimacy that society does not afford them (Arrgel et al., 2015; Edelman et al., 2016; Meoli et al., 2020).

Therefore, with all the challenges of unforgiving environment entrepreneurs find that the entrepreneurial journey is not adequately supported emotionally (Meoli et al., 2020). The harsh realities of the entrepreneurship journey brings to the fore the need for coping mechanisms (Busch & Barkema, 2020). This real need is raised in the papers of Amankwah-Amoah (2018), Lattacher & Secundo et al. (2017) and Wdowiak Malgorzata (2020). These papers raise the critical impact that failure has on the physic of an entrepreneur which has the potential to dissuade nascent entrepreneurs from continuing their journey.

Collectively, Shepard (2015) indicated that the studies of entrepreneurship had favoured narrow focus on dominant principles, which may have contributed to the multitude of studies into entrepreneurship covering diverse areas without the development of a defined framework, evident in the proliferation of studies on entrepreneurship. Therefore, to address these narrow focus studies, Shepard (2015) called for future entrepreneurial studies that considered a

multiplicity of perspectives to be able to contribute towards the body of research to enhance the depth of interpretations.

Given the critical urgency of entrepreneurial success, these factors reflect a need to explore the influences of opportunity development, social learning, learning behaviour and the coping mechanisms of nascent entrepreneurs.

3.2. Conclusion

Research problem

"To what extent do social learning behaviours influence entrepreneurial ventures during the opportunity development phase?"

In addressing the urgent need to understanding the contextual and motivations of the social learning behaviours of entrepreneurs during opportunity development this study aims to address the calls for the advancement of the emotional and learning behaviours of nascent entrepreneurs

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. The study has adopted a qualitative approach to explore the influence of entrepreneurs' social learning behaviours during the nascent phase of opportunity development. This is the phase which focuses on the entrepreneur's engagement with their local environment and their learning receptiveness to the environment. As shown in the literature review, there is limited studies in this area of research, particularly during the opportunity development phase together with the social learning behaviour of entrepreneurs during this period.

As such, these gaps in the literature provided a key determinant in positioning this research study as an exploratory design approach. The qualitative research design was deemed appropriate to explore both the influences and the motivating factors behind the inhibitors and promoters of entrepreneurial ventures in order to understand the influences of social learning behaviours during the opportunity development phase. Data was collected for this study through a process of conducting a series of semi-structured interviews with various "active network agents" (Kerr & Coviello, 2019, p. 382) in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, which included founders of enterprises, as well as entrepreneurial mentors and managers of business incubators. Data analysis in the form of categorisation and thematic analysis aided the exploratory nature of this study, where the research questions were utilised to direct the framework and aid these processes. The various limitations surrounding this study were considered and the determinants in ensuring research rigour, focusing on the potential impact of the validity, reliability of the research approach, and ethical considerations arising from the research, are discussed in this chapter.

4.2. Research design

The philosophy adopted for this study was interpretivism. This study's

fundamental objective was to gain a deeper understanding of entrepreneurs' perceptions during the opportunity development phase, within the context of social learning and the influence on learning behaviours.

Given that, this study is positioned well within the social science and entrepreneurial domain as its aim was to understand the nascent research of entrepreneurs' social learning behaviours during opportunity development. As this research explored the human intentions and the perceptions of social learning, social concepts within the domain of social science, it therefore lends itself to an interpretivist methodology (Packard, 2017).

An exploratory study with semi-structured interviews was conducted. The interview process enabled the establishment of true underlying assumptions and a focus on "*what is missing?*" (Gartner & Birley, 2002, p.388) to understand the opportunity development construct and influence of social learning behaviour. The understanding of what is this missing information differs from the natural scientific philosophies, which have tended to focus on the identification of correlation of factors (Packard (2017) and not an understanding the behaviours of "outliers" (Gartner & Birley, 2002, p.388).

Prior engagement with other industry stakeholders either mentors or those that manage entrepreneurs in a learning environment (Lackéus, 2020) were interviewed at the preliminary level of evaluation, as they were considered vital in providing an instructive perspective on the research problem and influenced the interview questions during the study by providing further perspectives on the behaviour of nascent entrepreneurs.

In order to understand these relationships, a content analysis approach was adopted to assist in the extraction of the true meanings of these social phenomena (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 109) and develop a deeper understanding of where the entrepreneurs work and live (Creswell, 2014, p. 37). The extraction of data was performed with a view to identifying the underlying meanings of the content and the context of the meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Jones et al., 2018) of the perceptions of the entrepreneurs toward social learning behaviour.

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that researchers have employed a higher propensity towards qualitative research (Davidsson, 2015; Lattacher, & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016; Markowska & Wiklund, 2020; McKeever et al., 2015; Suddaby, 2015; Vogel, 2017) in uncovering entrepreneurial learning behaviour, cognitive experiences, and opportunity undertakings. However, within qualitative research, varied methodologies have been employed, extending from, case studies, narrative studies, and longitudinal studies to semi-structured interviews. Given that this a nascent study in using the contextual concept of social learning behaviour within the theoretical entrepreneurial process, the appropriate methodology that was adopted was one of interpretivism with an semi-structured interviews with a view to obtaining depth in this research area. This method was appropriate in understanding the lived experiences of social actors (Packard, 2017).

4.3. Population

The study focused on South African entrepreneurs, referred to as “intermediaries” (Martin et al. 2018, p. 6), that have conceptualised a business idea (Shane, 2000) and have passed the opportunity development stage (Dimov, 2010; Vogel; 2017) of their venture creation (Shane, 2000; Vogel; 2017).

This study's primary focus was to obtain an understanding of the drivers and perceptions of entrepreneurs' social learning behaviours during opportunity development. Therefore, this study targeted entrepreneurs who pursued their entrepreneurial journey primarily towards opportunities as opposed to a necessity. Furthermore, since the principal focus of this study was towards opportunity development and the influences of social learning experiences in South Africa, these are considered key areas of entrepreneurial learning (Lackéus, 2020). This target population ensured research concentration (Beigi et al., 2019), as this provided a boundary within which to frame this study. In stating this criterion, it must be highlighted that this study revealed a certain level of ambiguity in terms of the conceptual understanding between opportunity and necessity pursuits in formulating new ventures from a few participants and is elaborated further in Chapter 5.

Since entrepreneurs are continually refining and adapting the venture business opportunities (Dimov, 2010), this target population provided the scope to investigate those entrepreneurs that have experienced opportunity development and; perceptions and drivers around the social learning behaviours. The targeting of this specific category of entrepreneurs ensured an alignment to the research problem and explored the period in the entrepreneurial journey where an entrepreneur refined their ideas and as such, was guided through a process of venture development (Dimov, 2010; Vogel, 2017).

4.4. Sampling

4.4.1 Sampling method

The sampling method adopted followed a purposive sampling methodology (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), which required an in-depth analysis of a chosen research area to be conducted. The core criteria for selecting the sample were premised on three areas, the motivation for opening their first business venture, the number of years since their first business venture as well as operating in South Africa. Further details of this selection is included in 4.5 within this chapter and in Chapter 5. As this research focused of the nascent phase of the entrepreneurial journey (Vogel, 2017), this sampling method was appropriate and therefore selected a sample of entrepreneurs engaged in an entrepreneurial venture in South Africa. The fact that they have experienced the early stages of entrepreneurship (GEMS, 2020a; Vogel, 2017) aided the research in exploring their social learning experiences and perceptions during the venture opportunity development based on their experiences.

The interviews with entrepreneurial mentors provided confirmatory and non-confirmatory perspectives, which provided research rigour in the qualitative study. The results of these interviews are highlighted in further detail in Chapter 5.

The sample was drawn from the author's personal network, academics and business incubators through a combination of volunteer and snowball sampling techniques (Kumar, 2019) within South Africa. The early stage classification by GEMS (2020a) in that nascent entrepreneur that has either

started a business or been in business for less than three and half years was used benchmark in the selection. In that, entrepreneurs must have passed this stage of the entrepreneurial process to glean the experiences within entrepreneurial development and learning. The reference point's use represents an environment purposed for learning; the development of their business ideas and their business opportunities presents fertile ground to explore these behaviours. There was be no criteria set on the success or failure of an entrepreneur's venture post the nascent stage as the focus on this study was to draw out these perceptions and experiences to analyse the themes that emanate from these interactions.

4.4.2. Sample size

A sample size of 12 entrepreneurs and two industry experts, involved in the mentoring and teaching industry of entrepreneurs ,were selected for this study (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). One of the key challenges in quantifying a sample size is the nature of data being gathered and the extent to which generalized statements can be made (Cohen et al., 2000) however, Guest et al. (2006) confirm a sample size of 14 to be appropriate for qualitative studies of this nature.

There are considerable discussions and debates around data saturation, which is the point in the interview process where no new insights on the research questions are achieved (Greg et al. 2002; Saunders et al., 2018). Despite this debate, the critical purpose of the sampling was to ensure that the sample size is adequate to capture all insights towards addressing the research problem and questions, without impacting the value of the data, therefore posing a guiding limit would be justifiable (Saunders et al., 2018) in ensuring research quality and rigour. The discussion on the data saturation is included in Chapter 5.

4.5. Research sample

The criteria for selecting the participants for the semi-structured interviews included being them being part of a business venture which was at least three years old. Table 2 indicates the sample of entrepreneurs, their pseudonyms,

their industry type and experience. Appendix B further explains their motivation for following the entrepreneurial path, and information on age, industry, and experience, location of first or current business venture and the level or extent of support obtained during the opportunity development phase. The information in Table 2 and Appendix B was used in the results section discussion of the learning and coping framework that emanated from the study in Chapter 5.

Table 2: The types of participants, their industry and experience

| Participant | Pseudonym | Industry | Experience |
|-------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Community organiser | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and technology training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.8 years in rural social engagement. Founded a local NGO. |
| 2 | Social entertainer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and coaching training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than 3 years in marketing and training. |
| 3 | Opportunity seeker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol distillery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 years in alcohol distillery industry. Family owned business. |
| 4 | Leadership capacity developer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural and management consulting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 years' experience in leadership capacity management. Hobby from childhood in agricultural farming. |
| 5 | Serial entrepreneur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 years as a serial entrepreneur, with 5 years the current company in the ITC services sector. Stakes in diverse production and services entities. |
| 6 | Motivational entrepreneur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills training child-care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than 3 years' experience as a social entrepreneur. Degree in marketing and public relations, Post-graduate in business administration. |
| 7 | Business hub entrepreneur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial innovation incubator hubs, SMME focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than 5 years' experience in training entrepreneurs. |
| 8 | Executive coach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentorship, coaching, leadership training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 years, in Executive coaching; Leadership development Career development; Coaching Public Speaking; |

| Participant | Pseudonym | Industry | Experience |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 9 | Digital security consultant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business ITC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training; Life Coaching. 9 years in digital marketing, business IT support and cyber security. |
| 10 | Business incubator director(industry expert) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and mentoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 years' experience as a serial entrepreneur that covers the spectrum of interests, |
| 11 | Serial entrepreneur Medical researcher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years' experience. Mechanical engineer |
| 12 | Vision led social entrepreneur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 years as a social entrepreneur in counselling and teaching underprivileged communities. |
| 13 | Property investment consultant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real estate investment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 years' experience as an entrepreneur. |
| 14 | Business incubator mentor(industry expert) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and mentoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 to 15 years mentor of nascent entrepreneurs |

4.6. Unit of analysis

South African entrepreneurs, labelled as “*active network agents*” (Kerr & Coviello, 2019, p. 382) were the primary respondents and their perceptions and represented this study's' unit of analysis.

In answering Vogel's (2017) call to conduct research into entrepreneurship as two distinct phases, one that of venture idea and the second of venture opportunity, the limitation to the nascent entrepreneurial phase provides a concentration in the study to enhance exploration within the key construct of opportunity development.

The ability to understand social learning behaviour and the ability to capture these underdeveloped phenomena within human organisational experience requires perspectives from people with relevant learning experiences and

adequate exposure (Bandura, 1977; Gioia et al., 2013). Therefore, the stakeholders from the entrepreneurial learning sector who were interviewed as part of a preliminary evaluation stage were considered vital in providing an instructive perspective on the research problem. These preliminary interviews provided critical information towards data triangulation. This triangulation provided confirmatory and non-confirmatory analyses resulting in an additional layer of rigour to the study. Refer to Chapter 5. 3 for a discussion on this additional rigour provided by this information triangulation.

4.7. Measurement instrument

Qualitative style research requires a closer and deeper engagement with the interviewee. Accordingly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to enhance the personal interaction and resulted in obtaining a deeper understanding of the personal perspectives (Gioia et al., 2013) and their lived experiences (Martin et al., 2018, p. 285). The interview questions were structured principally around the key constructs of the two key theoretical frames of Bandura (1977) and Kolb (1984). The key constructs and sub-constructs of social learning, learning behaviour and opportunity development the foundation of the study's research problem, illustrated in Figure 6, were developed from literature, and were used as the foundation to develop the interview questions illustrated in the consistency matrix in Appendix X. The key constructs and sub-constructs illustrated in Figure 6 were used as the foundation for the analysis of the data obtained from the interview. This analysis is further elaborated in Chapter 5.

However, the drawback of this approach may be the researcher's closeness to the experiences of the entrepreneur and their own biases, which may result in the researcher's views being obscured by the interviewee's views. Given the above criticism, the development of an interview guide, as illustrated in Appendix A, helped set a framework for all the interviews. The interview guide included an interview protocol to guide the interview process which comprises a script for the beginning and end of the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). In addition to this, the questions were developed in an open-ended way (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012), to draw out meanings from a "critical mass" (Gartner &

Birley, 2002) that is reflected in the research problem, with the combination of social learning, learning behaviour within the context of opportunity development. As the questions were open-ended, this allowed for follow-up questions to generate new information. In addition, there was an allowance for short follow-up interviews to clarify any concepts that were observed during the interview process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The interview questions were then mapped to the research questions as illustrated in Table 1.

4.8. Pilot interviews

A single pilot testing session was conducted to ensure the reliability of the measurement instrument. The interview was conducted with an entrepreneurial mentor in industry. The process involved testing the interview protocol's effectiveness with the primary objective of maximising appropriate data extraction. This pilot assisted the synthesis of the interview protocol. Where deficiencies were found to exist, amendments to the schedule was made to ensure better data extraction without diverging from the research questions. The schedule was found to be principally effective with the exception of one question regarding the definition of social learning behaviours of entrepreneurs. This required an inclusion to the pre-interview protocol on the general considerations of what social learning behaviours may entail without providing undue restrictions on the research objectives as indicated in Appendix C.

4.9. Data analysis

4.9.1. Data collection

The hallmark of good qualitative studies' entails the sourcing of data from multiple sources (Gioia et al., 2013). Accordingly, the study commenced with the preliminary interviews of industry experts in the teaching and learning space in order to establish the industry entrepreneurial learning behaviour practices.

Consequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs focusing mainly on their experiences, perceptions, and influences from social learning behaviour practices during the early phase of their business opportunity development. Given that the interviews were framed to extract the

experiences of the entrepreneur's experiences and perceptions, this approach provided a retrospective or cross-sectional approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) the study of the entrepreneur's understanding of social learning behaviours during opportunity development.

Data collection was conducted in two steps. The first step involved establishing the initial interview protocol as an exploratory investigation of the interviewee's responsiveness to the interview questions (Gioia et al., 2013); following which minor revisions to the interview protocol were conducted.

The second step of the data collection process was the actual collection of data. The data collection was conducted entirely via social media applications, due to the fact that participants could not meet in person owing to the impact of COVID-19.

Despite the initial interview protocol adopted, during the main data collection phase, interviewees provided advancing information that required minimal revisions to the interview questions (Gioia et al., 2013). This flexibility in the interpretive research provided qualitative rigour and depth in uncovering new concepts and ultimately developing those further (Gioia et al., 2013).

4.9.2. Transcription

All fourteen interviews were submitted to a professional transcriber for transcription.

4.9.3. Data analysis tool

The semi-structured interview process is considered an extensive and time-consuming manual activity and as such, garners criticism related to transparency and trustworthiness. Hence, this reduces the potential for reliability, dependability, and replicability which are all key features of high qualitative research studies (O'Kane et al., 2019).

Accordingly, to enhance the level of transparency and trustworthiness, the computer-assisted software, Atlas.Ti, was utilised to ensure that data was presented in a transparent and trustworthy manner. More importantly, this was critical to enhance the researcher's understanding of the data and provided a

more refined outcome of the narrative themes. In doing so, it reduced the researcher's biasness (O'Kane et al., 2019).

4.9.4. Data analysis

With the aid of a computer software package, various categories can be identified through the application of a single word, a paragraph or phrases (Saldaña, 2009). In order to establish trustworthiness of results, the coding process involved outlining the coder protocol to implement a systematic process (Saldaña, 2009). Figure 3 illustrates the basic systematic coding process framework by Saldaña (2009) that was adopted in this study.

Classic scientific scepticism exists surrounding the academic quality of data produced through qualitative studies, as there is a perception that such studies do not adhere to the strict and systematic confines of scientific research (Gioia et al., 2013).

A systematic data analysis was conducted to counter this scepticism, similar to the process illustrated in Figure 3 with the final coding and thematic analysis from this study illustrated in Figure 4. This systematic analysis resulted in an initial evaluation of the data, utilisation of the participants' terms and codes (1st order), followed by an evaluation utilising the researcher's concepts, themes, and dimensions (2nd order) (Gioia et al., 2013). This dual analysis reporting from the author's perspectives and the participants provided the link between the data collection and the research problem (Gioia et al., 2013).

4.10. Quality assurance

A key quality concern regarding the quality of data is the unpredictability, the volume of information, and the researcher's risk of being viewed as a "knowledgeable agent" (Gioia et al., 2013) in the collection of data. These concerns meant that there is an increased tendency of confirmation bias during the interview process (Gioia et al., 2013). This study ensured quality assurance by maintaining a balance between having an informed and uninformed understanding of the key concepts in the literature.

4.10.1. Credibility

As a counter to the bias that may be prevalent in the data collection, the

triangulation (Shah & Corley, 2006) of the participants' responses concerning industry data or verifiable sources was conducted to overcome the trustworthiness and validity of research data and the findings thereof (Golafshani, 2003). The interviews included two established industry experts that were involved in mentoring and training nascent entrepreneurs. These two experts provided excellent contrasting views given their diverse backgrounds with one expert a serial entrepreneur from America directing a local innovation incubator hub with the second expert a long established mentor servicing mainly underprivileged entrepreneurs and SMMES'.

4.10.2. Transferability and confirmability

Another mechanism adopted to enhance the validity, trustworthiness was the interview process's documentation in describing the conclusions, and interpretations with the inclusion of the participants' direct quotes in the research findings of the report illustrating and providing justification for the emerging themes (Cope, 2014). The meticulous recording of data in at least two media platforms, cell phone and voice recording media, as well as verbatim transcription of the interviews ensured confirmability of the data obtained during the interview process (Shah & Corley, 2006).

To reduce the ambiguities and uncertainties in determining what to write and how to report on the significant volume of data from this study, and ensure qualitative rigour in the data collection process a clearly defined interview recording and collection protocol was adopted for all interviews. (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). The author captured all interview notes either online or on handwritten notes during the interview process or were utilised during the data analysis and reporting phase for refreshing and reconfirmation of the data collected. The minor technical difficulties with the use of cell recordings resulted in an iterative process to ensure that the transcriptions were reflective of the conversations with the participants.

4.10.3. Dependability or reliability

Dependability and reliability can be seen in qualitative research as the trustworthiness of the processes and data produced (Shah & Corley, 2006).

The sample selection to include only entrepreneurs that had started at least one business venture that was older than three years as well as the maintenance of the participants' confidentiality ensured the reliability of the data (Shah & Corley, 2006).

4.11. Ethical considerations

The factors taken into account in this study considered ethical dynamics by obtaining the participants' informed consent and ensuring confidentiality before conducting the interviews. Due to the study being conducted through a semi-structured interview process, the aspect of complete anonymity was not applicable. Interviewees were provided with a brief outline of the research study and asked to sign a consent form before being interviewed. All personal data will be kept strictly confidential, and any quotations from interviews will be anonymised, for example, Participant 1 or 2 (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, pg. 82), in the final report. The research has been approved by the GIBS ethical committee and the letter of approval is included in Appendix E.

4.12. Limitations

Given that this research approach involved the storytelling of entrepreneurs at a specific point in time, this approach was widely viewed as a limitation by scholars (Beigi et al., 2019). Therefore, the ability to detect changes in a research area was constrained by this approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 129).

The qualitative study included a semi-structured method in the interview process. The researcher's inexperience in conducting semi-structured interviews represented a limitation for this study, given the risk that interviewees would relay information serving their own agenda (Gioia et al., 2013).

The sample population of entrepreneurs was drawn from a diverse social background; nevertheless, the participants' learning behaviours may not be representative of all other categories of entrepreneurs. A narrowed focus on the entrepreneurship process's opportunity development phase may not consider the influences of the learnings from the other stages of the

entrepreneurial process, i.e., venture idea, evaluation, and exploitation, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The geographical location of entrepreneurs interviewed are based in South Africa; therefore the learning behaviours was framed by the social and economic characteristics that they encountered and may not be transferrable to entrepreneurs to other geographical locations.

Chapter 5. Results

5.1. Introduction

The report's findings were centred on an inductive model obtained through semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs that operated in South Africa. This process involved a prequestionnaire response, which was utilised in obtaining a sense of the entrepreneur's initial motivations for starting their business ventures; their educational background; the rationale for positioning their business ventures location; and timing such ventures; as well as obtaining a sense of the level of support sought during the early phase of their development. Appendix A summarises these responses and was used as a reference point for categorising the themes that emerged from the interview process.

The formal interview process was conducted to discuss the social learning experiences triggered during the opportunity development phase, and was followed by a discussion to draw out the perceptions of the social learning behaviour on the barriers and promoters that their business ventures experienced during the opportunity development phase. The findings section's central focus was positioned to highlight the central themes that emerged from these discussions with the entrepreneurs. The theme focus extended towards how their community presence influenced their business venture progression, their learning behaviour receptiveness, the entrepreneurial value creation, including the inhibitors and promoters from their social learnings on their entrepreneurial ventures and the impact on their ability to deal with the development of a new opportunity. Table 3 depicts these themes and constructs that emerged, and Figure 4 illustrates the observed relationships comprising the coping mechanism model that emerged from these discussions.

The discussion of the results is depicted principally around the themes that emerged from the data analysis as discussed under this section in 5.3 to 5.5 and a synthetisation of the results per research question as discussed under section 5.6 and 5.7. This thematic approach was adopted to provide a synthetisation of the rich data extracted in a clear and concise manner and to provide a roadmap towards the discussion of the research results in Chapter

6.

5.2. Description of participants and context

5.2.1. Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the findings from the interviews conducted with 14 participants with diverse social backgrounds and engaged in the entrepreneurial ecosystem with a specific focus on the opportunity development phase. There were varying motivations provided by the 14 participants regarding their pursuit of and development of their business ventures. The 14 participants consisted of two distinct categories. The first category included 12 entrepreneurs that had created and established at least one business venture. The second category included two mentors and managers of entrepreneurial learning institutions. The research findings have principally been presented according to the themes derived from the analysis and synthesis of literature review reported in Chapter 2 and 3. The alignment to the research questions and then to the interview protocol schedule was reported according to this thematic literature review as well to ensure consistency and congruency.

5.2.2. Description and details of participants

A total 14 participants were interviewed with the requirement that they had at least developed one business venture that was older than three years in existence and a confirmation of the motivation for pursuing the business venture. The motivation posed to the participants was whether the ventures pursued were based on an opportunity observed or based on a necessity. The results are discussed further in 5.2.5.1. The total participants included two industry experts who were managers of entrepreneurial business incubators currently engaged in teaching and mentoring nascent entrepreneurs.

The participants were selected on a judgemental sampling process combined with an adopted snowball sampling process. The participants were selected from the researchers existing networks, which included entrepreneurs, business incubators and academics. The selection criteria for the participants was premised on their motivation for pursuing their business venture, either

due to the pursuit of an opportunity or a necessity, given that this study is about opportunity development. All participants except three confirmed that the pursuit of the business venture was due to an opportunity observed in the market. Of the three participants, participant 4 confirmed that it was due to the pursuit of both an opportunity and a necessity while participants 8 and 12 confirmed that it was due to neither. All participants confirmed that they had developed a business that was at least 3 years old which is a key differentiator in terms of the definition of the nascent phase of entrepreneurs (GEMS, 2020).

All participants, except one, indicated that profit was a necessary part of the business venture irrespective of the purpose of their venture being either one of profit or non-profit. The diversified backgrounds ranged between social entrepreneurs, serial entrepreneurs, independence seekers, business, knowledge based entrepreneurs and business incubator entrepreneurs and mentors with experience ranging from 3.8 to 22 years. The interview process revealed themes based on the frequency of key words mentioned per participant. The synthetisation of themes per participant, as illustrated in Figure 4 below, provided much insight into the motivation and drivers behind the participants' perceptions about the influences of their social learnings during the opportunity development during the assessment of the impact of learning transformation and coping mechanism framework in 5.8.3.

| Participant | KEY GUIDEING PRINCIPLES | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| P 1 | | | | community venture |
| P2 | business | | entrepreneur | |
| P3 | business | | | |
| P4 | business | people | development | |
| P5 | business | people | | |
| P6 | business | people | | money |
| P7 | business | | opportunity | |
| P8 | business | | | learning |
| P9 | business | people | | support |
| P10 | | people | development entrepreneur | |
| P11 | business | | development opportunity | |
| P12 | business | | | learning vision |
| P13 | business | people | | support social |
| P14 | business | | | behaviour incubator |

Figure 4: Mapping of key words per participant

A prequestionnaire was administered to all participants to obtain a sense of their motivation for pursuing their entrepreneurial ventures, their educational background and the level of support or training that they received particularly during this phase, if sought at all. This prequestionnaire is reflected in Appendix B with the analysis of the participant's details and responses to these questions summarised in Appendix C. The information from this questionnaire was used in the analysis of the profiling of participants in comparison to their responses in the development of the coping mechanism framework in Chapter 5.

As the interview process progressed, the development of new codes was established and tracked to assess the development of the new codes' saturation rate. It was observed, that after nine interviews, the development of new codes had declined significantly as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

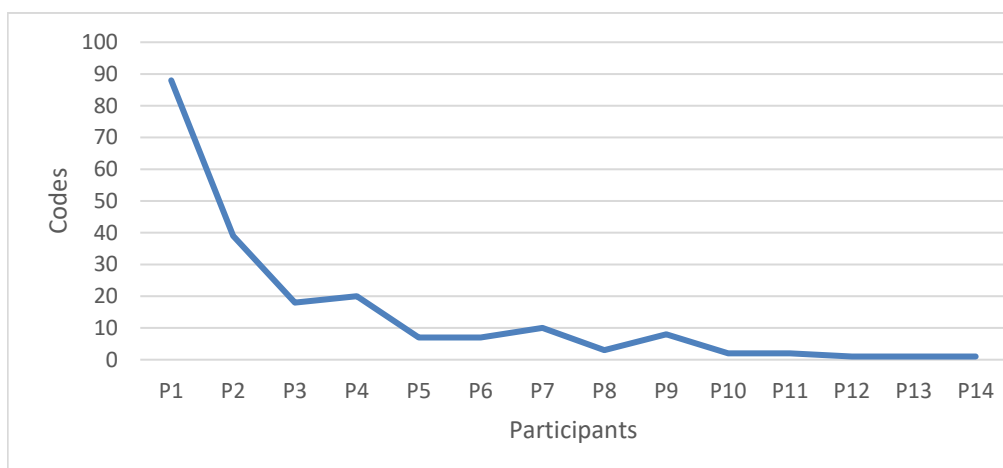


Figure: 5: Illustration of real codes saturation rate per participant interviewed

5.2.3. Details of the interviews and transcriptions

Interview protocols

The interview process was conducted over a period of approximately seven weeks. The duration of the interviews were on average 90 minutes, with the maximum time being 100 minutes and the shortest 35 minutes. All interviews were recorded on an audio device via an online social media platform due to

the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. The online medium required clarifications for participants due to connectivity issues during the interview process which accounted for the extended interview process for a few participants.

Transcription of interviews

All fourteen interviews were submitted to a professional transcriber for transcription. Subsequent to the transcription process, a comprehensive review and audit of all transcripts was conducted, with revisions being effected where it was required. According to the interview protocol communication plan and prior to the commencement of the data analysis process, revisions were made to the transcripts for all relevant names of participants, sensitive business and personal information to be anonymised.

These revisions were the only key areas of amendment, except for minor cohesion revisions to the transcriptions. The transcripts were then loaded into the data analysis tool, Atlas Ti.

A majority of the participants adhered to the interview protocol. One area that required clarification was the term social learning, a concept introduced in the pre-interview protocol. Once this broad understanding was re-presented to the participants, a majority were able to engage with ease in this area and provide rich data. Participants 1 and 2 displayed boundless enthusiasm for this particular research topic and provided the foundation for a majority of the codes and categories development in the process.

Certain amendments to the interview schedule were effected to ensure better data extraction without diverging from the research questions.

Data analysis

The data analysis was performed with the theoretical framework adapted for this study, which incorporates the tenements of social learning theory, learning behaviour, and opportunity development, illustrated in Figure 3. The coding categories and sub-categories were developed through a combination of the interpretation of the real codes extracted from the interview process and the

theoretical framework developed for this study (Saldaña, 2009).

5.2.4. The development of the themes and constructs

This study adopted the qualitative approach to uncover the data directly from the participants to explain the results. The significant volume of data collated provided direct support of the results for the purpose of research and resulted in the rich extraction of knowledge (Shah & Corley, 2006). Due to the diverse nature of the participants' social learnings in the entrepreneurial journey, considerable volumes and variations of codes were developed to describe the participants' varied learning experiences. On the other hand, similarities were observed in the participants' learning experiences, which often resulted in the overlapping of constructs.

The analysis of the interviews conducted resulted in the extraction and development of 205 codes or constructs as indicated in Appendix E

This study adopted a twofold strategy in terms of the code extraction, one of code identification and the final one that of grouping in key code groups (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The first was the identification and then categorisation of all similar phenomenon, for example emotional readiness. The next step conducted was the reading of the transcripts and the highlighting of the text that appears to align to the phenomenon ring-fenced. The next step in the analysis process involved the coding of all highlighted using a set of predetermined group codes developed from the conceptual framework that were extracted from the literature review. Figure 1 displays the list of codes created per main code group category.

This provided the research study with a significant amount of data and contributed towards thick descriptions (Shah & Corley, 2006). The next step in the data analysis involved a synthetisation of the data through the categorisation process, which resulted in 59 sub-categories relating to the original real data, as illustrated in Appendix E. The next process of the data analysis required further synthetisation of the sub-categories into the main categories developed in terms of the theoretical framework as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

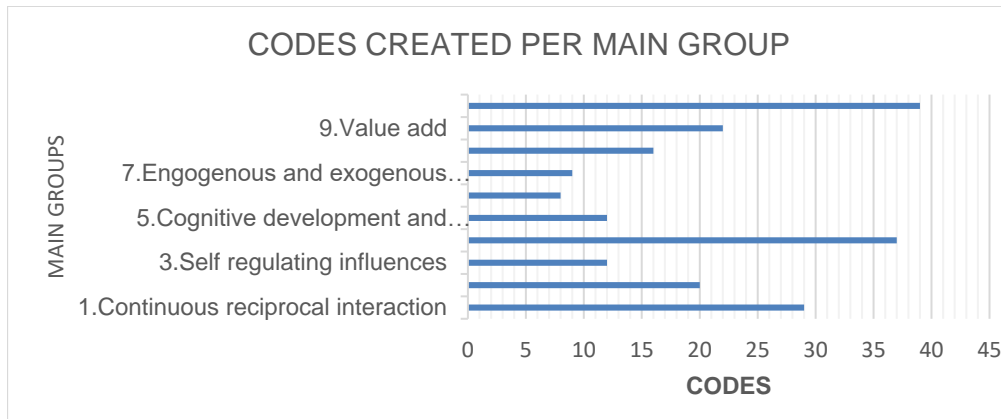


Figure 6: Top individual codes per emergent theoretical framework theme categories

The last step in the data analysis was the final synthetisation of the categories into three broad themes that emerged from the analysis, which was performed in two steps. The first step involved analysing the top real codes as illustrated in Figure 7 below. The naming convention of the themes were premised on the code category names. The first of which was where the first coding emerged per the frequency counts tracked for the theoretical framework constructs and then finally, the number of mentions in total per emergent theme. The structured and methodical coding process adopted enabled the elucidation of constructs and themes towards particular groups of learning experiences of the entrepreneurs.

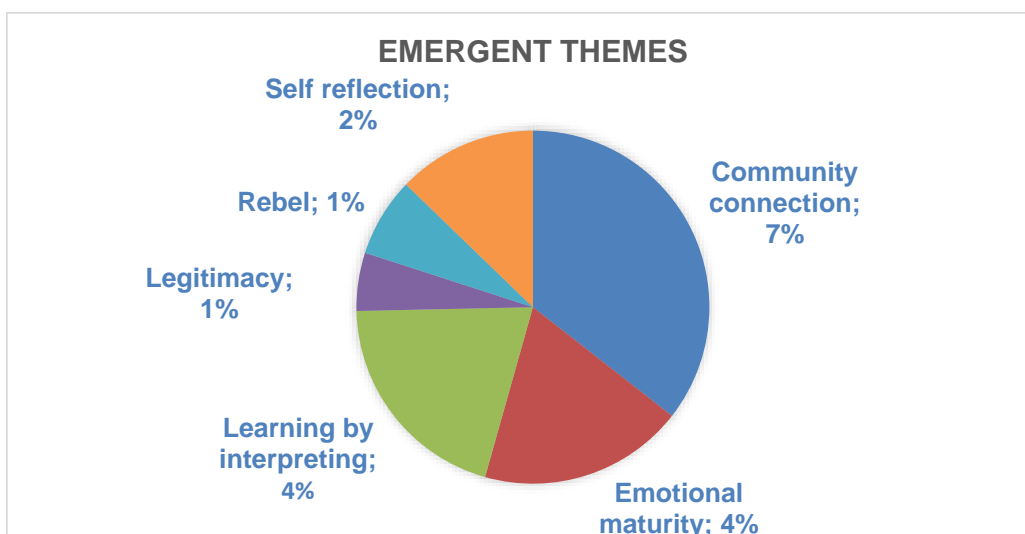


Figure 7: Top individual codes per emergent theme category

The industry experts were coded in a separate group to synthesise the results and provided a triangulation analysis of the data observed from the interview process as referred to in Chapter 4.

5.2.5. Use of the term social learning behaviour and opportunity development

This study sought to first frame the key constructs, opportunity development, and social learning behaviour as illustrated in Figure 6.

Opportunity development

A majority of the participants easily subscribed to the concept that the pursuit of their business ventures was due to opportunities identified albeit due to varying motivations. Three participants highlighted apparent ambiguity in the pursuit of their business ventures and expressed a strong view that the pursuit was either a dual purpose, with one that pursued a clear opportunity or that of a necessity.

Participant 4 indicated that the term opportunity development assumes that there has been a sequential set of steps performed to reach that decision. The participant however indicated that at times it might be due to a fortuitous event that leads to that opportunity.

...opportunity just pops up or quite literally drops on your lap and you take it forward. (4.2)

Participant 1 indicated that the opportunity was borne from engagement with the community first with a view to the external and internal considerations of the environment. The participant indicated that the opportunity was thereafter developed with the co-sharing of information and providing new possibilities to the community.

...the opportunities then came from the discussions and everything, and communities were sharing what they see as possible, and how the world has changed, because this is what used to happen before and now they

cannot access this anymore. (1.15)

Participants 8 and 12 were unequivocal in highlighting that their entrepreneurial motivation pursuit was founded on a vision that they desired to take to a market of their choice, which was principally based on the receptiveness to their vision. Interestingly, these two participants positioned their business proposition on their intellectual property, which they wished to sell to their chosen markets, and may reflect an unyielding attachment to their business vision.

...where you start with a vision of something that you want to produce in the world and then you make it happen. Therefore, that is different from a business opportunity or a necessity. (12.1)

Social learning behaviours

Given the diverse backgrounds of the entrepreneurs interviewed as well as their embeddedness within the communities that they served, the concept of social learning behaviours, previously framed in the pre-interview introduction, required a reminder for a few participants. Refreshing the participants on the concept of social learning behaviours, without unduly clouding their opinions, was in itself a reflection of the prevailing attitudes of the level of awareness of the influence social learning during opportunity development. The contrasting attitudes of the influence of social learning behaviours during the opportunity development phase is reported in detail in the sections that follow in this chapter.

5.3. Results: Theme 1 – Communal reciprocity

5.3.1. Definition of social learning behaviours

Participants were asked about their understanding of what the term *social learning behaviours* meant to them in order to obtain a sense of the participants understanding of the concept in the context of an entrepreneur's journey. This question is included Appendix B, question 1.1. The responses to this question provided insight into the participant's perceptions about the social learning behaviour concept.

All participants except one positively endorsed the view that the personal influence on their entrepreneurial journey had principally been from their interactions with their family, peers, colleagues, surrounding environment and society. Participants indicated that strong family and societal support were key encouragement factors towards their wit in pursuing their missions.

...if you have a community that picks you back up then that does help. (9:50)

The strong nucleus supported represented the foundation of the participant's social learning behaviours patterns that informed their entrepreneurial journey. This foundation represented an entrenchment of such learnings within the social consciousness of the participants in their entrepreneurial journey.

...certain behaviours that I learnt, and that sort of stuck with me throughout the day, throughout the years. (P2:34)

Participant 12 had a particularly strong view in terms of the understanding of social learning behaviours. The view expressed was that these behaviours, related to relationships that emerged through a symbiotic engagement, between the various team members with a view towards a collective response from the creation of effective network of relationships.

I do not think the social learning behaviour – I think of how everybody in the team is expressing themselves and learning together, and building effective relationships, and having a successful outcome. (12:68)

5.3.2. Communal engagement

The theme was constructed from the participant's responses of their understanding of social learning behaviour and the community actors that influenced their pursuit and development of opportunities. The themes of community receptiveness and relationship building were revealed to be key inhibiting and promoting factors of social learning behaviours. The summary of the responses per participant is illustrated in Figure 8 below with a follow-up discussion on the key areas.

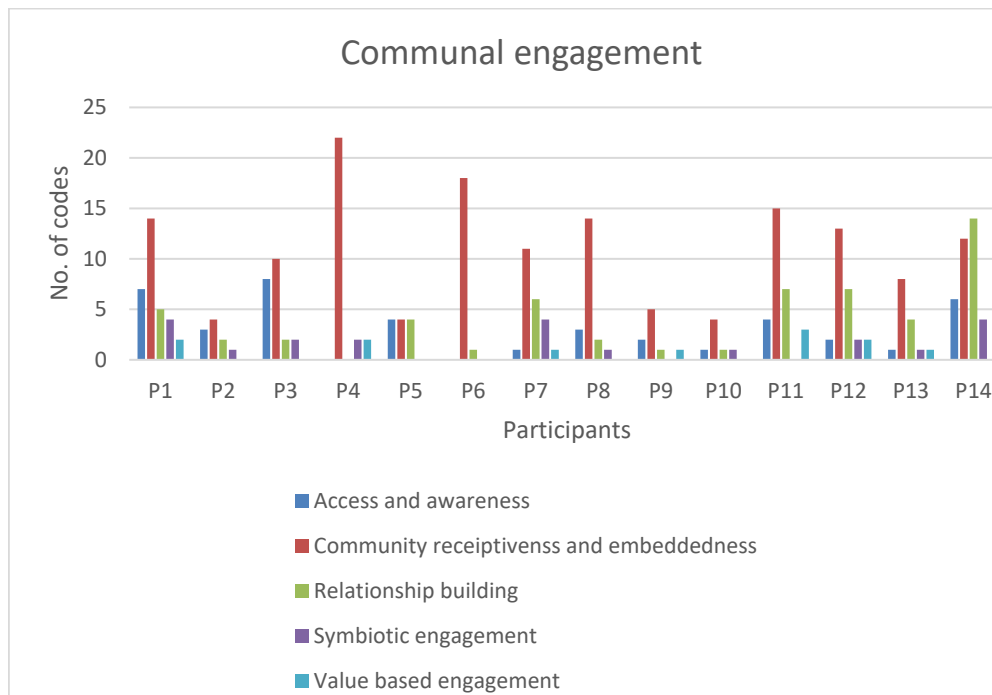


Figure 8: Illustration of codes created per participant for the theme communal engagement

5.3.2.1. Access and awareness

All except one participant indicated that the recognition of access to the external markets was a key determinant to their future success. The participants indicated that they recognised the value of access to networks, which provided them with resources not ordinarily reached on their own and provided them with an impetus to engage in such relationships.

It was also access to connections and networks. I think that is important, because access to markets begins with getting out of your comfort zone and being in a place where you can actually connect with others. Because people can easily open doors for you if they can see that there is a connection between us, we can work together. So that was one of the first things that I would say we received, a form of help or support. (2.84)

The majority of the participants indicated that the ability to activate their access to markets provided them with the impetus and motivation to utilise their access connections and networks for the creation of impact in the communities that they served.

What am I doing with all these access, all these networks that I've created, all these platforms that I'm privileged to be part of? How am I using those things effectively to create impact in communities? (1:12)

5.3.2.2. Community receptiveness and embeddedness

Community receptiveness

Affirmed respect for community

A majority of the participants displayed a deep and abiding respect for the community that they served. Participants 1, 4, 7 and 11 reflected on their apparent privileged backgrounds with humility and frankness. The participants indicated that this respect was borne from their acknowledgement that their personal privileges were just that, privileges for themselves and especially not viewed in the same light by the community.

...just because I come and I've got a Master's and I'm trying to do my Ph.D. it doesn't mean that my intellect or the knowledge I have is superior to that of chiefs and headmen, and all these people in rural communities. (1:57)

Participant 6 indicated that their privileged status was not used to degrade the local community but rather it was an opportunity to learn more from the community as opposed to imposing their ideas on them. The theme of learning more from their communities was extremely prevalent with the participants indicating that building trust and respect was a cornerstone to improving their learning experiences and reciprocal engagement with the community.

I learnt about what was happening in the townships, and the realities of people's lives, and got awoken to wow, the world was bigger than my little house and my little school. (6.33)

Participant 4 went as far as indicating that it was more what the community could teach them as opposed to them teaching the community.

I realise that it's not about me going to teach people entrepreneurship in rural areas, it's about me going to find out what people are doing already and compete for space and relevance in their lives based on what you know. (4.26)

Participant 13 the medical research innovator, wholly supported the majority participants' views, in that the entrepreneur's ability to listen to the community as opposed to enforcing their views on the community was a more effective way of engagement.

...most of the time we want to enforce our own experience and our own thinking, and our own knowledge of certain things and insist on. Where sometimes there is just other ways to do it if you are willing to listen differently or see differently. (13.36)

Transparent and authentic engagement

The view expressed by the majority of the participants revealed that honest, open, understanding and transparent engagement was a key determinant in their engagement with the community.

...being in a system where everyone can see what everyone is doing. (6.22)

So if you're engaging a community you're understanding. (8.67)

Participant 8 referred to this honest engagement as one that recognises the community as human beings and a realisation of the impact of decisions from which an evolution of learning is realised.

...looking at any human being that is on the other side of anything that has some sort of impact in terms of what you do and how you do it, and how you are learning and evolving through those connections. (8.22)

Participant 13, the business incubator mentor (industry expert) indicated that an entrepreneur's accommodating background might have an influence on their ability to recognise and then empathetically respond to a communities need.

...it is about if you are raised to regard others, and if you are raised to know that there are situations and circumstances and perspectives outside your own, you are able to see other people without necessarily casting your own lived experience or aspersions or whatever on them. So with that then you're able to either be intuitively guided and led, or just empathetically guided and led around how you engage, how you approach. (13.30)

Receptive strategic collaborations

At least half of the participants indicated that the strategic selection of partners early on in their career or non-selection was a key success determinant in the early phase of opportunity development. Participants indicated that they had to convince partners to collaborate with them on a level playing field that suits their circumstances. In addition to this initiative, the participants further revealed that this exercise was very often an onerous process but that their outreach towards the community at various points of entry contributed to them achieving scale in their business faster.

I gave before I asked for anything. In addition, when they saw the value and when they saw that their member base were really excited to attend the free workshops and they got really good reviews after it, that was the journey that led to then be able to do a paid program thereafter. So I invested a lot upfront to really just show who I am, but also to learn in the process as well, because I'd never run workshops before. (8.45)

If you do not put yourself in different circles then you might not learn some of the things that you learn, like entrepreneurship or life skills, or whatever it is. (9.32)

Community embeddedness

The role of a close embeddedness by an entrepreneur within a community received unanimous positive feedback from all participants. The level of importance and elevation of this area was considered as critical towards the development of the opportunity or vision. The participants indicated that allowing that close interaction facilitated an open channel with the community.

...the nicest thing about my journey with entrepreneurship I have allowed myself to become part of communities of entrepreneurs. (11.30)

A majority of the participants indicated that direct communication with the community required an almost fervent pursuit of seeking opportunities while ingratiating themselves with the local communities.

...you know like a leech that sticks onto a plant, the SMME's have to be like leeches to us, in other words, seek our guidance, keep constant communication, seek out opportunities, follow the opportunities, follow the leads, not sitting back, they have to be proactive. (14.18)

The participants indicated that the ability to explain and translate ideas with the community in an understandable manner resulted in an enhanced level of communication and connection that resulted in a deepening of the participants' embeddedness in the consciousness of the community.

...we have to be able to explain certain concepts in a way that people who are in the audience can relate to. In addition, in order for that to happen you have to have some level of embeddedness yourself in their own community and in their own environment, and in their own reality. (4.73)

There was overwhelming affirmation by all participants on the importance of embedding within a community and the importance of feedback relating to their successful integration into the community in the pursuit of their goals.

Therefore, when you build a product and running pilots it is easy for you to get feedback quite quickly, for you to iterate your product or either to actually kill your product as early. (11.51)

So if you're engaging a community you're understanding. (8.67)

...you can map out what it is that you want and then that's going to allow me to say, okay then, let's think of ideas of the things that we could do. So in no ways then do you think I know everything, I've got an idea, let me go and impose my idea into these people, they don't know anything. (1.58)

Despite participant 3's frank acknowledgement that engaging with the community outside their social circle was an unaccustomed area, participant 3 indicated that the importance of being able to engage and connect with the community was a critical success factor for the future of the business venture. To illustrate this point participant 3 indicated that the recent hiring of an employee that had demonstrated the ability to connect with the community provided an additional dimension to their business growth.

...he's got this amazing ability to connect with people from a different demographic that unfortunately I – I mean we were never taught and know how to do that, and he can do it. (3.47)

Participant 12 was boisterous in support of the Theory of U, a theory that escalates the prominence of listening to what is happening and the entrepreneur's response to these indicators in the community. The adoption of this theory in every facet of the entrepreneurial journey was central to participant's vision development.

Theory U and you think about listening to what wants to happen, and the bottom of the U, which is the presencing state, and in the presencing state you are listening to what is calling you forward from the future. (12.69)

5.3.2.3. Relationship building

A majority of participants indicated that forging authentic and real connections with the community was a fundamental to their business ventures during their early years. Participant 8 indicated that the benefit of building such relationships with trust resulted in further opportunities being extended to them. This links with the points raised in 5.3.2.2.

Therefore, these people had become friends, they are out there in the marketplace, and they trust you and they know, and they will be able to then recommend and open doors for you. (8.44)

...without quality relationships I do not think you can have a successful project. Therefore, it is a fundamental thing that influences me throughout any project, from the beginning to the end. (12.21)

The value of being able to use their networks was evident in participant 1's response. The central premise of bridging the networks was the exchange of information to the benefit of both parties.

I wanted something that would sort of bridge that gap that because I had so many networks I wanted to bring those networks and to see how I can link rural communities to those networks that we're able to just exchange and then see how we can help each other. (1.33)

Participants 1, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 14 were passionate on the co-sharing of knowledge. Interestingly, these responses were from participants that had a deep connection with their community and therefore placed a higher premium on making those connections.

...when we started our business our key focus was that we build the product, we co-develop it with the customer. (11.50)

I would go to schools the teachers would ask me, would I allow them to sit in the classes with their own laptops and teach them as well. So then you would find students sitting with teachers learning while I'm teaching the things to them together. (1.73)

Participants indicated that these relationships created a clear pathway during their early years to present, with their community and customers validations and product and service development.

...if you can find those relationships where you are giving value that they are looking for, they will definitely open the door and say come in and deliver. In addition, that is what I did in the early stages. (8.73)

...you keep in touch with the customer, you have a process of continuous validation of the customer needs. (7.15)

So through our interaction with the world we learn more about ourselves, we learn more about what's important to us, we learn more about how to bring our vision effectively into the world. (12.31)

Participants 1 and 2 indicated that they first received their break into entrepreneurship through entering local and global competitions which provided them with life-long enduring relationships and enabled their development and growth.

That is life-long support, because we are still in touch, we still talk and we still empower each other in many ways. Therefore, I would say that has helped me a lot. (2.47)

5.3.2.4. Symbiotic engagement

Participants 1, 3, 4,7,13 and 14 indicated that the co-sharing of information, referred to in 5.3.2.4, reinforced the buy-in of key stakeholders and the community and as such, opened a path of easier access to their target market. The participants indicated that the relationships built resulted in easier acceptance by the community.

I needed them to sort of give me buy-in that they don't shut me out of the schools. (1.89)

...this is not just my idea but I think let a group of people who may be prepared to buy into this concept and that's what validates the whole opportunity into something more tangible. That was the process we used. (7.9)

5.3.2.5. Value based engagement

Participants 1, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13, the community social entrepreneur, the business incubator entrepreneur, the digital security entrepreneur, the medical researcher innovator, the visionary social entrepreneur and the socially-

conscious investment property investor, respectively, indicated that one of their key determinants in engaging with the community was principally decided by the alignment with their value beliefs. All participants displayed a strong sense of understanding and perception of what their core beliefs were and this contributed towards their unequivocal responses.

I thought that I would not do it because it clashed with my values, I would not even understand it at all. Therefore, it was an opportunity that was there, the market was there but it clashed with my values and what I truly believe in. (11.14)

Participant 4 echoed a similar attachment to the values belief system when they reflected on a circumstance whereby a community member requested an action that went against their beliefs. Participant 4 further indicated that their intuition drove the disengagement from the venture proposed. The concept of intuition links to the concept of agility referred to in 5.3.3.1.

We found out what was happening later on, but we also knew what was not being said. (4.74)

5.3.3. Mind-set capabilities

This theme was constructed from the participant's responses to their understanding of social learning behaviour and the community actors that influence their pursuit and development of opportunities. The combined themes of emotional fortitude and rebelliousness were revealed as key social learning behaviours. The theme of agility was more relevant for participants 3, 7, 11 and 13 given their propensity to focus on the growth of their business ventures in their early years. The summary of the responses per participant is illustrated in Figure 9 below with a following discussion on the key areas.

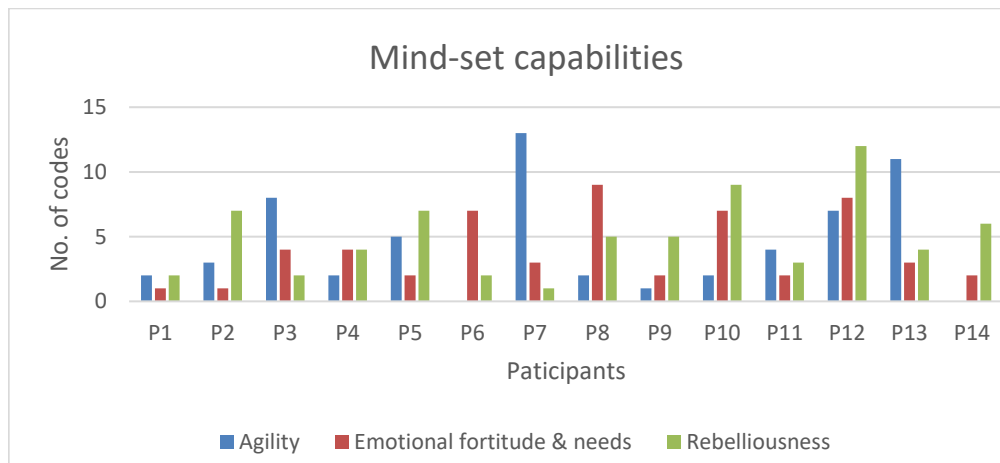


Figure 9: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme mind-set capabilities

5.3.3.1. Agility

Participants 3, 7 and 12 indicated that the ability to use their intuition, which was developed over a period of time, contributed towards a better understanding of what was required in pursuing and developing an opportunity and therefore was a key determinant of their early success.

Therefore, you know one develops that kind of an intuition over a period of time with practise. In addition, I think that helps us all to understand which is a better balance sheet, which is a patient that needs more attention, which is an entrepreneur who needs more support, or which is an entrepreneur, which should be connected to the right opportunity. (7.87)

Participant 12 went further and indicated that the entrepreneur's presence in an environment prompts intuition and assists the entrepreneur in connecting to the right opportunity.

...state of presencing that we can access our intuition. (12.24)

Participant 7 interestingly indicated that the time pressures of the world has prompted a reduction in the planning time for strategic decision making to the extent that the approach to strategy is now one that of operations on a daily basis to survive.

I think because of the rapid speed of change that we have experienced in the last few weeks or months we are taking nothing for granted, and our approach for strategy is operations now. So we take one day at a time, we do not make big plans and anything like that, we just live for the day and our objective is very simple, survive. (7.36)

Participants 3, 5,7,11 and 13 echoed this recurring theme of survival instinct and time pressures. The participants indicated that the time length to make decisions is shortened and hence, constrained their ability to make timeous decisions.

I think that is the most critical thing that when you are an entrepreneur you cannot stop thinking, you do not have the time to actually sit down and think. Think of what is this, what is your next move. Yes, you can do it but you need absolute time to sit down and actually do it. (5.38)

Participants 2,3 and 13 indicated that to accommodate the fluid and changing environment they were able to pivot their business proposition to ensure value was continuously added to their business and ensure its continued success.

Bearing in mind that some ideas might be short-lived, but that is fine, you made a bit of money in those three to six months, and that is the thing, you need to be flexible when you have a business. Therefore, value adding is not about having one idea and sticking right through to it. (2.21)

Participants indicated that the key to this agile mindset was being able to pivot and change from their previously adopted business processes faster than the market in order to ensure the sustainability and success of their business.

...that momentum is what maintains sustainability. So if you keep having these breaks in momentum and you are not able to keep a certain pace because of the speed that decisions are made and, then things break. (13.65)

Interestingly participant 10 indicated that the simple re-location by an entrepreneur to a more conducive environment which supported a growth

mindset could have a positive impact. The participant indicated that the learning behaviour must support the change in approach to nurture the entrepreneurial mindset.

...by moving to a place that very much raises growth mind-set by reading the books, by doing your own mental work you can change your mindset. (10.61)

5.3.3.2. Emotional fortitude and needs

Participant 4, indicated that the focus of following the entrepreneurial path had transitioned from initially profit to currently, one of purpose. The participants indicated that this change was made with consideration of the impact on the social environment and resulted in a positioning of their business ventures.

My focus now is saying, what difference can I make in other people's lives? What contribution can I make in the development of other people? And I think when that happens actually you shift away from the monetary satisfaction and you focus more on less tangible, more meaningful

Contrary to the view expressed by participant 4, participants 1, 5 and 10 had a positive view of profit-making in that they saw it as an opportunity to leverage, what their local community considered wealth, to their advantage and therefore did not see this as a barrier to their success.

I was not shy to say, I have money, let's use it to buy this and this that is going to help us into our venture. (1.34)

For Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur, business incubator director, and participant 3, their family's financial support provided them with the foundation and confidence to propel their future ventures.

...when my second start-up failed in San Francisco I was still a banker before that, my dad was a doctor, like I was not going to sleep on the street, so I knew I'd be all right. (10.44)

Participant 3's indicated that following the path of entrepreneurship appealed to the emotional needs that was desired, which was principally gaining independence. This view was echoed by a majority of the participants.

So there were certain personal wants and needs that we wanted to achieve.
(3.17)

The majority of the participants indicated that having the mental and emotional fortitude was critical to their success and surprisingly saw it as an opportunity and not as a failure contrary to the societal perceptions referred to in 5.3.5.3. The participants unanimously indicated that recognising this as a vulnerable area was central to their emotional wellbeing as a nascent entrepreneur.

...good entrepreneurs when they are challenged, when they see adversity they really look at it as opportunity, they really are going to find a way to make it work. I think that is incredibly important. (10.69)

...if you are not adaptable, agile, and resilient, you are going to break. (8.75)

Participants 10 and 14, the industry experts, and mentors to entrepreneurs supported the majority participants' views, indicating that having grit and mental fortitude was central to an entrepreneur persevering in their early years, primarily due to societal dissuading perceptions. The participants indicated that applying a dogged attitude, making sacrifices and innovating were critical characteristics.

People are going to tell you are crazy. Like my first start-up in New York, everyone told me I was crazy, and it was the most successful one in my career probably. So do you have that grit? Do you have that perseverance to say, you know what, I am going to pursue this thing and I am going to get it done. (10.71)

...from my experience, they are going to battle. It is going to be a tough journey out there; you have to have resilience like you have never had before. You have to be like a leech, you have to make sacrifices, you have to pivot, you have to network more, you have to market more, you have to

be innovative, and you have to be creative. (14.45)

5.3.3.3. Rebelliousness

The unanimous and passionate responses by all participants indicated their persistence in the face of immense societal pressures. This highlighted a strong desire to stay their chosen course with complete dedication, passion and commitment unreservedly.

So if you look at the characteristic of an entrepreneur, entrepreneur is different from anybody else, and that is why they say that it is not for everyone, because as an entrepreneur there is a certain DNA about you that is different. However, it is a DNA that is so important for the current setting in our society in that it almost guarantees success. Not immediately, but eventually. (2.90)

Participants 2, 5, 10 and 14 indicated that their desire to rebel against societal norms was driven by their passion, energy, perseverance and pride in what they were planning to achieve.

It is because of my drives and my passion, and my rebelliousness. (2.95)

...you need to have the energy to keep going even when it's bad you need to have that drive to keep going on. (5.21)

...then you have to persevere, you have to be able to be determined on that path. (10.20)

I like to prove people wrong, I like to find ways to make it happen. (10.59)

...pride and achievement that is another motivating factor. (14.24)

Participants 8 extended the views of participants 2,5,10 and 14 to indicate that being able to rebel against the norms and hustle, and actually experience the challenges of running a business contributed towards a deeper understanding of how the business operated and thus, created an emotional connection to that experience.

You should have hustled, you should have felt the pain, you should have overcome those challenges yourself, and you should be running in that race. You should be saying, okay, this is what is working, this is what is not working, here is how we can – this is how we are keeping it up to date for today. Because if you are not playing the game you and you are teaching somebody else, you could be teaching him or her out-dated methodologies. (8.53)

Participant 3 supported this view with a simple response that, for an entrepreneur to practically learn, you have to get into the ring of entrepreneurship and not stand on the side-lines.

You have to put your money where your mouth is. (3.54)

5.3.4. Self-adjustment

The participants provided divergent responses on the theme of self-correction which is reflective of their diverse social backgrounds. Nevertheless, the themes of purposive connections and inflection points were revealed to be key social learning behaviours. The summary of the responses per participant is illustrated in Figure 10 below with a following discussion on the key areas.

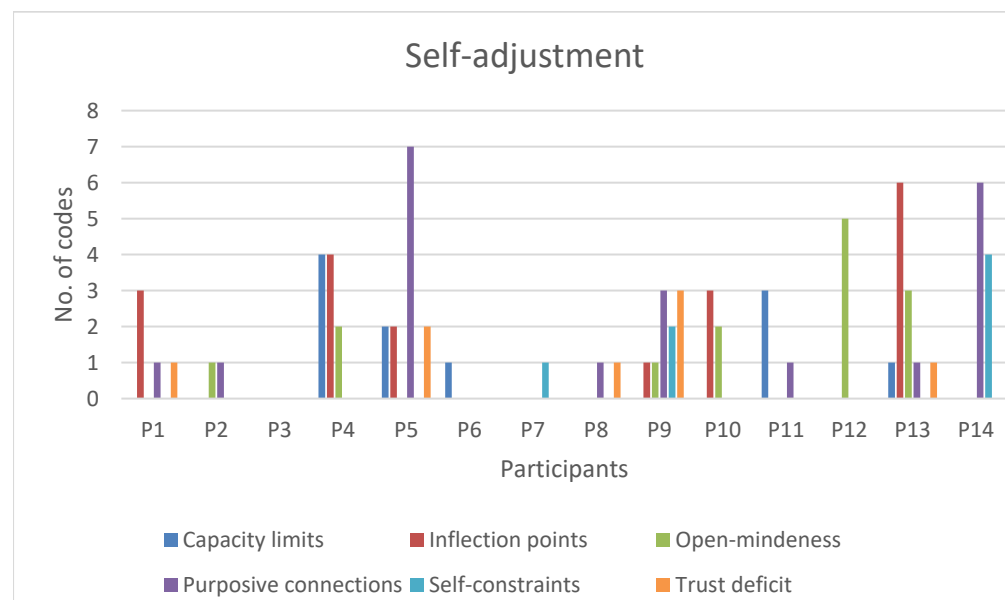


Figure 10: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme self-adjustment

5.3.4.1. Purposive connections activated

A majority of the participants indicated that establishing and activating strategic networks and connections provided entrepreneurs with an access that able to provide support and enhance brand recognition.

...by growing, that following you have already got access to market the first day that you step out, and a lot of people are not realising the potential of social influence and building your brand using the social networks that are available right now. (8.66)

...partner more strategically even with some of the clients that we worked with at that particular time as well. In addition, partner more strategically with even certain people we rely on to deliver some of our own services. (13.37)

5.3.4.2. Open-mindedness and accountability

Participants 2, 4,9,7,10,12 and 13 all indicated that they recognised that creating a business took time and required an uncompromising commitment for their chosen path. Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur business incubator mentor (industry expert) supported the notion that an entrepreneur's early recognition that they are not a finished product sets them on a path to further development and growth.

I think it is just open mindedness, if you realise you are not a finished product and you can develop and you can grow, that does help people to change and make new changes in their life. (10.36)

Participant 7, the business incubator entrepreneur, tampered the views of commitment by indicating that a barrier to nascent entrepreneurs in South Africa was their lack of accountability despite the resources allocated towards their development. Participant 14, the business incubator, industry expert supported the view of participant 7, by indicating that the training provided to entrepreneurs was principally driven to provide discipline that was lacking in nascent entrepreneurs.

Well success comes out of accountability. In South Africa what is happening to a large extent is, you know, entrepreneurs need resources and we throw the resources at them. It is already one-sided approach. There is no accountability from the entrepreneur, and I think that needs to change. (7.56)

5.3.4.3. Recognition of capacity limits

Participant 11, the medical research innovator, had a novel approach towards the development phase. As a high premium was placed on the use of scarce resources, the participant indicated that adopting and then exiting failing opportunities timeously was a key determinant to preserving their key resources and time, considered key commodities during their early years.

...thinking about failing fast, doing things quite quickly and failing fast you do not use up too much time, you do not waste resources and you also do not – it does not affect you that bad. (11.49)

5.3.4.4. Inflection point

Participants 1, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 13 indicated that they had reached a point of no return in their venture, to the extent that even though it was an uncompromising path to follow, it was a choice that they were wholly passionate and committed to. Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur and business incubator director (industry expert), surprisingly called it the worst job in the world.

...just like, you know what, I'm going to try and make this work no matter what happens. No matter happens, I'm just going to keep pushing and pushing. (1.117)

...it is literally the worst job you could ever have, but for a lot of people it is a calling. (10.38)

5.3.4.5. Trust deficit

Participants 1,5,8,9 and 13 indicated that a key barrier to their nascent years and to a certain extent one that continues till today has been the forging of

partnerships. The participants indicated that their reluctance to enter into new untested relationships was due to previous negative experiences or simply a community that has historically not been receptive to their engagement.

Participant 8's response below set the tone for the participants overall response to how they viewed and felt about partnerships.

I will not work with anyone. I tried once, I co-hosted a training workshop with somebody and I did not enjoy the experience and I have never done it again.
(8.47)

5.3.5. Social conditioning

The participant's responses revealed that emotional readiness, self-development and societal perceptions were the key areas of influence with respect to their social conditioning during the opportunity development phase. The participant's responses are illustrated in Figure 11 below with the discussion on the responses following thereafter.

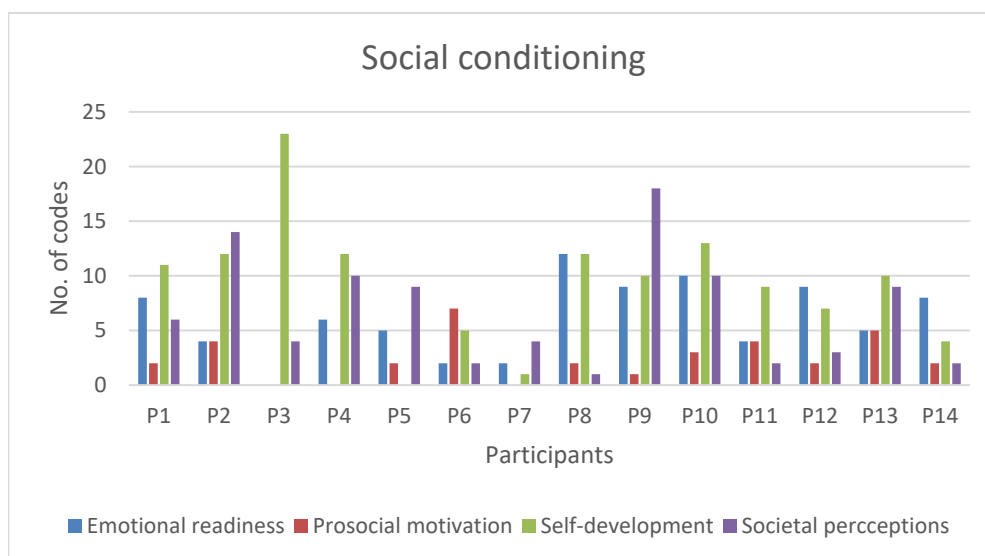


Figure 11: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme social conditioning

5.3.5.1. Emotional readiness

All participants except 3, indicated that being able to emotionally react to an opportunity was influenced by their social backgrounds and indicated that intuitiveness with the community facilitated this emotional reaction. It was not surprising that participant 8, the mentorship coach who was responsible for mentoring entrepreneurs in the corporate sector, indicated that being in an emotionally ready phase represented the most influential area. Participants 1 and 4 that indicated the foundation for their drive to pursue the opportunities was to obtain independence and a firm desire to make a difference in the community, given their underprivileged backgrounds.

...it gives you an immense sense of self-worth, an immense sense of achievement to be able to say; I provided a service that somebody was happy to pay this much for, on my own. That is huge. That is huge. (4.37)

...wanted to offer equal opportunities, I wanted to offer access. I think that's what happened. When you come from a rural community and you witness like a lot of young people who are really brilliant people but they end up nowhere and their lives, like you think, oh, this child has such potential, they can go so far. (1.30)

Emotional impact of failures

Participants 1, 7, 8,9,10 and 14 indicated that the emotional toll of failure was deliberating on a nascent entrepreneur. The participants indicated that the culture of failure was not an accepted practice and as a result, the emotional impact of trying to meet that expectation can potentially derail entrepreneurs with a weaker disposition.

However, as an entrepreneur if you say I failed in an area and then you treat it like a failure then things just break. Then you become emotional about it and emotionally attached it, and you cannot move forward thereafter. (8.61)

Participant 9 indicated that there was no emotional support and understanding, from society during this period nor was failure culturally accepted.

...it is the failure, failure is not something that culturally we accept. You are supposed to go and try a business, fail at it, try again, fail, try again, fail, but when we sit at the braai, we make fun of people who failed at business. You are goaded, whatever you know. (9.67)

Participant 1 went as far as indicating that the first failures they experienced almost completely derailed their future ventures, where the participant contemplated exiting the venture.

...it made me very scared then to take on another opportunity when I knew that, you know what, this one was such a big failure, I ended up having to walk away. If I take on another opportunity then I'm going to fail again. (1.50)

The industry expert's participants 10 and 14 supported this view, having first-hand accounts of the emotional toll that failures can have on entrepreneurs. Participant 14 indicated that the risk of failure was compound by the unrealistic expectations of an entrepreneurial path by entrepreneurs.

...you've got the money, and I'm a businessman, I'm driving this car, I bought this outfit, I bought these shoes, so they become able to sustain themselves, and then suddenly when business falls so that pride and ego is no more there, because it's humbled you. (14.39)

Emotional disintegration from failures

Participants 2, 7,9,10 and 13 encapsulated the fear exhibited by participant 1 by indicating that as nascent entrepreneurs they suffered emotional disintegration from the perceived failures of their business ventures. What was interesting was participant 2's indicated that the topic of the emotional drain caused by society's preconceived bias and pressure towards entrepreneurs was not discussed.

...it's a topic that we never discuss on how society can actually influence and also damage an entrepreneur who is just trying to just make ends meet, but there's these constant expectations and just constant disapproval along the way of why would you even go back and do your own thing when you

can become a manager somewhere. (2.40)

This is not a journey for the weak and not the – you have to have not just physical but mental, emotional, spiritual resilience to weather this, and it is not for everybody as a result. Not everybody can handle this kind of pressure. (7.80)

Meeting the tribulations of emotional failure

Participant 9 indicated that there was period of emotional evolution when it came to dealing with the emotional fall out of failure.

I just have to deal with and see it through. I just have to deal with what is happening and find ways of managing that anxiety, meditation or therapy or whatever it is, you have to do. (9.59)

Participant 8, the mentorship coach, offered that entrepreneurs could approach such situations with drive to overcome the temporary state of affairs.

...so just to get yourself out of that emotive response state so you're not fighting it, you're not running away from it, and you're definitely not frozen, but you're able to make a rational decision on what the steps are that you've got to take to move forward. (8.63)

Emotional acceptance of failure and critique

The theme of emotionally accepting the realities of failure and critique received a highly emotive and engaging response from all participants, except from participants 3 and 7. Interestingly participants 3, the opportunity seeker with strong family support, and 7, the business incubator entrepreneur, made no mention of the emotional impact of failures as entrepreneur.

Participants 1 indicated that failure was an inevitable occurrence of entrepreneurship due to the negative perceptions of the community.

...you can take rejection, you can take failure, because you're going to fail. You're going to have people criticising what you're doing, because not everyone is going to think your idea is the greatest idea out there. (1.92)

Participants 5, 8 and 12 indicated that the physical experiences of failures assists an entrepreneur to learn and contributes towards success in the future.

...some mistakes you do make, even if someone tells you, hey, do not touch the stove it's hot, you want to feel it and know that it is hot for yourself. Something's you will make by yourself if you are able to minimise the number of mistakes that you make. (5.26)

As an entrepreneur you're going to have to accept that every single day something is going to break or something is going to go wrong, and it's going to – it might sound like a failure, or you might have called it a failure, but actually it's nothing, it's just go aha, that's what's happened, how do I fix it, how do I move forward, how do I evolve, how do I actually prevent it from happening the next time? (8.60)

I saw it as a learning experience, as everything is a learning experience. I mean the project was not a failure, but it did not achieve what it could have achieved. (12.15)

With the benefit of experience and much insight the serial entrepreneur and business incubator director (industry expert), participant 10, offered a supporting and comforting view, in addressing the setback of entrepreneurial failure. Participant 10 indicated that due to their non-South African background, they viewed failure in a different perspective to their South African counterparts.

...if you start a diet there's going to be days where you say, oh, I really want to eat some chocolate cake, and okay, so today you'll have a piece of chocolate cake, tomorrow do you beat yourself up and say I'm done with my diet, or you get back on the diet and keep going and realist that that was just a sidestep in a long term process. It is no different. (10.73)

5.3.5.2. Societal perceptions

All participants, except 8, indicated that they had been exposed to negative and to a certain extent positive influences of society perceptions. A significant proportion of the responses from the participants highlighted the extreme

disparity and animosity society has of entrepreneurs. The raw pain and extreme frustration that was elicited from the participant's responses express the emotional toll that societal perceptions have on nascent entrepreneurs.

...everyone is watching me like does she know what she's doing, like where is this going to go, what is happening? (1.77)

...some people within my society group, or within my immediate influence, that don't believe that I'll make it, and they said that you might not make it. (2.77)

...it is always the hardest thing to have everyone think that you are wrong when you think that you are right. (9.41)

That is just our culture, we do not say, oh, congratulations, you tried your third business, or, you are going to bounce back or whatever it is. We are like, oh, it is finished man, and they took everything. So just that, from a cultural point of view there is just that, our view of failure and what not. (9.96)

Participant 12 and 13 indicated that the disregard of entrepreneurs, particularly in South Africa, by society was most likely due to the ingrained historical legacy issues.

...it goes back to that social engineering was in many ways we – our society was set up the way it was. In many ways, it was difficult for people to have like role models and representation of what it meant to own businesses. (13.39)

The serial entrepreneur and business incubator director (industry expert) perfectly summarised the views of the majority participants by indicating that society does not understand entrepreneurial failure as it is not a norm.

...specifically in South Africa there is a feeling that failure is failure. (10.10)

Counter productiveness of society's norms

A majority of the participants indicated that the deep-seated negativity that society placed on entrepreneurs remain a critical barrier against their success

as nascent entrepreneurs.

...but you should have an office, you should have a car already, and you should have staff, in order to be classified as successful. (2.41)

...when you say you want to start a business it is like; it is something that they do not understand. In addition, maybe ideally, they would have liked to support you, but because they do not understand and have a bit of fear, it is very hard for them to do so. (5.30)

Participant 8, interestingly had harsher view of nascent entrepreneurs and the apparent sense of self-entitlement to financial support which was ascribed to societal expectations for entrepreneurs in this case.

...because they are not smart with their money, and there is this whole thing, it drives me crazy, it is everyone that starts a business that says I need funding. What do you need funding for? (8.69)

Participant 5 encapsulated the feeling of all participants by indicating that at times it felt like taking on the world.

...it is always the hardest thing to have everyone think that you are wrong when you think that you are right. (9.41)

Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur and business incubator director (industry expert) indicated that the South African society's acceptance of risk is low and therefore acceptance of entrepreneurship, which is a risky path, may not be so easily accepted.

I mean mind-set maybe comes into this idea of risk taking, and again like I understand why there's maybe less ability to take risk in South Africa. (10.76)

Participant 2, indicated that the impact of these societal expectations places doubt on their consciousness and results in inner conflict towards developing their opportunities further.

...so there is always conflict along the way of expectations, society

expectations and the influence that it has on you to be the version, or the version that people you should become. (2.76)

In reflecting on the extreme expectations held by society, participant 2 suggested unlearning and relearning long-held practices as an emotional guide in over-coming those deep-seated perceptions.

...the reality is one of them has to fall, and I think at the end of the day you need to unlearn all that you've learnt and see which one can you afford to let go of to become the best version of yourself. I think that is where the interesting challenge happens, is when you start unlearning all of your social behaviours. (2.94)

5.3.5.3. Prosocial motivation

All participants, except 3 and 7, expressed an explicit desire to continue to pursue the development of an opportunity with social purpose that has an impact on the community.

...what I was pursuing is pursuing how can I create a bigger impact in this world, how can I make a difference to more people's lives? (8.1)

...being quite prepared to work in various ways and things and not take huge amounts of money and create the systems that make it work for more people, if not everyone. (6.48)

Participants 3, the opportunity seeker, and 7, the business incubator with a mission to expand their business, indicated through the discussions that their core interests were profit-driven and did not express an explicit desire to position their business purely on serving a social cause.

Participants 4 and 9 identified that the societal issues confronted by their respective communities, influenced the type of opportunity that they pursued and provided motivation during the opportunity development phase. The participants indicated that trying to address those societal issues was a central driving force.

Drama, drama, murders, killings, political issues, religious issues, those are all problems. (2.14)

Compassion drives opportunity development

For participants 1, 4, 10, 11 and 13, compassion stands out as the core rationale for continuing to pursue an opportunity. The participants indicated that their passion and their capacity to understand the human nature of those issues drove their opportunity development.

My focus now is saying, what difference can I make in other people's lives? What contribution can I make in the development of other people? And I think when that happens actually you shift away from the monetary satisfaction and you focus more on less tangible, more meaningful. (4.75)

I think a human is understanding what is your passion, like why are you here? Why does this matter to you?

Empathy drives opportunity development

All participants, except 3, 7 and 9, expressed a robust and spirited commitment to embracing empathy during the opportunity development processes. An interesting observation was that participants 3, 7 and 9 indicated that they had struggled to establish a closer engagement with the communities that they served, with a lesser extent for participant 7.

It is like that for years and years but nothing is changing, but also I think it got to a point where I am like, yes, but for how long am I going to keep complaining? What am I doing to actually do something to make sure that there is change, and then something happens to actually bring change? (1.19)

Are you adding an emotional twist to it to make them feel more empathetic? (2.11)

My social catchphrase is – I actually created a cause. (5.48)

...what motivated me to start with was this completely burning desire to help

*people, and that was the reason that I had ventured out in the first place.
(8.5)*

Interestingly participant 12, indicated that they saw their success intertwined with the success of the community that they served and their guiding principles provided a driver for their opportunity development.

Success for me is where everybody wins. Success for me is where everybody has a satisfying experience, which honours him or her, and the outcome is satisfying. I mean that is impossible when you do not follow your guiding principles. (12.17)

Participant 14, the business incubator mentor (industry expert) believed that nascent entrepreneurs possessed a strong sense of giving back to their communities that they came from and as such, this represented a key motivator for developing their business ventures.

...there is a sense of humbleness, because they want to give back. Ja, they come back to us and say, you know what, whom can we help or how can we help? Which is a good thing, because they know they were there, they have got out of the situation, they want to give back. (14.40)

Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur and business incubator mentor (industry expert) referred to this societal desire as a simple human reaction to truly understanding their purpose for following a path.

I think a human is understanding what is your passion, like why are you here? Why does this matter to you? (10.18)

5.3.5.4. Self-development

As with the emotional impact of societal perceptions, the theme of self-reflection, self-mastery and self-identity was a view that was passionately raised by all participants as vital towards the development of opportunities. They believed this was influenced significantly by their social learning behaviours.

Self-identity- search for autonomy and accountability

The majority of the participants indicated that they were determined in their pursuit attain a sense of autonomy and accountability. This was expressed with much fervour.

To have your own little baby I think that is what I was looking for. (2.32)

...my main motivation was to get stronger control over my own destiny, if you will. So I wanted to be able to make decisions that I can be wholly accountable for and I hold myself accountable for that. (3.3)

I love my independence, so working in a job was quite tough, the only job I ever loved was when worked KPMG. It did not feel like a job, I was an advisory, I have to do what I wanted, so I yearned for that independence and I was in a dead-end job and I was not getting prospects anywhere else. Therefore, I thought maybe this is a sign that I should try my own thing again. (9.9)

Participant 10, the business incubator director (industry expert) indicated that it was critical for an entrepreneur to self-introspect and understand the real reason for following that path and then sticking to that path with doggedness.

...it is about knowing your why and then having this dogged determination to achieve that why. (10.66)

Embedded purpose and profit purpose

Participants 3, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 all expressed a keen desire to have profit and purpose at their core mission statement. The participants indicated that as they progressed from their first years, they have transitioned from a pure profit-driven business venture to one where a particular purpose is now at its centre.

...at the end of the day we never questioned our values whilst struggling to making profit. In addition, sometimes it is always important to put your values first before the drive to always make profit. (11.7)

Participant 12 indicated that despite the opportunity offered, the conviction to

stick to their guiding principles had become central to their decision-making process. Participant 12 had expressed an uncompromising commitment to having vision at their core of their purpose therefore, it is not a surprising comment.

...it just felt very uncomfortable, and it felt more and more uncomfortable the longer I was in that process, because I was not honouring my values, my guiding principles. (12.41)

Continuous learning and support

There was unanimous agreement amongst the participants that the learning culture derived from their social backgrounds and circumstances – in most cases, poverty - encouraged them to continuously strive to learn.

...at this stage, the business is you and it embodies you. I am guessing its early stage so not that many employees and if you as an individual yourself are not continuously striving to improve yourself and learn, and then your business is not learning. (9.87)

...the first one to a year that is when you need the most support from society, from the government, that is the foundation year. In fact, I would say one to three years; because even in your third year there are things that you still have not gotten right. Probably not from a resource perspective, because I think three years is a long time to not get your act together, not unless you had a stumbling block along the way, it happens, but I would also say just from a self-mastery perspective, how do you now begin to brand yourself once you've laid the ground rules for your company. (2.42)

Participant 2 pointed out that this continuous learning critically extended towards emotional support and self-mastery of nascent entrepreneurs.

...emotional support, mastering yourself support, teaching entrepreneurs how to become masters of themselves, that is the first thing, and I am talking about emotional support from that instance. (2.52)

Participants 6 and 10 offered slightly differing opinions on the influence of an entrepreneur's social learning behaviour on their success. Participant 6 indicated the significant role of their background, which echoes the majority participants' views. On the other hand participant 10, the serial entrepreneur and business incubator director, indicated that those characteristics could be taught to entrepreneurs.

...my learning's have impacted me in how I approach everything, in what I think of the world and my outlook. (6.76)

I mean certain people are born into families that think this way more, or they are born in circumstances that promote these feelings more. Therefore, it is hard to say culturally or personally, but I guess my point would be that it could be taught. (10.27)

Passion

The majority of the participants indicated that the focus on self-development was an obsessive desire to succeed as entrepreneurs.

It is because of my drives and my passion, and my rebelliousness. (2.95)

Participant 8 indicated that the lack of passion and drive could be barriers against nascent entrepreneurs.

That must be one of the reasons most small businesses fail in that first – in the early years, it is that you are not so strong on chasing your passion and your happiness. (8.78)

Self-reflection

Participants 1, 2, 3, 8, 9,11,12,13 and 14 voiced strong opinions on the critical value that self-reflection had on their development as entrepreneurs. The participants indicated that self-reflection was a critical action in light of the immense pressures that society places on them as entrepreneurs and the negative perceptions.

At the time, you are terrified, but for me the only thing that I knew was I had

to go. What I knew is that what I wanted was not in Johannesburg, and if I looked at – and the thing is when I looked at where I worked I knew that I was going to grow and yes, I was going to get promotions and dah, dah, but I think it was this thing that. (1.8)

Self-configuration from societal bias

Participant 13 encapsulated the struggle of resistance exhibited by society towards entrepreneurs and suggested that the entrepreneur recognise the issue, deal with the issue and then move forward. What was profound was that the participant indicated that despite the historical ills, an entrepreneur is in fact best suited to deal with the community that doubts their existence directly and therefore, change societal bias.

...if you're like a young black women, right, and you're sitting in a boardroom with a grumpy old white guy, it's easy to just see him as a symbol of apartheid basically, to see him as a relic of apartheid and his conditioning and as the enemy and as somebody who doesn't like you, or you can see him – and I say this because in our industry I mean I saw a lot of this, you can see him as somebody, as a human being who has been socially conditioned to fear you. In addition, that fear you then turned into not just social conditioning but even the engineering of our entire society, it even turned into laws that made him apart from you. (13.31)

I have got to think around them even though the problems or biases or whatever are not necessarily mine, but I've got to help the person with those to see around them, so how do I do that? (13.28)

5.4. Results: Theme 2 – Emotional learning receptiveness

This theme underscores the importance of emotional learning; learning behavioural patterns; entrepreneurial mind-set drivers; and mentorship influence on opportunity development.

5.4.1. Learning receptiveness

The participant's responses revealed that this theme of entrepreneurial learning support was an overwhelming positive confirmation of the key areas in terms

of the influence that their social learnings had during the opportunity development phase. The participant's responses is illustrated in Figure 12 below with the discussion on the responses following thereafter.

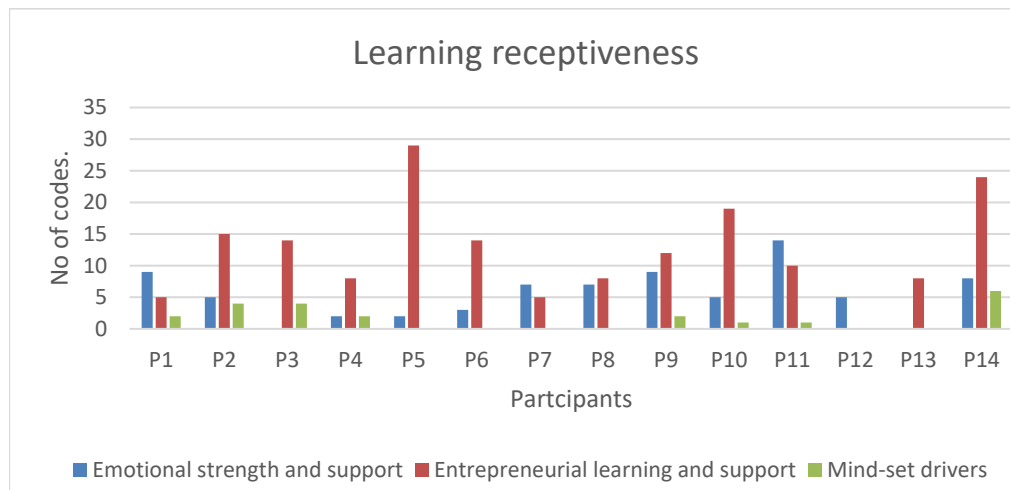


Figure 12: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme learning receptiveness

5.4.1.1. Emotional support and strength

Self-doubt in capabilities

Participant 2 indicated that the early stages of the business venture was wracked by extreme self-doubt despite having all the theoretical knowledge and training in the area. The participant further indicated that there was immense strife on how to remove oneself from that moment in time. The lack of technical expertise aligns to the views of the participants mentioned 5.5.2.1., however, in this case it leads to participant 2 doubting their abilities.

...when I was just busy doing my business, the very, very early stages, probably the first six months I had no idea what value adding creation was, unless of all of the teachings and the graduations and the educational qualifications I had, I just couldn't get it right. (2.15)

For participants 6, 7, 8 and 9 they expressed strident views on the configuration of support-learning programs and the influence that they had on entrepreneurs. They argued it reduced their confidence and represented a barrier to future

development.

I see that as a barrier, that we are not teaching people enough and the right things, and inspiring them with the confidence. (6.54)

We do not ask the SMME's the right questions, we ask them the wrong questions and we expect them to be compliant, compliant, and compliant when they are starting. We should be asking them about their business. Therefore, it is an unfair comparison. (7.84)

Participants 10 and 14, the business incubator (industry experts) interestingly offered stark contrasting views on the success of formal support learning programs. Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur (business incubator director and industry expert) indicated that the structure of such learning programs are structured towards rigid deliverables whereas participant 14 championed the value of such programs with the implementation of regimented and disciplined structures.

...their KPI's aren't about building great businesses, they are just about providing services. (10.48)

...in terms of controlling behaviour our first positive is our requirement to join the incubator. So they must be a registered company, they must have a tax clearance certificate; they must provide us a motivation as to why they want to join the incubator. These are all areas they can see from stage 1 that we are a professional outfit; we will not accept anything else. (14.13)

Validators

All, except participants 2, 3, 4 and 12, explicitly mentioned that the various forms of validation that emerged from their engagement with the community provided them with the impetus and confidence to continue to pursue the development of the opportunities.

the thing is, being part of an accelerator, incubator, I got to become part of also a community of people who are also engineers like myself and are thriving business leaders. So it helped me build a lot of knowledge about

business, understand so many concepts in business, or entrepreneurship, that I never had an idea of because my thinking, I was just a one-sided person. (11.28)

Participants 1,7,8,9 and 11 indicated that formal courses and competitions, both local and international, provided them with a boost and validated their business ventures. The participants indicated that the validation by reputable institutions provided them with supreme confidence to continue with their opportunity development.

...you are able to access market because your brand is now being recognised alongside a well-established and recognised brand. In addition, it allows you to then gain some credibility and access quicker than you could have if you just tried constantly to do it on your own. (8.72)

Interestingly all, except participants 7 and 10, explicitly indicated that their strong family support sustained them during their early years. There was an overwhelming acknowledgement that a strong nucleus support system had a positive impact on them emotionally during their nascent phase. In contrast, participants 7 and 10 indicated that as business incubators they are focused driven on the mentoring and training of entrepreneurs, which was their motivator.

I would not be here, I would never forget whatever, that, you know what, it is not me alone. It has never been me alone; it will not be me alone because you cannot do anything alone. So my team are also special. (5.46)

...my parents as well who have continued to celebrate their many ways. It is because of my drives and my passion, and my rebelliousness that they have sort of dimmed the lights and said, okay, let's watch her succeed. Surprisingly because of that, I have succeeded, you know. (2.66)

Spiritual sustenance

Participants 1, 2,9,10 and 12 eloquently highlighted the importance of spiritual motivation that supported their emotional needs during what the participants

referred to as a lonely period for entrepreneurs. The participants all had the characteristic of having people, business, entrepreneurial flare and vision at the core of their consciousness.

...it means accessing your intellect, your emotions, and your spirituality. That makes it a much bigger perspective. Therefore, some people might call it accessing the field. (12.26)

Emotional support barriers

Participant 1 indicated that the lack of support that entrepreneurs received mentally and emotionally arose due to the segregated mechanism on how entrepreneurs existed and operated.

The problem is we're currently just working in our own silos and we're not thinking that actually we all have something that we all need from each other, so how do we then talk to each other and make sure that we actually share and help each other we thrive together. (1.115)

Entrepreneurial contentment

Despite the emotional and mental barriers, participants indicated that they possessed the emotional contentment that comes from following their chosen path and this provided them with clarity on their purpose.

I have actually been extremely happy in my business, and I have been offered jobs to go back into corporate, and there is not a chance. (8.16)

I love it, it is really hard but I have really enjoyed my experience, I could not imagine doing anything else. Therefore, I think it is about that, if you believe it is a calling then you are going to persevere, you are going to find a way to make it work. (10.74)

5.4.1.2. Emotional entrepreneurial mind-set drivers

Sense of urgency and commitment to entrepreneurship

Participants 1, 9 and 14 indicated that they had a deep desire to get on with their entrepreneurial ventures with a sense of urgency to attain their goals.

I had to fight that myth because I am like, you know what guys, I do not have the time to go find co-founders, and I have to get going right now. Then I just had to find, like push through being a solo founder doing something that everyone says never works. (9.44)

Participants 3, 6, 9 and 13 indicated that their dedication to the entrepreneurial path emanated from their background exposure which reinforced their life path as an entrepreneur.

Therefore, for us it is a way of life. It has always been a way of life. (13.48)

Skills enhancement

Participants 2, 10 and 11 indicated that they recognised that they had not possessed all the skills in their nascent years, which was a key point to gaining the skills that they required and created an enduring benefit.

I think it is just open mindedness, if you realise you are not a finished product and you can develop and you can grow, that does help people to change and make new changes in their life. (10.36)

Skills transfer

Participants 1, 2 and 4 placed a high premium on transferring skills to the community that they served. The participants indicated that the skills transferred benefitted the community that they served.

I've helped him, practically started from scratch and applied for funding to get equipment, set up his board, members of his board. So I just normally share more or less what I'm doing with mine and how he must approach his, who he must contact, who he must try and align. (1.98)

5.4.1.3. Entrepreneurial learning and life cycle support

A majority of the participants expressed appreciation of the impact that mentors imparted on them through their trials and tribulations. The participants indicated that like-minded mentors or people that they aspired to be were motivators, not only around their business ventures but also emotionally and mentally.

...at some point it just gives you that extra push whenever you feel down, just to listen and hear someone say, you know what, I've done that, that's also I failed so many times. (5.44)

...he had to stop me dead in my tracks and say, if you don't stop that all you're going to do for your entire business is create solutions, you will never ever take it to market, sell it and actually earn a revenue from it. (8.28)

Participants 5 and 8 indicated that mentors were critical to their learning support in their nascent years. The participants did reflect a different approach to mentorship, with participant 8 using one mentor through the entire learning process whereas participant 5 utilised multiple mentors for various learning needs during the opportunity development phase.

...you cannot necessarily have one mentor, I think it's important to have different mentors for different aspects that you would feel that the one to work on. (5.43)

In contrast, participants 2,3,6,8 and 9 revealed strident views around the area of mentorship and post opportunity creation support. The participants indicated that despite the existence of mentors, which they were appreciative of, what they yearned for however, was a consistent life cycle support system that emotionally and professionally supported every step in their journey.

...there is no post course development or support then we actually did a once-off job to an entrepreneur that actually requires on-going support. (2.53)

Then when you win the competition where is the support thereafter? You might have a year, maybe two, show me a business, a start-up that is

running and fully functional after two years. (6.57)

I mean if you Google it, what do you need as a start-up, I don't think you're going to find anything that pops up that says, here's what you should be – here's a process of thinking that you should follow. In addition, here are the top five barriers to entry in the different areas of your business, and here is how you can overcome them. Here are the tools, the strategies, the templates what you can do, and here is a mentor that can actually work alongside you to get that to happen. (8.51)

Participant 14, the business incubator mentor (industry expert) indicated that there may be a misconception of the role of business incubators and similar learning programs by a few nascent entrepreneurs. Participant 14 indicated that the misconceptions about the role of such support programs influenced the configuration of the programs.

They believe that because the municipality funds us everything should be given to them free of charge, no renting. (14.12)

So we believe that they need to be mature, they need to be accountable, they need to be responsible if they want to continue in business. (14.46)

Participant 2 echoed the view of the majority of participants in indicating that there was a lack of support during the entrepreneurial learning phase. This lends credence to the call for life cycle learning support.

...entrepreneurship should always be, at different touch points in our lives, because it is such an important topic. (2.89)

Support inertia

Participants 1, 6,7,9,10,11 and 13 further expressed high levels of irritation towards the lack of support provided to entrepreneurs during their early years. Participant 1 went as far as saying that they are performing the duties of key stakeholders yet the lack of support made them feel abandoned and alone in their pursuits.

...so with them I think because they're the beneficiaries, they're the – what I'm doing is a service that they should be providing. So they should be my number 1 partner. But it's taking a long time to get them on-board. (1.86)

...a lot of entrepreneurs probably do not get a lot of support, because people also want to see the proof of the pudding before they care for you. (13.49)

Learning program barriers and promoters

The participants had contrasting views on the success of learning programs.

Participant 5 indicated that the learning programs, while serving their purpose in creating a safe environment for development, it did entrepreneurs a disservice when they exit from the learning programs in not exposing and sensitising them to the harsh realities of the world.

...as you step out it's like when you're still in your parents comfort, you don't know anything about electricity, you just switch on the lights, just know the lights are there, the water is hot, the water is running, there is food. So you're a bit comfortable, as the incubator is there, they provide us with these support and then you see like, okay, you know what – and you go to these training's even though you don't have time, but you're seeing that things are a bit moving, you're learning this, you're learning how to do this and that, but in essence the real world is not actually like that. It is a very tough, tough world. (5.37)

...in incubation sometimes you do feel a bit comfortable because I actually grew up when I started to be incubated, because now you know take some of the time the program that they want those programs at that time could be using to get clients. (5.33)

Unsurprisingly, participant 14, the business incubator mentor (industry expert) indicated the benefit of such learning programs. The participant indicated that they provided a safe environment for an entrepreneur to pursue the opportunity development and therefore played a critical role in the entrepreneur's development.

...that is why it is called incubation, you are given the warmth, and you are given the growth, like any incubator. So they have that kind – they come in with that kind of view, and because they are protected then it gives them an opportunity to pursue business opportunities. (14.34)

5.4.2. Emotional mind-set evolution

The participants' responses revealed that the combined theme of personal and emotional development was a positive confirmation of the key areas in terms of the influence that their social learnings had during the opportunity development phase. What was interesting was that the participant's use of the term *personal development* was closely linked to their emotional reactions to the stimuli in the environment. Therefore, the term *personal and emotional development* was used almost interchangeably. Therefore, the two categories of emotional and personal development were combined in the final thematic analysis. The participants' responses is illustrated in Figure 13 below with the discussion on the responses following thereafter.

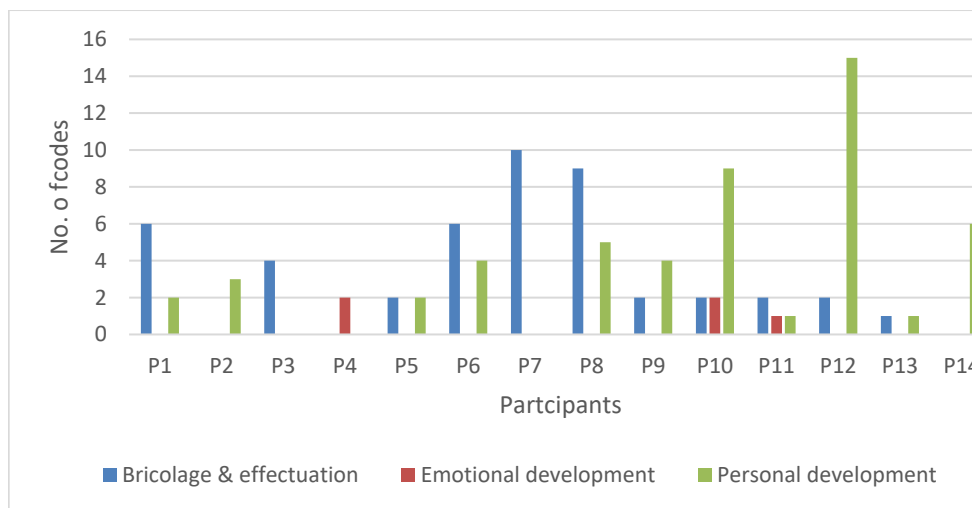


Figure 13: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme emotional mind-set evolution

5.4.2.1. Emotional development

Participants 10 and 11, who were primarily interested in entrepreneurial development, indicated that a risk taking nature was central to their evolution as an entrepreneur but participant 10 did indicate that it is a skill that can be developed.

...some people are just born more risk taking or grittier, but it is something you can develop. (20.29)

Participant 4 simply indicated that the ability to commit time was a key barrier to the future progression of an entrepreneur in meeting their challenges was and their inability to commit to that opportunity development.

I think that is due to time. (4.44)

5.4.2.2. Personal development

Continuous learning by interpreting

A majority of the participants boisterously supported the view that their ability to continuously commit to learning or rather unlearning past practices and then relearning new practices contributed significantly to them understanding the opportunities which they pursued as well as contributing towards their future learning.

...unlearning all of your social behaviours. Starting to look at yourself seriously and say, but this is what I want to do. It is never a difficult – it is never an easy thing to do, but I think entrepreneurship is not easy, so this should be a walk in the park. (2.97)

Participant 8's drive to continuously learn from every experience in an effort to improve their personal self-being and obtain a better understanding of their environment that they serve represented a key characteristic of the majority of the participants.

...you will always find me learning something. If it is aligned to where it is I'm going, what it is I'm doing, how can I improve, how can I serve better,

how can I reach the market better, I am always learning. (8.23)

Participant 12 elaborated further by indicating that the learning process was about a combined effort of recognising, understanding and accepting their self-identity, the business processes and then proceeding to determine a mechanism in which to turn those learnings into a reality.

...there is a learning process involved; there is a process of building self-confidence, of learning how to operate a business, of learning how to make visions a reality. Of all the action steps that are needed along the way. (12.51)

Participants 10 and 14, the business incubator and industry expert boisterously supported the views of the participants who showed a strong desire and ability to listen, learn and interpret the market and community's that they served was a key promoter of their continued pursuit and success of the opportunity development process.

...if you want to grow, if you want to break a habit and grow a new one then I mean how would you do that in any walk of life, you would really recognise where you are, you would put steps in place in order to grow that skill to really learn that muscle memory. (10.34)

5.4.2.3. Bricolage and effectuation

Participants 1, 7 and 11 provided interesting responses regarding the dilemmas that they faced about the availability of resources within the community, which they served as well as the scarce resources that the participants possessed. The participants indicated that they engaged with the community to enquire about the scarce resources that existed within the community. This question critically raised an introspective perspective within the participants on whether they had the resource capacity themselves to meet this urgent need.

...do I have the resources that would enable me to grab this opportunity; with the little that I have I could move forward. (11.12)

Participants 1, 7,8,10 and 13 supported the view that community engagement was central to them pleasing the customers that they served, understanding their needs and then aligning their opportunity to those needs. The participants indicated that the drive to meet the needs of the community while grappling with the decision on where to place their scarce resources was a key barrier to them moving forward with potential opportunities.

To learn how to package it so that it can reach a customer and align to their needs so that they would buy and then be served by it. (8.18)

Participants, 1, 6,8,12 and 13, indicated that limited resources was a stumbling block towards their future visions, social, and community engagement. The participants further indicated that the dilemma that they were confronted with was whether the purpose met the future needs of that community and the decisions that they were required to take to action those decisions.

...it wasn't like we're choosing this one, but it was what type of resources and what's the future like that I'd say to determine the focus that we're taking, and the technology then was the focus that we decided to take. (1.29)

Participant 4 indicated that a pragmatic view was adopted in that action was critical to forging ahead on an opportunity notwithstanding the scarce resources.

If you wait for people's promises, you will die hungry. (7.44)

5.4.3. Fortuitous learning

The participant's responses generated the theme, of what the author has defined as fortuitous learning, to be one of the lower level of importance being associated by the participants. Term fortuitous was premised around the central theme of participants having experienced serious difficulties in their background which had a direct bearing on their entrepreneurial journey. Within this category, there was an overwhelming positive confirmation around the view that crucible events had the largest impact on their social learnings during the opportunity development phase. The researcher uses the word critical events in the place of the participant's terminology, of crucible events, to align to the

literature in this area. The participants' responses is illustrated in Figure 14 below with the discussion on the responses following thereafter.

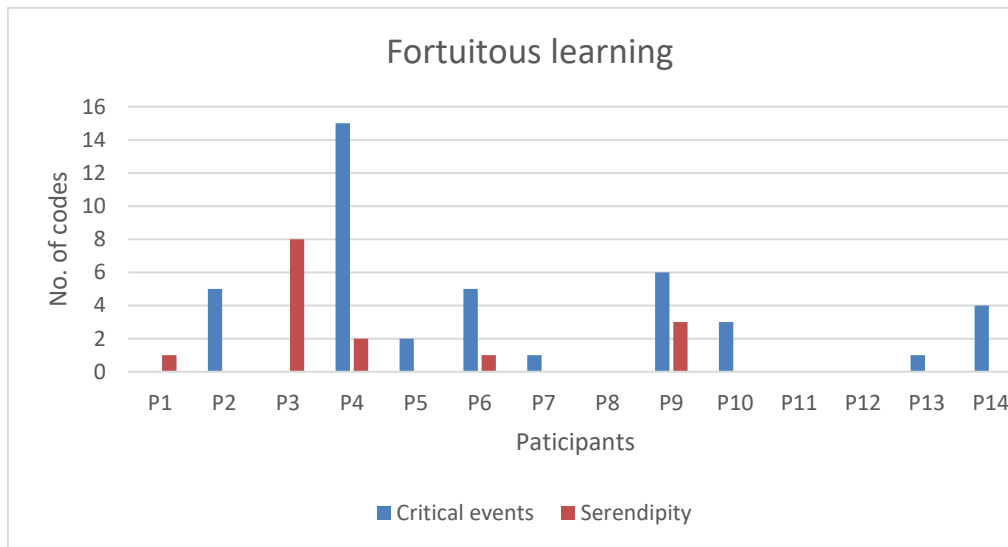


Figure 14: Illustration of codes per participant for the theme fortuitous learning

5.4.3.1. Critical events (Crucible events)

At least half the participants indicated that they were despondent during the phase of opportunity development due to the occurrence of crucible events in their life. Nevertheless, from that despondency arose a real need to change their future path.

...life changing experience that forced them to scrape at the bottom of the barrel of their being. (4.7)

I had a pet, a cockatiel, bird, and there was no food or money in the house, I think I had like R20 or something like that, where you buy food for yourself or you go buy a bunch of seeds. You have to make a plan. (9.23)

Crucible events prompts self-reflection

Participant 4 made a profound observation on the value of self-reflection in the face of a crucible event. With the use of the analogy of the experience of Nelson Mandela in his transformation from a prisoner into a leader, participant 4 revealed the critical importance of self-reflection and learning when an

entrepreneur is faced with an event that tests their mental capacity and fundamental identity of who they are.

However, prison was some kind of crucible, which sharpened his leadership skills, which forced him to introspect, which forced him to reflect. If he had not been arrested, he would probably be like Malema today. He would never have gone through that leadership development process. (4.9)

Participant 2 indicated that the crucible event prompts a self-evaluation and the results in the right questions being probed to address their dilemmas that ordinarily may not have been asked if such crucible events may not have occurred.

...why is it that I am not making any money in such a field that is dominated where people are doing well. What is it that I'm doing wrong that other people are doing right? (2.18)

Participant 4 indicated that as an entrepreneur the feeling of being closed-in by their circumstances forces them to be creative and innovate rapidly and move forward with the actions in developing their opportunities.

They are kind of cornered, and when you are cornered, I do not think you have time to go through a sequential process kind of approach. You quickly identify an opportunity and you get on with it. (4.4)

Participant 14, the business incubator mentor (industry expert) supported the view by participant 4 and the rest of the participants, in recognising that the crucible events confronted by entrepreneurs' forces an entrepreneur to become more innovative and enterprising in order to survive.

Number one is the fact that people cannot find employment. We have noticed that, because they cannot find employment they want to start a business to see whether they can make money. (14.15)

...what makes them that enterprising is because they have realised and accepted that they are unemployable, but they have to make a living. (4.11)

5.4.3.2. Serendipity

For participants 1, 3, 4, 6 and 9, the people focused entrepreneurs; they indicated that their actions in letting themselves be exposed to the community allowed fortuitous events to unfold and as such, led to further opportunity development.

...it is not a business that I decided to go into, but like it is the stars aligned and I – because I was already out, there being, an entrepreneur and then I ended up there. (9.25)

A key indication by the participants was that they were not ready at that point when the opportunity presented themselves but it did provide the impetus that they were looking for which they undertook with much gusto towards the future development of the opportunity.

...opportunity just pops up or quite literally drops on your lap and you take it forward. (4.2)

Participant 3 made an interesting observation indicating that the continued reliance on luck by an entrepreneur may subvert a true learning experience and may actually shroud the true performance of an entrepreneur to their potential detriment. The participant indicated that this could be due to the occurrence of extreme uncertainty and unpredictability in the process.

...because there is so many unforeseen that could pull the rug out from underneath you. (3.71)

5.5. Results: Theme 3 – Entrepreneurial action

5.5.1. Environment

5.5.1.1. Ecosystem factors

There was an almost unanimous positive affirmation by all participants with the exception of participants 10 and 12, on the significant barriers that confronted them within the ecosystems that they engaged in.

Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur business incubator and industry expert, may seem anomalous towards the responses of the remainder of the participants except for the fact that their strong views and beliefs resulted in them almost placing a cursory level of importance on the impact of ecosystem barriers during entrepreneurial development. Participant 10 indicated the American background drove their attitude of over-coming any obstacles, whilst participant 12's belief was that it is the vision taken to market which is based on an existing need, and as such ecosystem factors are almost inconsequential to future development.

Reduced strategic decision making time

Participant 7 indicated that the rapid changes in the ecosystem now renders traditional strategic practices outdated due to the constant demands of an entrepreneur to be able to make timeous decisions to be able to stay relevant.

...strategic horizon, you know, what used to be earlier or one year out of three years horizon has now become a month-to-month, week to week, day to day horizon. (7.35)

Non-alignment of ecosystem value chain

Participant 9 indicated that the key barrier to the entrepreneur's engagement with the ecosystem is the non-alignment of all the actors in the value chain and that entrepreneurs are merely reactionary in the entire process.

...so my issue with the ecosystem is that – because as entrepreneurs we just – we are responding to stimuli in the environment, that is suppliers, that is customers, that is the government, that is institutions or whatever that we interact with in the environment, that's the ecosystem. To me it is not aligned enough. (9.82)

Restricted access to strategic networks and government

...you have got no clue how to access the market, it is a massive barrier. (8.40)

...so are there not ways for working systems within non-profit structures to partner with private and government to create a transparent bubble for us to deliver more effectively? (6.79)

Restricted financial support

Participants 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11 indicated that gaining access to financial markets was a great barrier to their future development.

South Africa is literally the land of have and have not, so therefore there is not much funding. (10.46)

What has been surprising are the strong views of participants 2, 3, 8 and 9 regarding their level of importance attached to the receipt of financial support? The participants vigorously indicated that financial support is not the precursor to success as an entrepreneur contrary to the market as well as fellow budding entrepreneur's opinions, their reaction at times boarding on derision at the perception in society on the importance of financial support to an entrepreneurs success.

...you cannot buy yourself out of business problems, you cannot buy yourself out of not having customers. You cannot buy yourself out of bad employees, you know. You cannot. It will help you moving forward, but it cannot solve some problems. (9.64)

...because they are not smart with their money, and there is this whole thing, it drives me crazy, it is everyone that starts a business that says I need funding. What do you need funding for? (8.69)

Restrictive regulations

No ecosystem barrier rankles the participants more than the adherence to arcane and restrictive regulations. Majority of the participants indicated this as a key inhibitor of their success and future development. The participants indicated that regulations did not extend to the common belief that only government had excessive regulations, but also established institutions that created artificial boundaries frustrated the entrepreneurial flare of the

participants.

So licences are a pain in the backside. So licences was a big issue and then also SARS. So getting our excise registration was – jeez it was painful. (3.50)

...if you haven't followed the governance you will not even be looked at. So no-one understands that in order for me to follow the governance if I'm not Participant 1 and I haven't received shares money I do not have the money, where am I going to get money for all these things? (1.88)

...biggest stumbling block, that although management was quite happy with the solution we proposed, but the biggest issue is to say that you cannot do business while you are still a student at University X. (5.6)

Participant 14 (industry expert) indicated that the approach adopted was to accept entrepreneurs into their business incubator only subject to regulatory pre-compliance prior to incubation. Participant 14 indicated restrictive approach well founded to ensure entrepreneurial discipline absent in nascent entrepreneurs. This however, does lead credence to participant 1's concerns on the regulatory barriers confronted by an entrepreneur and the adequacy of learning support programs.

...many of them are not compliant. Therefore, we want – our first stage is to ensure that they are compliant. Compliant – By being compliant, I mean they do not register for VAT, they do not register for tax, and they do not register with UIF for their employees. (14.28)

5.5.2. Opportunity development

5.5.2.1. Business process know-how

A majority of the participants indicated that the early phases of their business ventures one the critical barriers to their success was their lack of technical knowledge on the configuration of their business model.

...starting and running a business. I mean I did not actually know what that would entail; in fact, I am only really starting to know. (3.13)

...sometimes you want to take so-called opportunities, but without understanding the dynamics of what this means. (4.19)

I see it a lot of times with a lot of entrepreneurs that are always excited by every opportunity that they come across, they never ask themselves these questions about the integral question, internal questions and external questions, and they usually make the wrong decisions of taking up the wrong opportunities. (11.7)

Participant 7 indicated that entrepreneurs were not assisted in their nascent phase in configuring their business models resulting in fortuitous learning.

I do not think that our current South African ecosystem is conducive enough to get an entrepreneur to identify and validate his business model, it is a process of trial and error. (7.53)

You are not exposed to any of that, and if you do not understand all of that when you get out to working on your own you have no clue where to start and how to move forward. (8.25)

5.5.2.2. Adaptability and awareness

A majority of the participants indicated that the keen awareness and the willingness to continuously learn was a promoting factor in their early success and therefore, facilitated their understanding of their purpose.

I think sometimes you start on the process and then it grows from there because we went in with an element of naivety. (6.25)

...continuous learning as an entrepreneur, being willing to continuously learn and change and sort of adapt as an individual. (9.84)

I've probably chopped and changed the number of services that I want to do like three or four times, because of the constant understanding of who I am and a constant alignment of where I'm going, that I know that actually this is

what I'm going to do. (2.51)

Participant 2 added another dimension to the views of the majority participants by indicating that they were able to adapt to changing circumstances while maintain their guiding principles.

In the first two months, we were heavy, heavy on fumigating, now that we are on level 1 the business has sort of dribbled a bit. However, that does not mean we are going to close it down, we are looking at another way now to reinvent it. Keep the company name, keep the promise, keep the guiding principles, but just be flexible enough to change it. (2.26)

5.5.2.3. Sense-making

All participants overwhelmingly indicated that their ability to sense the environment in which they were engaged in was of paramount importance to their success during the early years of their business ventures. This was what led to opportunities for many of them.

when I started my business in the healthcare space, was that I had gotten interaction with a number of women and a number of people that had some health defects due to accidents or due to some non-communicable diseases such as cancer and hence had lost – they had had their body features deformed. Therefore, because of that it came as an opportunity. (11.3)

So I think my opportunity then was born from actually just engaging first. (1.78)

Participant 8 indicated that pre-engagement with the community and creating a connection with the environment was a significant promoter of their early success. The participant echoed the majority's views that the pre-engagement with the local communities was critical to creating a perception in the consciousness that they were able to draw on when they completely engaged in their business ventures.

if you start to already be getting a feel for your market through that and you can do it even while you're employed, no issues, because you're just talking

to people, relationship building, engaging, but you understand at the back of your mind you're doing some research right now. (8.68)

Participant 8 indicated that the close communication with the community resulted in an iterative process of developing the opportunities further, but critically ensuring that the community felt a sense of ownership of the opportunity that was developed.

...this is not just my idea but I think let a group of people who may be prepared to buy into this concept and that's what validates the whole opportunity into something more tangible. That was the process we used. (7.9)

Interestingly, participants 3, 7 and 10 indicated that their first very first ventures suffered failure from their lack of understanding on what the problem was in the market and the key to that was ensuring contact was made with the environment. The participants indicated that the lesson learned from their first ventures into their learning in the subsequent ventures in the early years.

I created this really cool thing, now I just have to find a market; it is actually the opposite, right? Like you want to find a problem or a market and then design a solution for it. So yeah, maybe getting people out there and having first contact they will start to realise that you need to figure out the problem first before you start building a solution. (10.57)

For participant 3, the opportunity seeker, multiple attempts on trying to break into a market resulted in the realisation that community engagement was key. The approach adopted by participant 3 was to hire a person that had deep existing connections with the community that they wished to serve which was in contrast to all the other participants who had direct interaction and affinity with the community that they served.

We found a guy now, we just appointed a person to run our events. So we did this Facebook advertising thing, that was a whole new thing for us, and we found a resource who's got – I mean he should be C suite in a listed company, if you compare. But we found him, and we've now got this guy in

our business, I mean I can't tell you how lucky I feel because of that and it's because you engage more and more with your surroundings. (3.79)

For all the difficulties experienced by the participants in creating a connection with the community, participants 1,8,12 and 13 indicated that the connections promoted inclusivity with the community, which led to innovation with a particular focus on the needs of the future.

...stay up to date, innovate, look at what's happening with entrepreneurs in your market elsewhere in the world, where they are doing things faster, better, quicker, smarter, more efficiently, and then bring those in and apply it here. (8.59)

5.5.2.4. Stakeholder receptiveness

Participants 1, 2,4,6,10,11 and 13, all expressed extreme frustration with the lack of critical stakeholder buy-in or interest in their ventures. The participants indicated that with the lack of involvement by the key stakeholders this required them to adapt their approach to their business ventures and decisions made.

...when you leave certain decisions also in the hands of indecisive people or people who are not capacitated to make decisions or in an environment where making decisions has implications or consequences. (13.43)

...they're the beneficiaries, they're the – what I'm doing is a service that they should be providing. So they should be my number 1 partner. But it's taking a long time to get them on-board. (1.86).

5.5.3. Value offering

5.5.3.1. Value creation

Removing a pain point

Participants 2 and 11 indicated that the key to value creation was the identification of a key area that concerned or troubled a community and to provide a solution to that area.

...value creation is when you are in a specific environment and people will continue to go back to your product or to your service because it has addressed their pain point in some way. So in a business that's essentially what you should be doing is you should be addressing the pain points of people. (2.10)

Adding more to the status quo

Participant 3 indicated that their willingness to add more than what was currently accepted in the market added value.

...role of the business is to try and get those bits of value and pull them into your business in whatever way or form. (3.77)

Value creation driven by capacity and effort

Participants 2,3,7 and 13 tempered that desire to create value by indicating that value creation was influenced by the level of effort and capabilities that an entrepreneur maintained or possessed during their early years. The participants indicated that a period of self-reflection assisted in creating additional value.

...what do I like doing and where can I add value, and where does it come effortlessly? (2.20)

...do we have capacity? Can we actually deliver on it and do it? (13.15)

Inadequate business process structures

A majority of the participants indicated that a key hindrance for their initial business venture's ability to present a more valuable service or product to the market was their inadequate structure of their processes and their approach adopted. The theme of inadequate structures and processes aligns with the theme on inadequate business know-how, mentioned in 5.5.2.1. In this case, the participants saw the lack of structure and poor approach as a key hindrance to value creation in the early phase of their business ventures.

...people structure and strategy combination that we didn't clearly

understand when we started, and I sort of wish we did because I think we would have been a lot further down the track now had we done that. (3.26)

...it's systems that create that, and people in the systems then can make it succeed even further with the right attitude, purpose, why, behind why they're working. (6.35)

...you have to have the structure set up front and you have to know how to grow that structure to match the growth in your business. (8.30)

Alignment of needs to future value creation

Participants 1, 5,8,11 and 13 indicated that their future opportunity development was closely aligned to their current values and needs as well as an anticipation of what the market may present in the future. They believed that this forward-looking perspective will create value to their future goals.

I don't interact with people a lot more, I'm more of a loner, and I always try to go for opportunities that do not sort of take me out of my peace. In the sense that I do not interact with people a lot, so I do not want to get into opportunities where I have to constantly be interacting with people. (11.66)

...is there the opportunity to exchange value, will we be paid, and paid on time, and remunerated fairly for what we have delivered? Is the client ready for what we are going to actually do? (13.14)

...what are we doing now to make sure that we align to the future that we want to see? (1.103)

Innovation leads to value creation

Participants 1, 5,8,11 and 13 displayed a fever-rent desire to create solutions with a sense of urgency. The participants indicated that despite the challenges faced in the community there was a drive to be creative and find solutions to the issues that they wished to address.

...we're not looking for a thesis, we're looking for a problem solver.

...it is also about us creating solutions. So away from consulting how then do we also put solutions into the business. (13.7)

...good entrepreneurs when they are challenged, when they see adversity they really look at it as opportunity, they really are going to find a way to make it work. I think that is incredibly important. (10.16)

Legacy

Participant 2 attached a higher level importance to the pursuit of the entrepreneurial journey and believed it can serve as a beacon of recognition and create an enduring contribution to society

...what appealed to me the most was to definitely have a legacy and create a company under my name that will feed others. (2.29)

5.5.3.2. Opportunity extension

At least half the participants indicated that the establishment of alternative streams of income was central to their value creation in a community. The participants indicated that the alternative streams of income provided them with the freedom to pursue their vision and calling unimpeded.

...that's what my next calling will be is we've validated what we are doing now, now I have to work on the next game of scalability, which means hopefully we'll achieve to some kind of a social franchising model. (7.81)

I need to start looking at alternative income streams that can provide me with money to keep me going in my personal like family space, but then also allow me to still continue to push my venture. (1.44)

5.5.3.3. Sustainability

Participants 1, 3, 6,7,11 and 12 indicated that the sustainability of the business venture was a key concern for them in their nascent years. The participants indicated that their ability to create a sustainable business was hindered by their inadequate business models.

Clarity of business model is what determines sustainability of the business, and the potential of its capability of being able to pay our bills. (7.50)

Participant 12 indicated that the central success factor to ensuring the sustainability of the business venture was to simply learn about the different dimensions of business, interactions with the community and environment and align to the central vision.

...the more you learn about how to run a business, what's needed in running an effective business. How to manage finances effectively, how to market effectively, how to build effective collaboration, how to translate a vision into practise. The more you learn about that the more sustainable your business becomes. In addition, obviously the more you have a track record over time the more you attract the collaborations and the clients and resources that will make your business sustainable. (12.55)

5.6. Summary and conclusion of results: Research question 1

What are the social learning behaviours exhibited by entrepreneurs during opportunity development?

The interview questions 1.1, 1.2.2, 2.1 and 2.2.1 were presented to the participants to determine the types of social learning behaviours that were demonstrated or utilised during the opportunity development phase.

5.6.1. Definition of opportunity development

The research question 1.1 was posed to the participants to obtain their understanding of the term opportunity development and linked to the pre-questionnaire question 8, which probed the participants' motivation for pursuing the opportunities.

The responses from the participants generally confirmed that the motivation to pursue entrepreneurship was to discover new markets and new opportunities. However, a few participants indicated that their pursuit either was a combination or did not meet the definition of opportunity or necessity. The motivation for the opportunity development was driven by a higher propensity

to follow a set vision and not an opportunity that existed in the market at point in time.

What was evident from the majority of the participants' responses was an acknowledgment that closer social interaction with the communities were critical during the opportunity development phase and contributed towards further opportunities.

5.6.1.1. *Emerging social learning behaviours*

The social learning behaviours that emerged from the interviews with the participants included community embeddedness, emotional fortitude and readiness, rebelliousness and societal perceptions and were considered instrumental in their understanding of the influence of social learning behaviour during the opportunity development phase.

A majority of the participants indicated that the ability to create a connection with the community that they served, build a relationship based on mutual trust and co-sharing of information were central social learning behaviours. The participants indicated the nurturing and development of key collaborations and networks were key social learning behaviours during the opportunity development phase. A key feature of the participant's responses was that those that had closer links with their community responded with a higher propensity towards relationship building and engagement as their favoured social behaviour during opportunity development.

5.7. Summary and conclusion of results: Research question 2

How do the drivers of these perceptions about social learning behaviours influence the inhibition or promotion of entrepreneurial ventures during opportunity development?

Interview questions 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 2.2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 were presented to the participants to determine the key underlying drivers of the social learning behaviours that influence an entrepreneur's response to

opportunity development. Questions 2.5.1 and 2.6.2 were the core questions presented to the participants to determine the key inhibitors and promoters of social learning behaviours on opportunity development.

The thematic synthesis of the data from the participant's interviews revealed seven clear drivers of the participant's perceptions about their social learning behaviours, communal engagement, mind-set capabilities, self-regulation, social conditioning, learning receptiveness, emotional evolution and fortuitous learning.

A recurring theme that emerged from a majority of the participants was a propensity towards a rebellious nature, with a strong commitment to their vision and independence, as well as the extreme frustration with the negative perception of the legitimacy of the entrepreneurial career in society.

5.7.1. Social learning transformation

A number of key constructs emerged from the research in terms of influences of social learning behaviours as illustrated in Figure 9. The responses by the participants to the questions on their key learnings revealed a wide ranging of responses on the social learning behaviour patterns and the transformation of the opportunity. A theme that emerged to the forefront of participant's responses was the perceptions about the coping mechanism in dealing with the outcomes of their failures and success. The failures and success were intertwined with the participant's perceptions of the inhibitors and promoters towards the level of support that their business venture received in their nascent years.

The four central themes that influenced the participants learning transformation was their ability to connect and embed themselves with the community, their commitment towards self-reflection, and a deeper level of emotional maturity awareness and an attitude of continuous learning by interpreting the signals in the market and community. Two over-arching themes that were common across all participants, thought at varying levels of important was the uncompromising commitment towards their entrepreneurial path and a deep emotional reaction to the apparent lack of acceptance of entrepreneurs by

society.

The theme of engaging with the local community with respect, transparency and purpose as well as creating a close connection and embeddedness within the community's enabled the participants to create and develop their opportunities as well as extend the scope of their business ventures.

The recurring theme of fear of failure was a deterrent to their future ventures pursued due to the perception of illegitimacy from society. The participants indicated that the feeling of abandonment and self-doubt led to mental disintegration from the lack of assistance during this process. The participants indicated a higher reliance on emotional well-being to assist them through the period of failure. On the other hand, the participants indicated that the failures resulted in a period of self-reflection and increased their emotional ability to deal with future failures. The participants overwhelmingly responded that they saw the failures as learning experiences.

A central theme of continuous learning was the constant drive to learn from the environment and a period of self-reflection was the success factor. This was borne from their perceived lack of expertise in the nascent years coupled with an absence of adequate support on how to actually run a business were critical inhibitors of their success.

Figure 9 captures the synthesised four-step process that considered Kolb's (1984) experiential learning framework. For the purposes of the analysis of the learning transformation the 12 entrepreneurs were used to determine the influence of the learning behaviour and the two industry experts were used to triangulate the results. The themes that emerged per participant for all codes per theme is illustrated in Figure 9

The first step was based on the background of the participants, their social learning behaviours, guiding principles and background that influenced their pursuit of opportunity development. The naming convention of the participants during the creation of the opportunity was collated from the key guiding principles established in Chapter 5, Figure 12.

The second, third and fourth steps were synthesised from the participants responses to the influence of social learning behaviour during opportunity developed.

The second step was aligned to Kolb's (1984) two phases of reflective and conceptualisation.

The third and fourth steps were adapted as an extension of Kolb's (1984) phase four active implementation.

The second, third and fourth steps were formulated from the participant's responses to the inhibitors and promoters of social learning behaviour during the development of their business venture.

In addition to the above factors, the third and fourth steps were further influenced by the participant's reaction to interview question 1.3. This question asked the participants for reaction to the pursuit of a business venture that was established without the following of their guiding principles as well as their subsequent reaction and emotions to those decisions. The items in bold in step four indicates the top method of coping implemented by the participants.

An interesting observation from the analysis of the responses from the industry experts confirms the participant's indication that there is need for support, emotional and professional during opportunity development. However, there was a differing perspective on the focus area that would best support entrepreneurs, cushioned between an inward looking perspective and an outward looking perspective. Participant 10, the serial entrepreneur and business incubator director indicated that an inward looking mind-set was a key factor in an entrepreneur's early success. The participant indicated that training an entrepreneur to develop a sense of grit and resilience and critically recognise, accept and deal with their failures was critical to their emotional well-being. On the other hand Participant 14, the business incubator mentor, supported the view that closer engagement with the community and the entrepreneur was the type of support and reaction that would ensure the success of an entrepreneur was the ability to activate network access and forging links with the community.

The synthetisation of the participants responses on the influences of their social background, the influencing factors transform an opportunity subsequent to disappointments and their subsequent coping mechanism that the entrepreneurs incline towards is illustrated in the four-step process in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Analysis of the learning transformation and coping mechanism of the participants

| Participants | Step1: Identification/ creation of opportunity | Step 2: Factors influencing transformation process | Step 3: Transformation of idea | Step 4: Coping mechanism to handle developing opportunities |
|---------------------|---|---|---|--|
| P1 | Equal opportunities for all(community) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of failure detracted opportunity development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action taken to review status and rethink approach. | Community connection , emotional maturity. |
| P2 | Value creation and self-mastery (business) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detrimental role modelling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirect towards purpose, reflection. | Emotional maturity , community connection. |
| P3 | Value and brand Sustenance (business) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aversion to changing brand position, changing market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on future scale. | Learning by interpreting , self-reflection. |
| P4 | Purposive and deliberate action(business, people) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of market understanding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical considerations dictate future investments. | Emotional maturity , Learning by interpreting . |
| P5 | Serial risk taker(Business, people) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation, trust deficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed circle and deliberate pursuit. | Community connection , emotional maturity. |
| P6 | Grit, persistent and resilience (business, people) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naivety in decisions made. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pivot faster. | Community connection , learning by interpreting. |
| P7 | Customer validation with reciprocal engagement (business, opportunity) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer miscommunication. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured process adopted. | Emotional maturity , Community connection. |
| P8 | Entrenched purpose (business, learning) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always guided by principles and values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision guides opportunity. | Emotional maturity , Community connection. |

| Participants | Step 1: Identification/ creation of opportunity | Step 2: Factors influencing transformation process | Step 3: Transformation of idea | Step 4: Coping mechanism to handle developing opportunities |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| P9 | Freedom and independence (business, people) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure due to lack of technical expertise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities only on strengths. | Emotional maturity, Community connection. |
| P11 | Passion driven purpose (business, opportunity, development) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure as not compatible with values. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value driven purpose. | Community connection, Emotional maturity. |
| P12 | Entrenched vision driven pursuit (business, learning, vision) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure as not compatible with values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict adherence to guiding principles. | Emotional maturity, Community connection. |
| P13 | Agile and responsive customer reciprocal satisfaction (business, people, social) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure turned into a distraction and waste of resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refocus of purpose and principles-power of saying no | Community connection, Emotional maturity. |

5.8. Conclusion of chapter 5

The research findings presented in this chapter have been compiled from the two research questions proposed in chapter three. The findings showed that the diversified learnings of an entrepreneur's social background has a strong influence on the business ventures that are pursued during the opportunity development phase.

Despite their backgrounds, the entrepreneur's propensity to adapt, preserve, and learn through an iterative learning process contributes towards their development in this phase. The entrepreneur's embeddedness within a community has a significant influence on the ability to progress and develop their business opportunities. The emotional consequences of establishing a new business in a community that has deep biasness against the entrepreneurship profession represents a significant hurdle to a nascent entrepreneur and was a theme that developed all areas of the discussion in the chapter. Finally, the coping mechanisms that could be followed by nascent entrepreneurs were discussed. The discussion of these findings are then discussed in Chapter 6 and contrasted with the literature review reported in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6. Discussion of the results

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the results included in Chapter 5 and has been derived from 14 semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs that operate in South Africa. The discussion incorporates the two questions raised in Chapter 3 and the findings that relate to the literature review, as included in Chapter 2, with the overall aim of providing further perspectives on the research problem posed in Chapter 1.

The intentional broad framework adopted and the diverse social background of the participants resulted in divergent as well as complementary rich themes emerging from this study. Firstly, it was found that the understanding of what an opportunity and concurrently, opportunity development is, vacillated between a clear pursuit of an opportunity, to both an opportunity and necessity, to one that follows neither approach. Secondly, it was found that nascent entrepreneurs exhibited diverse social learning behaviours, influenced, largely by their social consciousness and backgrounds. Thirdly, it was found that the key drivers of the social learning behaviours, emotional maturity was influenced the inhibitors and promoters of the social learning behaviours of entrepreneur's. Finally, the emotional learning and coping mechanisms for nascent entrepreneurs was both a promoter and inhibitor to an entrepreneurs during their nascent years.

6.2. Discussion: Opportunity development

Understanding of the concept of opportunity development

The responses revealed that participants with a higher affinity in pursuing a venture based on a clearly defined vision were more inclined to indicate that their motivation in pursuing their business was neither due the pursuit of an opportunity or necessity but rather a vision.

The responses revealed that the decision to continue with the project emanated from the likelihood of its potential or whether there was a market that was ready for the opportunity presented.

The literature supports the decision of entrepreneurs deciding at this stage of entrepreneurship to continue to pursue the opportunity or exit (Vogel, 2017).

Motivations in pursuing opportunity development

The study found that a majority of the participants generally confirmed that the motivation to pursue entrepreneurship was to discover new markets and new opportunities. However, a few participants indicated that their pursuit either was a combination or did not meet the definition of opportunity or necessity. The variations in the responses supports the ambiguities that exists in the understanding of the concept of opportunities (Echardt & Shane, 2003; Jafari-Sadeghi, 2020).

The study found that a majority of the participant's acknowledged that closer social interaction with the communities was critical during the opportunity development phase (Jones et al., 2019; Shepard, 2015).

6.3. Discussion: Theme 1- Communal reciprocity

6.3.1. Communal engagement

6.3.1.1. Awareness and activation of networks

The study finds that entrepreneurs interviewed had a positive appreciation of the value of their personal networks in bridging the scarce resources. Because of this positive appreciation, entrepreneurs readily accessed their own networks and resulted in moving out of their comfort zones and collectively connecting with others in the community concurrently creating social impact.

This finding finds support in literature where entrepreneurs are constantly confronted with the prospect of constrained resources and are always looking for additional ways to increase their avenues for possible points to access those resources (Kerr & Coviello, 2019). The reliance on their own personal resources (Lans et al.,2015) forces entrepreneurs to recognise the need for

assistance which prompts them to start conversations with networks that they are familiar with (Kerr & Coviello, 2019). The combination of entrepreneurs and networks creates a conducive social impact (Jones et al., 2019).

6.3.1.2. *Community embeddedness, receptiveness and enduring relationships*

Community embeddedness

The study found two prominent factors that arose from an entrepreneur's engagement with the community. The first was a deep respect for the community as well as an embeddedness within the community.

The engagements were performed in an open, passionate and transparent manner fostering a culture of trust and honesty, which could be explained by the closeness of the entrepreneur to the community that they served. The study found that closeness to the community was achieved where participants had been familiar with the community and were aligned to the values of the community. The key benefit to achieving this embeddedness was the reconfiguration of the perceptions of the community as the entrepreneurs worked with the community. The potential to enable, implement and sustain those relationships occurred through the imprinting of the entrepreneur's identity in the minds of the community. The study found that a barrier was created in the minds of the community if the ideas were enforced onto an unforgiving community.

These findings strongly align to literature, which indicates that having a reciprocal engagement between entrepreneurs and the community promotes stronger ties and creates a relationship. The benefit of an entrepreneur having background understanding about community that they serve with having lived in it assists their understanding of the issues in the community (McKeever et al., 2015). Soetanto (2017) indicated that within an environment of uncertainty relationships are developed where common values are shared. The continuous engagement and embeddedness within the community creates an enduring benefit for the entrepreneur. McKeever et al., (2015) indicate that first point engagement by an entrepreneur with the community was from a point of

respect of the value of the community, which created an embeddedness in the minds of the community, that the entrepreneurs understood their suffering. The engagement led to a better understanding of the needs of the community, which resulted in an improvement in the development of the purpose of the business venture and opportunity (McKeever et al., 2015).

Relationship building and symbiotic exchange of information

The study found that the entrepreneurs forged a symbiotic connection with the local community by the launching of pilots or providing free services. The feedback from the community and a buy-in resulted in the conversion of an idea into a more tangible opportunity.

This aligns with the literature regarding entrepreneurs' engaging with the community on the viability of the product or service and receiving communication from the community through a feedback loop on the viability encouraging further opportunity development (Clausen, 2020). Busch & Barkema (2020) indicate that the reciprocal engagement with the community was an enabler to fostering a mechanism in which the community could actively play a role in the decisions made. The information from the interaction resulted in a reciprocal learning relationship, which further enhanced opportunity development (McKeever et al., 2015).

Therefore, it may be argued that the reason why entrepreneurs from outside a community are not readily accepted is due to a lack of common understanding, respect and an enabling coping mechanism to foster relationship building within the communities.

6.3.2. Mind-set capabilities

6.3.2.1. Emotional fortitude, agility and needs

The concepts of a mental resilience, perseverance, grit, intuition and the strong influence of independence emerged as critical themes that enabled nascent entrepreneurs in coping with the pre-conceived perceptions of society and the changing environment. The emotional resilience and ability to pivot was critical in influencing the timeous development and execution of strategic decisions to

maintain the momentum during opportunity development. The entrepreneur's relocation of their business opportunities to an environment that was more conducive to their business ventures was a key influencing factor towards the continued development of their opportunities. The relocation was seen as key contributing factors towards sustaining their development of their business ventures.

The study's findings are aligned with the literature regarding the fact that entrepreneurs demonstrate strong mental fortitude, resilience, perseverance, grit and intuition as coping mechanisms in dealing with the challenges society's biasedness during their nascent journey.

The social bias that prevails within a community may be a deterrent to an entrepreneur and enforces a pivot away from the unaccommodating environment (Williamson et al., 2020). The ability for an entrepreneur to disassociate themselves from the societal norms reveals a sense of perseverance to their chosen path (Williamson et al., 2020). Coupled with this perseverance is an entrepreneur's ability to adopt a response-focus regulation that could assist their ability to cope with the uncertain circumstances (De Kock et al., 2020).

6.3.2.2. Rebelliousness

The concepts of passion, commitment, sense of pride and fierce independence, were themes that emerged as central to an entrepreneur's propensity to rebel against societal norms and perceptions. Two participants had a strong clear purpose in driving their decisions as they engaged with the community, indicating that the vision of their business was the key to positioning themselves in the market and strategic collaborations were established to drive that mission to the extent that no opportunities were pursued if it did not meet those criteria despite the prospects of the opportunity. The drive and energy that an entrepreneur propels during their nascent phase contributes towards a deeper understanding of their business ventures. A critical factor of learning for entrepreneurs during this phase was the ability by an entrepreneur to hustle around the development of their opportunity.

The findings of the study give strong credence to the literature to the fact that despite the insurmountable challenges an entrepreneur faces, an exceptionally strong commitment to challenge the norms and adherence to a vision and purpose is a significant promoter of nascent entrepreneurial success. Schulte-Holthaus, & Kuckertz (2020) indicated the earlier an entrepreneur identified and confirmed their purpose it resulted in higher degree of passion towards their commitment as an entrepreneur. This then resulted in passion, pride, achievement dedication commitment to the purpose becoming entrenched in the DNA of an entrepreneur and was a key factor in sustaining the energy (Corbett et al, 2018). When an entrepreneur demonstrates a strong passion towards a vision the drive to maintain autonomy and control may prevent mutually beneficial collaborations developing ultimately resulting in lost opportunities (Kuratko, 2020). The ability to hustle created a deeper connection and understanding of how their business operated as well creating an emotional connection to the community resulting in their vision and purpose sustainability through an enduring trust relationship being developed. (Fisher et al., 2020).

6.3.3. Self-adjustment

Self-reflection

The study found that an entrepreneur's ability to pause and adjust their current positioning during the opportunity development phase was critical to their overall success. The recognition and acceptance that an entrepreneur was not a finished product represented an inflection point in the mind-set of the entrepreneur. This typically led to a change in their path. Another factor that drove the period of self-adjustment was a keen awareness of their actions. The study found that the lack of awareness acted as a barrier in certain cases. The study found that the concept of accountability was considered as both a barrier and promoter.

The findings find support in literature in that when an entrepreneur becomes aware, acknowledges and recognises that there is a need for self-correction that emanates from the period of self-reflection (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). The critical factor is that the entrepreneur recognises that there is a need for self-

reflection and then to act on that need (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016).

The study finds that once an entrepreneur recognises the need for self-correction, the search for external connections to assist the process occurs. Typically, this is seen in entrepreneurs engaging in selective and strategic connections with their networks, which plays an influential factor in increasing the social influence and identity with the networks.

This finding finds support in literature where once an entrepreneur identifies the need there is a period of self-correction and an action that transforms the need into a higher learning experience, which includes reaching out to the social environment for that assistance (Cope, 2011; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016).

Trust deficiency

The concept of trust deficiency was a theme that emerged as a key barrier in initiating partnerships with the wider community. Participants indicated that previous negative partnerships has led to their self-enforced action in being selective with whom they conduct business. It does seem surprising that with all the participants rating engagement and trust with the communities as key success factors, there was a reluctance to forge new relationships easily. Even more surprising was participant 1's reaction to having an aversion to easily developing a trust relationship, given that as a social entrepreneur he indicated embeddedness in the local community as a success factor.

The findings find support in literature in that the context of entrepreneur's background and experience influences the manner in which an entrepreneur is able to trust (Shi et al., 2015).

6.3.4. Social conditioning

6.3.4.1. Emotional readiness, societal biasness and legitimacy

Legitimacy consequences

The study found that the influence of pre-conceived societal perceptions had a pervasive negative impact on the emotional and professional mind-set of

nascent entrepreneurs. The barriers emanated from a culture with preconceived perceptions of entrepreneurs who were viewed with derision when entrepreneurs failed and demonstrated a lack of understanding or respect of the entrepreneurship profession.

These findings strongly align to literature on the social biasness of entrepreneur's within society. Society has a lower disposition towards the entrepreneurs as a career or profession therefore entrepreneurs have to constantly counter and respond to the issue of their legitimacy which presents significant challenges to a nascent entrepreneur (Fisher, 2020). As one participant in the study indicated that it felt like taking on the world at times.

Emotional impact of failure

It emerged from the study that the pervasive impact of society's rejection of entrepreneurial failure contributed significantly towards the mental and emotional disintegration nascent entrepreneurs. The disregard by society led to enhanced levels of self-doubt with the entrepreneur's abilities. The influential factor driving the emotional disintegration was the taboos of the subject of failure within society. An additional factor that contributed towards this emotional disintegration was the lack of emotional support towards nascent entrepreneurs. The participants indicated that this might explain the lower propensity an entrepreneur has towards risk taking in South Africa and not pursuing the opportunity development phase.

These findings strongly align to literature on the impact of failure on an entrepreneur's emotional well-being. Given the legitimacy issues faced by entrepreneurs the emotional consequences of failing are elevated for a nascent entrepreneur presenting significant challenges to their future progression (Fisher, 2020). As one participant in the study indicated that it felt like taking on the world at times and other indicated that the failure made them turn away from pursuing the opportunities. These findings support literature where studies find that that when faced with fear; entrepreneurs are dissuaded from continuing the path (Kollmann et al., 2017). In support of literatures contradictory findings on the impact of failure on the emotional well-being on

entrepreneurs. This study found that a few participants viewed failure as failure, which aligned to society's perceptions, whereas the rest of the participants viewed failure as a learning experience (van Gelderen, 2015).

Emotional coping with failure

Despite the finding that a few participants felt over-whelmed to pursue an opportunity after a failure, a majority of the participants viewed failure as learning experience. To the extent that the study found that despite the pervasive nature of societal biasness of failure, a few participants were able to adopt an attitude of indifference towards society's biasness. Participants indicated that the attitude of indifference emanated from a strong sense of self-worth as well as motivation in contributing towards the social needs of the community. The firm commitment to their understanding of their purpose resulted in the entrepreneur continuing on their path. Another promoting factor was the adoption of an unlearning and relearning approach in trying to cope with the emotional impact of societal biasness towards entrepreneurs and represented fertile ground for collective learning.

These findings strongly align to literature on the learning experiences and coping mechanism from failure on an entrepreneur. Literature finds that an elevated awareness of the emotional impact of failure improves their ability to progress and succeed (De Kock et al., 2020). The ability of an entrepreneur to remove themselves from their traditional norms increases their chances of coping with failure (Cope, 2011). Furthermore, strong links in literature are found in that the adoption of an unlearning and learning approach to coping with the emotions and societal biasness, promotes their ability to pursue their opportunities (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018; Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020; Secundo et al., 2017). It may require non-traditional approaches to cope with the emotional challenges (Fisher et al., 2020). One approach the participants indicated to dealing with failure was spiritual strength. This finding finds support in literature where it was found that self-compassion was promoted through spiritual meditation (Engel et al., 2019).

A few participants raised an interesting point on the taboos of failure in society, which may prevent entrepreneurs from openly talking about their failures. Literature finds that there could be benefit with entrepreneurs openly talking about failures as a normal occurrence and may change the issue of entrepreneurial stigmas (Singh et al., 2015). This may assist over-coming the risk adverse culture due these perceived failures. It is interesting that one participant that was from a culture that viewed failure, as a learning experience was able to fail repeatedly without undue stigma. This finding lends credence to the fact that conducive environments can promote entrepreneurial activity (Williamson et al., 2020).

Prosocial motivation

A strong prosocial motivation emerged as a key theme that directly influenced the type of opportunities pursued. Key enabling factors that influenced this social learning behaviour was a deep sense of compassion and empathy for the community. A reciprocal engagement with the community enabled the entrepreneurs to embed within the community. The benefits of embedding within the community created a deeper understanding of the social issues within the community, which was the driving force for further opportunities.

The findings find links to literature regarding the entrepreneur's extension or in certain cases, the central reasons, and an entrepreneur follows a prosocial motivational path. Shepard (2015) indicated that the embeddedness within a society by an entrepreneur led to a deeper understanding of a society's needs. The understanding obtained provided deeper insight into the development of the opportunity leading to a mutually beneficial outcome for society and entrepreneurs, a buy-in to the process promoted an entrepreneurs success (Murnieks et al., 2020).

6.3.4.2. Self-development

The concepts of self-identity, autonomy, accountability and passion emerged as key themes of an entrepreneur's drive to develop themselves. The participants highlighted that this was a key promoter for them removing themselves from positions that did not meet their independence desires and

freeing them to pursue the own path founded on a purpose therefore being accountable to the future that they wished to forge. The study found that entrepreneurs have a dogged belief in their principles, which aids their focus on self-development in the pursuit of independence. This study found that there were two distinct categories of entrepreneurs when it came to self-development. The first demonstrated a purpose but a willingness to adapt their vision to the environment that they served. The second of which the vision of the entrepreneur drove every decision with no deviation from that intention.

The findings find support in literature that indicates that the larger the passion is demonstrated by an entrepreneur and earlier in their journey to their vision the greater the propensity for an entrepreneur to pursue an opportunity development that is based on a specific purpose (Schulte-Holthaus, 2020). Grimes (2018) found that entrepreneurs that had a stronger affiliation to their vision were less likely to be influenced by societal demands therefore confirming this study's results.

Emotional and self-mastery

It emerged from the study that a strong attachment to the business venture propels entrepreneurs to continuously strive to learn to improve their business. The key promoting factors for this learning behaviour resulted in entrepreneurs pursuing emotional and self-mastery learning.

A key driver of the learning behaviour was that many participants engaged in the community's that they grew up which influenced their learning perceptions to effect positive social change. The study found that entrepreneurs adopted self-introspection as a key promoter in dealing with societal biases. The adoption of continuous learning and self-introspection assisted the entrepreneurs in understanding and developing novel ways to deal with societal biasness. One participant went as far as engaging with a social agitator having failed in the past, and tried gaining a common understanding leading to honest engagement creating connections to resources not ordinarily available as part of their awareness in trying to deal with the issues faced.

The findings find strong links to literature regarding the key benefit an entrepreneur's ability to self-reflect and learning about their experiences and under emotional impact. Entrepreneurs benefit from a period of deep self-organisation and definition of the purpose and goal despite their current tribulations with a contentment that they are contributing towards societal ills (Shri et al., 2019). The engagement with the community in an active and attitude of continuous learning provided entrepreneurs with environment to be aware of the potential of opportunities and opened additional avenues (Boso et al., 2019).

6.3.5. Discussion: Theme 2: Emotional learning receptiveness

6.3.5.1. Emotional and learning support

Emotional support and strength

The research found that entrepreneurs drew their emotional strength from a diverse category of validators with a majority agreeing on the value of having strong emotional support. Maintaining strong nucleus support from their family, reliance on spiritual guidance, networks formulated from engagement in business incubators, international and local competitions and business school programs provided entrepreneurs with strong motivation to continue to pursue their business ventures. The financial support from family provided the additional nurturing required for the nascent phase. The motivation enhanced the confidence and contentment that entrepreneurs had in their chosen path.

The findings find strong support in literature on the significant influence of a nucleus support has on a nascent entrepreneur. Meoli et al. (2020) and Arrgele et al. (2015) indicate that strong family support systems acts as foundation for an entrepreneur to pursue their dreams and are more likely to pursue and sustain their journey. There may be cases where family support act as barriers against an entrepreneurs journey (Arregle et al., 2015), however this finding in literature was not evident from the results of this study. A majority of participants indicating the value of a strong family support system may explain this.

Entrepreneurial learning and life cycle support

The study found that participants with a deep understanding of the suffering in the community's and those that had a stronger connection with their communities were motivated in creating impact in the community supporting the prosocial motivation.

The findings found support in literature where it was indicated that an entrepreneur's higher propensity towards empathy and compassion for a community's suffering and adversity led to a renewed purpose to assist the community through prosocial opportunity development ventures (Shepard, et al., 2020).

The study found contrasting views on the value of learning programs provided to entrepreneurs during the opportunity development phase. A prominent theme that emerged was that learning programs do not prepare entrepreneurs for the harsh realities of running their own business once they exit the learning programs highlighting this as a key barrier to the success of entrepreneurial support programs. Tied into the concept of realities the study found that participants encountered emotional support barriers, in the form of self-doubt and environment desegregation. Another barrier was due to the entrepreneurs' difficulties in translating their theoretical knowledge into practical operations as well as an environment was not synchronised towards supporting entrepreneur's during the opportunity development phase.

This finding is supported in literature by reflecting the occurrence of an expectation gap between the realities of entrepreneurs (Williamson et al., 2020)

The expectation gap may be due to a nascent entrepreneur's lack of understanding of their purpose or how to structure their goals, therefore the training programs which were premised on entrepreneurs knowing what they wanted to pursue, may not suit or meet the technical needs of nascent entrepreneurs (Engel et al., 2017). Engel et al. (2017) indicate that this may be due to the structure of learning programs, which do not consider the real role of improving an entrepreneur during that phase and concentrate on easily

reportable items for example entrepreneurial exit rates.

6.3.5.2. Entrepreneurial mind-set evolution

Bricolage and learning

The higher propensity by entrepreneurs to take risks presented a time pressure to deal with all challenges. The participants indicated that dealing with the time pressures resulted in a period of self-reflection on how to best use their constrained resources with the uncertainties in the market to meet the needs of the community.

The concepts of bricolage is well discussed in literature in the context of entrepreneurial action and utilisation of scarce resources. The literature supports the concept that entrepreneurs after a period of self-reflection realign their resources in a frugal manner (Michaelis et al., 2020).

Continuous learning by interpreting

The study found that the participants were keenly aware of the societal biasness and were committed to finding ways to alleviate them. This typically involved a method of unlearning and learning social norms with a focus on understanding the entire entrepreneurial process including the emotional aspects of entrepreneurship contributing towards the enhanced confidence in their abilities. The continuous learning process assisted the entrepreneurs in coping with their daily challenges as well as when the entrepreneurs alertness to the opportunity is higher however further research is needed into how and why learning influences the growth phase of entrepreneurship, the nascent phase of a business venture (Boso et al., 2017; Secundo, 2017).

6.3.5.3. Fortuitous learning

Serendipity

The study found that for entrepreneurs that were prone to engaging with the community more frequently, experienced fortuitous events and interactions that led to further opportunity development.

The literature indicates that an entrepreneur's propensity to expose themselves to society and engage in an open manner leads to serendipitous events and new social connections that ordinarily did not exist which promotes the discovery and development of opportunities (Busch & Barkema, 2019). Through the process of fortuitous events, entrepreneurs are able to generate new resources and connections that provides them with access to further opportunities.

Critical events

The concept of critical events was an experience that most participants had experienced, in the form of life-changing events, which had changed their social interactions with the environment and outlook on their entrepreneurial ventures. These experiences were viewed largely as positive influence on their learning development. This typically followed a period of deep self-reflection and often resulted in the entrepreneurs taking on more creative projects and innovating their opportunities further.

The emerging theme of critical events finds support in literature, where the occurrence of an event that disturbs the normal patterns of an entrepreneur's life compels entrepreneurs to self-reflect, however the period of self-reflection and learning occurs only when the entrepreneur recognises the value of the critical event (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). Leading credence to the value of self-reflection by a nascent entrepreneur.

6.3.6. Discussion: Theme 3: Entrepreneurial action

6.3.6.1. Ecosystem constraints

The study found an almost unanimous response from the participants regarding the pervasive hindrance towards the development of their opportunities due to significant industry changes, excessive regulatory and compliance within the ecosystem opportunity development phase.

The study interestingly found that despite the almost insurmountable restrictions placed on an entrepreneur with society, the attitude adopted was

one of uncompromising commitment to forging ahead with their business venture and find alternative ways to overcome the restrictions.

The findings are supported by literature where an entrepreneur's capacity and willingness to overcome the excessive environment barriers drive is driven by a higher or lower propensity to overcome the barriers (Meoli et al., 2020). The perceptions about the barriers may influence an entrepreneur's willingness to pursue an opportunity (Meoli et al., 2020).

6.3.6.2. Opportunity development

The study found that a majority of the participants indicated that their early years were faced with a constant scanning of the environment, learning, adapting and changing which proved to be a key promoter of their ability to cope with the environment changes and maintain their principles.

The creation of links with the community prior to introduction of the opportunity enabled an entrepreneur's ability to sense the market and community conditions and germinate the opportunities developed. The participants indicated that this promoted the creation of an enduring consciousness in the community. The ensuring benefit of the social connection created opportunities for co-sharing of information and innovation with the community and proved critical in gaining entry into further markets in the community with this approach.

This findings find strong support in literature where entrepreneurs with various stages of sense making occurring. The entrepreneur identifies the opportunity in the market which is what Vogel (2017) refers to as the ideation phase, then entrepreneur goes into a problem analysis phase due to an elevated level of awareness of the environment (Hoyte et al., 2019). The entrepreneurs were willing to relinquish their initial purpose to embed within the community to create a connection and create further clarification in the opportunity pursued (Grimes, 2018). Noticeably, one participant was adamant that the vision always drove what was taken to market and it was founded their understanding of the market need, which confirms Grimes (2018) findings where entrepreneurs that have a stronger affinity to their vision are less likely to adopt a sense making exercise first due to their attachment to their vision.

6.3.6.3. Value offering

The creation of value was supported by an entrepreneur's ability to identify the gap in the market, collate all relevant resources and capabilities with least resistance and provide the market with more than what was available. The participants indicated that adversity led to engagements with the community often resulting in innovative solutions. As well as one participant's, close affinity with the community led to a purpose to create a legacy within the community. This typically resulted in an enduring relationship within the community leading to further opportunities.

This finding finds support in literature with an entrepreneur adopting a culture of learning from their failure to identify their capabilities for future ventures that is resources and capabilities as well as resilience with the view to creating a legacy from the ventures (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018). Failure or adversity is seen as a start to creating the legacy (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018).

6.4. Discussion: Conclusion on research question 1 and 2

6.4.1. Discussion: Conclusion on research question 1

What are the social learning behaviours exhibited during opportunity development?

The purpose of the question was to obtain an understanding of the type of social learning behaviours that influenced the wide and diverse group of entrepreneurs interviewed.

6.4.2. Discussion: Conclusion on research question 2

How do the drivers of these perceptions about social learning behaviours influence the inhibition or promotion of entrepreneurial ventures during opportunity development?

This question sought to explore the perceptions of entrepreneurs about the drivers of social learning behaviours. The participant's perceptions of their

inhibitors and promoters of the learning behaviours proved instrumental in exploring their attitude with respect to how they process apparent critical events or failure in their development of their opportunities. These perceptions about the inhibitors and promoters were utilised in considering the perceptions about their ability to cope with the uncertainties with a reference to their stated guiding principles.

The study found that most participants agreed that the forging of deep connections with the community was a key driver of their success as well as failures where their connection was not as strong. The other key drivers were continuous interpretative learning and the emotional ability to deal with societal biasness, especially in the event of failures.

The study found that the type of social learning behaviours were strongly aligned to the three entrepreneurial mind-set factors, cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects as illustrated in Figure 15 below. The close alignment of the three entrepreneurial mind-sets resulted in overlap between the thinking; feeling and acting elements of entrepreneurial behaviour (Kuratko, 2020).

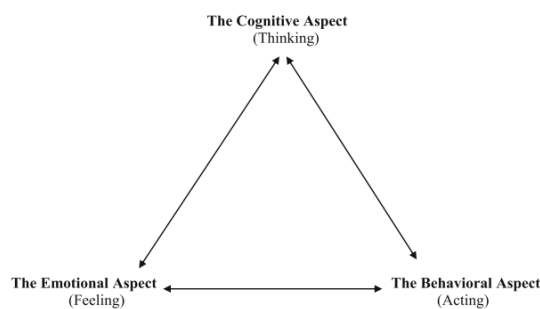


Figure 15: The triad of the entrepreneurial mind-set

Note this figure was reproduced from Kuratko et al., in 2020 indicating the three aspects of the entrepreneurial mind-set.

Learning and coping mechanisms

The study found that all participants except one demonstrated a strong propensity to establish a period of self-reflection post the occurrence of a failure. The period of self-reflection was initiated firstly by an acknowledgement of the failure, which led to the period of self-reflection.

The study was conducted in a setting where entrepreneurs were asked to indicate their attitude when alternative exploration of opportunities were pursued that went against their guiding principles (Muehlfeld et al., 2015). This question revealed interesting dynamics related to the background, learning behaviour as well as emotional attitude towards following alternative paths during opportunity development.

To understand the perceptions of entrepreneurs an analyse of the influence of an entrepreneurs background against their perception of failure as well as their coping mechanism. Their reflection on that experience was presented in an interview question that asked the entrepreneurs about their emotions, perceptions after pursuing an opportunity that did not follow their guidelines.

There is strong support in literature of the findings, which indicated that where an entrepreneur is able to identify, timeously accept their apparent failures and respond to societies perceived biasness it accentuated the need for an entrepreneur to be able to pivot in a manner that signals to the community a sense of reliability, confidence and empathy with their vision at their foundation (McDonald & Bremner, 2020). T

The one participant that was an exception indicated that every venture pursued was based on a set and defined purpose having had experiences in their professional work where trust was an issue. The key reason for this defiant attitude was that the motivation to pursue entrepreneurship was to attain independence and an unwillingness to compromise that vision.

The study found that a lack of professional and emotional support in the early years of their entrepreneurial journey was not adequate which propelled a majority of the participants to look to external structures and connections to

A prevalent theme from a majority of participants has been that the support from formal training programs that are focused on targeting the development of entrepreneurs did not align to their needs at point in time. The reason for that extended from the programs not meeting their emotional and technical needs.

6.5. Conclusion of Chapter 6

This chapter has presented a discussion of the findings of this study as it relates to the literature. The aim of the research was to explore and gain an understanding of the drivers and influence of social learning behaviours during opportunity development.

This chapter explored the social learning behaviours the factors and perceptions and inquired into the reasons for the perceptions. It further explored the. It finally studied the views and perceptions of entrepreneurs' drivers of social learning behaviours and the factors that promote or inhibit the opportunity development process.

The literature review supports the study findings in how the social learning and learning behaviours can co-exist within the field of entrepreneurship. This study has found that the integration of learning behaviours with a coping mechanism may contribute towards the adoption of sustainable decision-making processes during opportunity development.

It further suggests that the process of continuous community engagement and embeddedness through the social interactions may now be integrated with the theory of experiential learning behaviour. The cycle of continuous learning, interpreting as well as emotional evolution may result in a defiant attitude to continuously pursue an opportunity to achieve a sustainable outcome that addresses the needs of the community that they live, engage and serve.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 reported the findings of this study, in relation to the questions outlined in Chapter 3, and contrasted them to the literature as reported in Chapter 2. This chapter provides an assimilated view of the key findings. The discussion then proceeds to exploring the implications of the findings on the influence of social learning behaviour during the opportunity development phase of entrepreneurship. There is then a discussion on the limitations of the research with then a conclusion on the key recommendations for future research.

This study has attempted to understand the constructs of social learning behaviour during the opportunity development phase. The aim of study this study was to obtain a deeper understanding of the influence of the perceptions of social learning behaviours of nascent entrepreneurs have on the in promoting or inhibiting the development of an opportunity.

It set out to take an broad dual framework that incorporates social learning theory and experiential learning theory to explore the opportunity development phase of entrepreneurship. The study set out to explore the barriers and promoters that the social learning behaviours of entrepreneurs encounter during the opportunity development phase, along with the influences that the factors have on the success or failure of the business. Finally, the study set out to explore the coping mechanisms that nascent entrepreneurs exhibit during the opportunity development, with the aim of creating an understanding of the emotional cognition that follows the entrepreneur during this phase of entrepreneurship. This allowed for greater focus on the critical stage of on entrepreneurial processes, which are the subject of this research (Lattacher, & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020; Shepard, 2015; Vogel, 2017).

This was achieved through the research problem question *“How do social learning behaviours influence entrepreneurial ventures during the opportunity development phase?”*

The research was conducted through a 23-week exploratory study, involving nascent entrepreneurs within the context of social learning behaviour with the aim to contribute towards the extension in the understanding of opportunity development phase, given the extensive acknowledge by authors on the potential for entrepreneurial ventures in having an impact on economic growth and development. Figure 4 illustrates the studies core constructs and purpose in determining the influence of social learning behaviour in the opportunity development phase and provided a blueprint in the execution of this research.

7.2. Results of key findings

7.2.1. Reciprocal relationship between social learning and opportunity development concepts

The study found that participants followed an iterative path of learning and discovery during the opportunity development phase. The barriers that were faced by the participants represented key learning experiences and utilised in the development of their future ventures. This study sought to use two broad yet influential frameworks of Bandura (1977) which incorporated the influence of the cognitive and social learning experiences together with the Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning to explore the influence of these two areas on an the entrepreneurial opportunity development. The study found that motivated and purpose driven nascent entrepreneurs demonstrated an exceptionally high propensity towards continuous learning from their social communities and to feedback the learnings into their opportunity development. The entrepreneur's prior experience although critical was no barrier to them pursuing an opportunity. The entrepreneur's demonstrated a high level of independence and rebellious to maintain their vision and continue on their path to independence and autonomy while linking the mechanism of the entrepreneurial mind to the environment (Corbett et al., 2018).

7.2.2. The influential drivers, barriers and promoters of social learning during opportunity development

The constantly changing environment translates into entrepreneurs reaching out to their communities, environment and networks that they collate through relationships that they build through their journey. The study found six dominant themes that emerged from the exploration of the barriers, promoters and the coping mechanisms of nascent entrepreneurs during the opportunity development phase. These six core characteristics defined the participants' guiding principles, their views and perceptions of the inhibitors and promoters and critically represented the core coping mechanisms that were found to have been dominant within the participants.

The six dominant phases of emotional maturity and community connection, which represented the core of the coping mechanism, were supported by the rebel, vision defiance, learning by interpreting and self-reflections characteristics. The one over-arching theme that influenced the attitude of all participants was the issue of legitimacy. This depiction is illustrated in Figure 16 below.

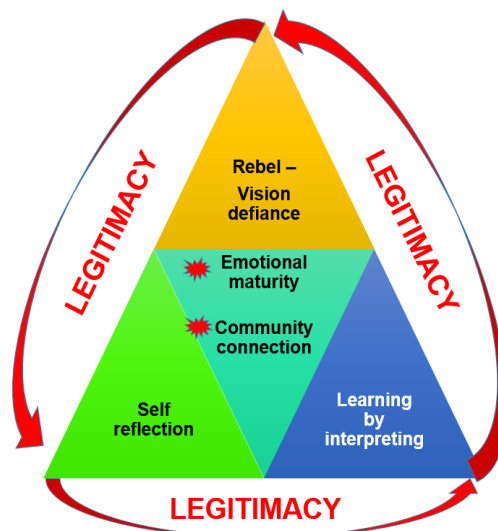


Figure 16: Central core of coping mechanism (authors adaption from study)

Emotional maturity and community connection

The study found that strong links between an entrepreneur and the community were forged due to a strong embeddedness within the community because of pre-connections and a link to the community through community leaders or instigators (McKeever et al., Soetanto, 2017). An entrepreneurs successes in the early years are defined by their early engagement with their target environment, an area of passion and critically from their deep engagement with the environment. That deep engagement creates links and roots throughout the environment and promotes reputational enhancement and recognition. Access to future opportunities are increased due to reputational and recognition entrenchment in an environment.

The study found that the all entrepreneurs had been faced with extreme emotional and mental strife as nascent entrepreneurs and was considered a topic not often focused in a profession that favours a results outcome as opposed to focusing on the mental welfare of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are faced with number challenges and due to the uncertain and changing environment; they are subject to rapid emotional challenges, which may have contradictory impact on their success (De Cock et al., 2020). Therefore, the results from this study provide much insight into how a nascent entrepreneur reacts in a time of uncertainty and failure, what coping mechanisms are adopted under uncertainty. This study finds that in times of uncertainty and failure entrepreneurs return to their original guiding principles, retreat from their expansionary, and risk taking behaviour followed by a period of self-reflection and repositioning of their future business ventures.

Rebellion – defiance to succeed

The study found that an eentrepreneurs drive to persist in the face of societal expectations drove them to move forward to their dream in achieving them. Once an entrepreneur decided on the path to pursuing the development of the opportunity, their commitment to prove the community that they will succeed becomes evident (Schulte-Hothaus & Kuckertz, 2020). Defiant adherence to

following their purpose is driven by their strong belief in their vision. However, it was found that when an entrepreneur had an extremely high affinity to their vision, their attachment to that vision made their decision making to new opportunities rigid therefore losing on potential opportunities (Kuratko, 2020). Nevertheless, the overriding characteristic that defined this phase was the ability of the entrepreneurs to cope with uncertainties in the market by hustling in their drive to engage with the community and create new connections (Fisher et al., 2020).

Self-reflection

The study found that there was a deep appreciation of the value of self-reflection as it was considered central for an entrepreneur to stop, pause and reflect on their trials during their journey. What was critical to the learning process was the ability to recognise the need for the self-reflection, to process the learnings and then critically to process and transform the learnings (Cope 2011; Lindh & Thorgren, 2016).

Learning by interpreting

Tied to the concept of emotional failure was the entrepreneur's desire to continuous learning, partly from the societal pressures of failure and partly by their strong desire of independence. A key feature of this period was a technique of unlearning and learning the societal biasness (Boso et al., 2017; Secundo, 2017). Boso et al. (2017) indicated that the value of continuous learning and concurrent engagement with the community was essential to the success of nascent entrepreneurs.

Legitimacy

Overcoming societal bias against entrepreneurship was found in the study to be a pervasive barrier against the future progression of many opportunities pursued by the entrepreneurs. The study found that learning programs were not providing entrepreneurs with the emotional and actual technical support to operate as an entrepreneur once they had left the learning programs and represented a key deficiency in the coping mechanism for nascent

entrepreneurs

7.3. Implications for practice

Coping mechanism development

The success of nascent entrepreneurs is widely acknowledged to be hindered by various societal expectations and norms (GEMS,2020b) and where very often entrepreneurs become discouraged and exit from their business ventures prematurely. This therefore places emphasis on ensuring entrepreneurs transition from the opportunity development phase to the next phase of their entrepreneurial journey. To this end, the study's results support a coping mechanism for nascent entrepreneurs that considers the social learning behaviours. This coping mechanism will facilitate and provide emotional support to entrepreneurs and ensure their sustained entrepreneurial path.

The key results of the study revealed a strong rebellious nature by the entrepreneurs to fight society's norms and forge an independent path. Future studies may conduct research into the relationship between the strength of social norms and the potential solutions for entrepreneurs that do not fit the traditional norms (Williamson, 2020).

The primary focus of this study was the opportunity development phase, which plays a vital role in the progression of an entrepreneur (Vogel, 2017). Future studies may expand the concepts of emotional fortitude to the entire entrepreneurship process.

Entrepreneurial learning from failure culture and entrepreneurial legitimacy validation

This study results supports the argument that the creation of failure friendly-friendly culture environment while critical for the nascent entrepreneur, an entrepreneur would be better served by the adoption of learning programs that educate them about the realities of entrepreneurship (Williamson et al., 2020)

The inclusion of well-being learning program initiatives as well as a destigmatisation community outreach program within the teaching institutions

may contribute positively towards raising the profile of the impact of mental health issues on entrepreneurs (WHO, 2019).

The study found that the key barrier to entrepreneurs during opportunity development is reluctance of strategic stakeholders to collaborate with nascent entrepreneurs. Therefore concerted actions should be implemented by entrepreneurial learning support institutions and mentors to foster a deepening ties between nascent entrepreneurs and strategic networks and concurrently increase their networking skills (Soetanto, 2017).

Life cycle learning support and learning support programs

The results in this study found that there was a real need for learning programs to teach entrepreneurs the actual functionalities of running a business. This may involve training programs to be extended to include the actual knowledge of what to do in running a business and when to execute certain actions (van Gelderen, 2015).

The results in this study could provide universities with impetus to become more efficient in changing the narrative from that of an individual having an intention to one of pursuing entrepreneurship as a career choice (Meoli, 2020).

Policy enhancements

A key finding from the study was the lack of emotional support functions for nascent entrepreneurs. Therefore those charged with governance and policy drafting, could provide support to entrepreneurs in the form of emotional well-being and health educational counselling services to sustain entrepreneurs through the development of their business ventures, encouraging the development of resilience (Boso, 2019).

7.4. Limitations

This study explored the key constructs of social learning behaviour and opportunity development. As reported in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, there exists considerable debate on the definition of opportunity development. A number of

other limitations exist in terms of the research methodology, which influences the generalisability of the findings.

Firstly, the sample population was to target entrepreneurs in South Africa, which is indeterminate, therefore the study was not able to apply the results generally. Combined with this was the small sample size, which was selected on a judgement snowballing technique, which limited the validity and the generalisability of the study's results (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

Secondly, this study was conducted exclusively in South Africa, therefore the results from this study may not be transferrable to other countries due to the differing cultural and contextual influences.

Thirdly, this study conducted was an exploratory and inductive approach, which may be subject to the author's bias.

Fourthly, this study was centred on a qualitative retrospective study which was performed on a small sample size, which limited the generalisability of the data.

Further to this, the study did not investigate critical areas of opportunity ideation and opportunity evaluation (Vogel, 2017) therefore the results may not be transferable to the other cycles of entrepreneurship.

7.5. Suggestions for future research

The research has identified a significant amount of factors that drive the social learning behaviours and the drivers of those factors, but further research is needed to explore a deeper connection between the factors.

A quantitative analysis study with a large sample could be carried out using the promoting and inhibiting factors identified in this research study. The potential of this approach then would be that the results would be more readily generalised than the qualitative method approach and ensure that the results from this qualitative study is complemented by a rigorous quantitative research study with the potential to advancing this study further (Shah & Corley, 2006). The sample population was to target entrepreneurs in South Africa, future studies could extend the scope to other countries either to developed countries

or similar developing countries.

The study found that entrepreneurs had a high level of self-control and self-regulation where there is a deep purpose intention. However, what may be interesting to explore in future studies is the influence of self-control in dissuading entrepreneurs from future opportunities. In other words, what influences the rigid adherence to a vision and whether that leads to opportunities not being developed further (van Gelderen, 2015).

The focus of this study was the social learning behaviours exhibited by nascent entrepreneurs during opportunity development. Future research could extend to the first phase, ideation, and last phase, exploration or to the entire phase to understand the influence of social learning behaviours on the various phases.

The study found that entrepreneurs displayed various levels of coping mechanisms during the opportunity development phase, however due to the broad nature of the study; a potential area that could be explored is to determine impact of selecting various coping mechanisms during the pursuit of opportunities.

7.6. Conclusion

The over-arching aim of this research was to contribute towards the nascent theoretical knowledge around entrepreneurial opportunity development and the influence of social learning behaviours during this phase. The results from this study provide a clear indication that the need for supporting entrepreneurs learning experiences, social acceptance and emotional fortitude is an urgent requirement as it has the potential to propel further entrepreneurial activity as well as sustain that journey (Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020; Shepard, 2015; Vogel, 2017).

Given the importance noted in the influence of entrepreneurship in the socio-economic well-being of a country (WHO, 2019), it is anticipated that this research study will provide an impetus towards an improvement in the success of entrepreneurs during the opportunity development phase with emotional fortitude and strength at the core in order to become sustainable.

Consequently contributing towards reducing poverty, stimulating economic growth and boosting innovation as well as enhancing social and environmental sustainability as envisioned by the United Nations, in the face of significant resource and economic constraints (Fisher et al., 2020; Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002), in South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Details of Participants

| Participant | Pseudonym | Motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture Opportunity or necessity | Industry | Locality/Timing of business venture | Experience as an entrepreneur | Education | Level of support pursued |
|-------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Community organiser | Opportunity. Grew up in rural communities and experienced hardships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by the prevalence of lack of opportunity for youth in rural communities. | Education and technology training | Rural communities, Eastern Cape. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.8 years in rural social engagement. Founded a local NGO. | Currently completing a PHD specialising in community engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIBS social enterprise programme. YALI SADC fellowship; Mandela Washington Fellowship. SAB Foundation GIBS mentorship and coaching programmes. |
| 2 | Social entertainer | Opportunity. Grew up in rural communities and experienced hardships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by the prevalence of lack of opportunity for youth in rural communities. | Marketing and coaching training | Durban, KZN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 years | MBA – UKZB, Gibbs BA Media & Communications and English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social SAB Kickstart finalist awarded an opportunity to gain business skills and achieve training that was strictly for business and business oriented. |

| Participant | Pseudonym | Motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture Opportunity or necessity | Industry | Locality/Timing of business venture | Experience as an entrepreneur | Education | Level of support pursued |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| 3 | Opportunity seeker | <p>Opportunity, active search for opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by difficulty in aligning values needs of corporate and pursuit of independence. | Alcohol distillery | Bloemfontein, Free State and Pretoria, Gauteng | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 years in alcohol distillery industry. Family owned business. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B Sc, chemical engineer. PGDIP. MBA. | Family support and informal courses. |
| 4 | Leadership capacity developer | <p>Both,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity - to establish in the largely uncontested space defined by the intersection of pure business pursuits of profit optimisation on the one hand, and development planning and management, on the other. Necessity- family commitments. Motivated by illiterate mother in pursuing entrepreneurship. | Agricultural and management consulting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm, in Eston, KZN and Consultancy firm based in Durban, KZN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 years' experience in leadership capacity management. Hobby from childhood in agricultural farming. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honours in Business Studies majoring in corporate strategy. Master of business leadership majoring in corporate strategy and services marketing BPhil in sustainable development planning & management PhD candidate in leadership, systems thinking and complexity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive business training from formal employ Formal training at Harvard School of Public (Boston, Massachusetts), in Sweden, in Rotterdam, in Kenya. Multiple African countries while in formal employment. |

| Participant | Pseudonym | Motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture Opportunity or necessity | Industry | Locality/Timing of business venture | Experience as an entrepreneur | Education | Level of support pursued |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| 5 | Serial entrepreneur | <p>Opportunity – No real motivator it just happened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship was not a widely acknowledge career when the business opportunities were pursued. | ITC | Durban, KZN, South Africa, SMME's and corporate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 years as a serial entrepreneur, with 5 years the current company in the ITC services sector. • Stakes in diverse production and services entities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public relations at DUT, and • Multiple informal business trainings and courses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUT innovation incubator. • Several SEDA intervention programmes. |
| 6 | Never say never entrepreneur | Opportunity. | Social entrepreneur | Cape Town | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years | Chartered Financial Analyst | Family support Formal education |
| 7 | Business hub entrepreneur | Opportunity. | Entrepreneurial innovation incubator hubs, SMME focus | Durban, KZN, South Africa, SMME's and corporate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years | Business mentor | Family support Formal education |
| 8 | Executive coach | <p>Neither, As there was no business nor was there a need to leave formal employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivator was the pursuit of independence. | Mentorship, coaching, leadership training | Durban, KZN, South Africa, SMME's and corporate | <p>7 years, in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive coaching; • Leadership development • Career development; • Coaching • Public Speaking; • Training; • Life Coaching. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA SA. • brain based coaching certification. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific areas of informal courses. • Personal and leadership. Development. • Marketing and sales. |

| Participant | Pseudonym | Motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture Opportunity or necessity | Industry | Locality/Timing of business venture | Experience as an entrepreneur | Education | Level of support pursued |
|-------------|---|--|------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| 9 | Digital security consultant | Opportunity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by entrepreneurial parents. | Business ITC | Pretoria Johannesburg, SMME's and corporate | 9 years in digital marketing, business IT support and cyber security. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIS Information Science Degree Certified Information systems security professional PGDIP MBA | Accelerator's 2018 and 2019. |
| 10 | Business incubator director(industry expert) Serial entrepreneur | Opportunity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursuit of a conducive entrepreneurial environment that aligns to the needs of the entrepreneur. | Teaching and mentoring | Stellenbosch, Cape Town, All sectors of entrepreneurs | 15 years' experience as a serial entrepreneur that covers the spectrum of interests, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serial entrepreneur | Family support Formal education |
| 11 | Medical researcher innovator | Opportunity. | Medical agriculture | Johannesburg, Gauteng; Cape town | 5 years' experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B Sc | Family support Formal education |

| Participant | Pseudonym | Motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture Opportunity or necessity | Industry | Locality/Timing of business venture | Experience as an entrepreneur | Education | Level of support pursued |
|-------------|--|--|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 12 | Visionary social entrepreneur | Neither, As vigorously committed to chosen social purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by a vision, to create social harmony and health in the world. | Human counselling | Durban, KZN | 22 years as a social entrepreneur in counselling and teaching underprivileged communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UCT BA degree economics, French, history. Teaching diploma. Journalism diploma. Counselling diploma. | Informal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> counselling, facilitation leaderships conflict resolutions |
| 13 | Property investment consultant | Opportunity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision to change the societal imbalances of the past. | Real estate investment | Durban, KZN, Johannesburg, Gauteng | 9 years' experience as an entrepreneur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bcom accounting Property courses ACSCL PDP Property related short courses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property related workshops |
| 14 | Business incubator mentor(industry expert) | Opportunity Mentoring entrepreneurs was a passion and teaching students. | Teaching and mentoring | Durban, KZN, Youth entrepreneurs | 10 to 15 years mentor of nascent entrepreneurs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD | Incubator |

Appendix B – Interview schedule

Semi-structured interview schedule

Pre-interview questions

The following few questions are to gain an understanding of the entrepreneurs details, their background and career path as an entrepreneur,

1. Name of participant
2. Qualifying question:

What was your motivation for the pursuit of your first business venture, was it to pursue a business opportunity or was it due to a necessity?
3. Name of first and subsequent business, where applicable and time in the business.
4. Location of your first and subsequent business, where applicable.
5. Industry of first and subsequent businesses, where applicable.
6. Number of years' experience as an entrepreneur.
7. Can you briefly indicate your educational background?
8. Can you briefly, indicate what or who motivated you to become an entrepreneur?
9. Can you indicate if at any point in your journey as an entrepreneur did you receive any training or support, formal or informal and can you indicate they type of training or support received?

Main interview schedule

Section 1

- 1.1. *What are the experiences of entrepreneurs during the early phase of their entrepreneurial journey during opportunity development?*
 - 1.1.1. (Open) What is your understanding, of opportunity development during an early stage entrepreneur's journey?
[This question sets the scene so that the entrepreneurs understanding of the term opportunity development and their context is sought and not be influenced by the interviewer]
- 1.2. (Open) How have you taken advantage of opportunities that you have identified?
 - 1.2.1. (Closed and probing) What principles have guided you or motivated you during the development of these opportunities during your entrepreneurial journey?
 - 1.2.2. (Closed and probing) How have they influenced your ambitions or desires as an entrepreneur in the pursuit of such opportunities?
- 1.3. (Closed and probing) Have there been any circumstances where you have pursued an opportunity without following your guiding principles?
 - 1.3.1. (Closed and probing) Under what circumstances were they under, and what were your motivations for pursuing them?
 - 1.3.2. (Open) What has been your personnel reaction to these success and/or failures in the pursuit of these opportunities?

Section 2

- 2.1. (Open)What is your understanding, of the social learning behaviours during an entrepreneur's journey?
- 2.2. (Open) Tell me about your attitude towards social learning behaviours in the context of your entrepreneurial journey?
 - I. (Open) In your view, what factors, have influenced your personal development in this area, be it within your closed circle or the external environment?
 - II. (Closed and probing) How has it influenced the development of your

business?

- 2.3. (Open) Can you think of any significant operational and strategic challenges where you had to draw upon those learning behaviours?
 - 2.3.1. (Closed and probing) How did it influence your approach towards the business development?
 - 2.3.2. (Closed and probing) Can you elaborate on what your reaction to these challenges have been and how have they influenced your continued pursuit of the opportunity?
- 2.4. (Open) Can you tell me about the key influential, drivers, that has changed or added value to the development of the entrepreneurial opportunity,
 - 2.4.1. (Closed and probing) Why have you selected those options?
 - 2.4.2. (Open) What other avenues have you considered or do you think could have assisted you during the opportunity development phase?
- 2.5. (Open) What has been your learning experiences in creating and developing your business during the early phases of your entrepreneurial journey in South Africa?
 - 2.5.1. (Open) What do you think are the barriers or promoters of such ventures?
 - 2.5.2. (Closed and probing) Why do you think so?
 - 2.5.3. (Open) What has influenced your decision to explore an opportunity at a particular point in time and locality?
- 2.6. (Open) In your view, what has been your experience of the level of support that entrepreneurs gain during the development of an opportunity in South Africa?
 - 2.6.1. (Open) How has the environment in which your business is positioned as well as your social learnings influenced the type of support that you have pursued?
 - 2.6.2. (Open) What do you think are the barriers or promoters of such levels of support?
 - 2.6.3. (Closed and probing) Why do you think so?

Section 3

Are there any other issues, which we have not covered about your personal views or experiences of the social learning behaviours of an entrepreneur during the opportunity development on which you would like to make a comment?

Interview closure

You have provided me with an insightful and engaging discussion on your personal experiences on your entrepreneurial journey, and it has excited me about the potential role of entrepreneurs in South Africa.

Would you be willing to provide me with a referral for another entrepreneur who has been through the early stages of their entrepreneurial journey within the South African context?

(Maintain Rapport) I appreciate the time you took for this interview.

C. (Action to be taken) I should have all the information I need. I will send you a recording of this interview and would you be able to confirm the contents of our discussion. Would I be able to contact you again for clarification of our discussion if I have any more questions? Thank you very much again, to your participation in this interview and I look forward to our future engagement.

Appendix B – Interview consent form

RESEARCH TITLE: The influence of social learning behaviours during entrepreneurial opportunity development

RESEARCHER: Nalisha Pillay, MBA student: Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria.

I am conducting research on the influence of social learning behaviours during the entrepreneurial opportunity development phase. I am trying to understand the influence of social learning behaviours on entrepreneurs during opportunity development during the early phase of your entrepreneurial journey. This deals with how your experiences as an entrepreneur are influenced by your intentions, forethought, your own behaviour, the foundation of those actions and its effects in reaction to the social norms in the environment as you deal with uncertainty during the early phase of your new business venture.

The interview is expected to last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The information and insight gained through the interview will assist me in understanding the inhibitors and promoters against opportunity development as well as to understand the influences of social learning behaviours on entrepreneurs in South Africa.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any point of time of this process. There will be audio recording of the interview, and you may choose not to be recorded. All data will be kept confidential, and any quotations used will be anonymised. Please contact my supervisor or me if you have any concerns or questions. Our details are provided below:

Researcher

Name : Nalisha Pillay
Contact No : 071 630 0889
Email : 19392011@mygibs.co.za

Supervisor

Name : Hugh Myres
Contact No. : 083 302 3802
Email : myresh@gibs.co.za

Participant's name: _____

Date _____ Signature: _____

Researcher's name: NALISHA PILAY

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix C – Additional support

25. APPENDIX 6 CERTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

(Additional support retained or not - to be completed by all students)

Please note that failure to comply and report on this honestly will result in disciplinary action

I hereby certify that (please indicate which statement applies):

- *I DID NOT RECEIVE any additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, and/or editorial services) on my research report:*
.....

- *I RECEIVED additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, and/or editorial services) on my research report*
.....Transcriptional

If any additional services were retained– *please indicate below which:*

- Statistician*
- Transcriber*
- Editor*
- Other (please specify:.....)*

Please provide the name(s) and contact details of all retained:

NAME:Ms.Eve.Armstrong.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:audtranscriber@gmail.com.....

CONTACT NUMBER:078 589 6602.....

TYPE OF SERVICE:Transcriber.....

NAME: Mrs Rookmoney Thakur.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:
maleni.thakur@gmail.com.....

CONTACT NUMBER: 078 544 2461 or 031-4645041.....

TYPE OF SERVICE: ... Editor.....

NAME: n/a.....

EMAIL ADDRESS: n/a.....

CONTACT NUMBER: n/a.....

TYPE OF SERVICE: n/a.....

I hereby declare that all *statistical write-ups and thematic interpretations of the results* for my study were completed by myself without outside assistance

NAME OF STUDENT: NALISHA PILLAY
.....

SIGNATURE: 
.....

STUDENT NUMBER: 19392011
.....

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: nalipillay@gmail.com
.....

Appendix E – Ethics clearance letter

11/26/2020

Ethical Clearance Approved - 19392011@mygibs.co.za - Gordon Institute of Business Science Mail

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science** Ethical Clearance Approved
University of Pretoria

Dear Nalisha Pillay,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS
Research Admin team.

Appendix F – Code list

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 1 | Access- direct market access positioning |
| 2 | Access- identification and activation of access |
| 3 | Access- network activation to create impact |
| 4 | Adaptability- business flexibility while maintaining principles |
| 5 | Adaptability -constant realignment of purpose |
| 6 | Agility- accelerated survival instincts |
| 7 | Agility -fluid environment forces opportunity repositioning |
| 8 | Agility- intuition drives opportunity development |
| 9 | Agility- midway feasibility assessment |
| 10 | Agility- opportunity mobility ensures sustainability |
| 11 | Agility- pivot from profit to purpose transition |
| 12 | Agility- pivot influenced by fluid environment |
| 13 | Agility -relocation pivot to receptive ecosystems |
| 14 | Agility- time pressures challenge expeditious decision making |
| 15 | Awareness- acknowledgement deficit |
| 16 | Awareness- holding the space |
| 17 | Awareness-openness to newfound possibilities |
| 18 | Bricolage- resource alignment with ecosystem needs |
| 19 | Bricolage- resource and capacity constraints |
| 20 | Bricolage- resources alignment for future needs |
| 21 | Bricolage- utilise what's available |
| 22 | Bricolage--leverage available ecosystem resources |
| 23 | Bricolage-pragmatic mind-set adopted |
| 24 | Bricolage- over-reliance on personal resources |
| 25 | Business process -systematic deliberate approach to opportunity development |
| 26 | Business process-trial and error business model development |
| 27 | Capacity limit- recognition of entrepreneurial limits |
| 28 | Capacity limit- recognition of timing exit from opportunities |
| 29 | Capacity limit- support outreach timing |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|--|
| 30 | Communal respect- affirmation and respect for communities value propositions |
| 31 | Community collaborations- communal pooling of resources |
| 32 | Community collaborations - serial points of engagement |
| 33 | Community collaborations- inclusive partnerships with strategic stakeholders |
| 34 | Community collaborations- partner with supportive stakeholders |
| 35 | Community embeddedness- increases alternative possibilities from exposure |
| 36 | Community embeddedness-Theory U- inward looking to the future |
| 37 | Community embeddedness- enhances decision making on opportunity development |
| 38 | Community embeddedness- positioning of identity in environment |
| 39 | Community embeddedness- supports feedback loop learning |
| 40 | Community embeddedness- receptiveness formed by unique exposure |
| 41 | Community engagement- initial development motivated by community |
| 42 | Community respect- transparent community engagement |
| 43 | Critical events- acceptance of circumstances prompt innovation |
| 44 | Critical events -creates value through enabling innovation |
| 45 | Critical events- elicit accelerated entrepreneurial ventures |
| 46 | Critical events- prompts and accelerates self-reflection |
| 47 | Critical events- prompts the correct question evaluation |
| 48 | Decision making-strategic horizon reduced |
| 49 | Ecosystem barriers - financial support access |
| 50 | Ecosystem barriers- access to government opportunities |
| 51 | Ecosystem barriers- closed markets restricts financial accessibility |
| 52 | Ecosystem barriers- excessive regulations deter opportunity development |
| 53 | Ecosystem barriers- financial support not guaranteed success factor |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|--|
| 54 | Ecosystem barriers- restricted access to influential networks |
| 55 | Ecosystem barriers- socio political pressures |
| 56 | Ecosystem barriers- strength of entire value chain |
| 57 | Emotional cognition- impatience to spend time developing |
| 58 | Emotional cognition- serial risk taker |
| 59 | Emotional fortitude-lower entrepreneurial mental strength |
| 60 | Emotional fortitude- resilience and grit in the face of adversity |
| 61 | Emotional fortitude- transparency on failures |
| 62 | Emotional needs- alignment of needs to opportunity development |
| 63 | Emotional readiness - emotional impact of failures |
| 64 | Emotional readiness - failures lead to lack of self-belief |
| 65 | Emotional readiness- acceptance of failure and critique |
| 66 | Emotional readiness- confronting emotional tribulations |
| 67 | Emotional readiness- emotional anger at access inequality |
| 68 | Emotional readiness- emotional disintegration from societal norms compliance |
| 69 | Emotional readiness- entrepreneurial emotional independence |
| 70 | Emotional strength- purposeful emotional activation |
| 71 | Emotional strength-entrepreneurial contentment |
| 72 | Emotional support barrier- emotional abandonment from silo mentality |
| 73 | Emotional support motivator - spiritual sustenance- Promoter |
| 74 | Entrepreneurial drive- pursuit of purpose without know-how and focus |
| 75 | Entrepreneurial drive-keen receptiveness for opportunity development |
| 76 | Entrepreneurial mind-set barrier- procrastination with creation of artificial barriers |
| 77 | Entrepreneurial mind-set motivator-sense of urgency -promoters |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 78 | Entrepreneurial mind-set motivator- soft skills development enhance reputation-promoters |
| 79 | Entrepreneurial mind-set- transference of skills to others |
| 80 | Entrepreneurial misdirection- misplaced focus due to external influence |
| 81 | Entrepreneurial support inertia- entrepreneurial frustration with key stakeholder disengagement |
| 82 | Entrepreneurial support inertia- lack of family support (barrier) |
| 83 | Entrepreneurial support -life stage entrepreneurial education |
| 84 | Entrepreneurial support- strong nucleus support- promoters |
| 85 | Entrepreneurial mind-set- early desire to pursue entrepreneurship |
| 86 | Forward looking drive- forefront of driving change |
| 87 | Forward looking drive-I purpose drives innovation inclusivity |
| 88 | Forward looking drive-looking into the future |
| 89 | Identity dilemmas-fulfilment deficit from corporate culture |
| 90 | Identity dilemmas- choice between following entrepreneurial and traditional paths |
| 91 | Identity dilemmas- ethical conundrums |
| 92 | Identity dilemmas-ignominy at feeling of entitlement |
| 93 | Identity evolution- evolving entrepreneurial mind-set |
| 94 | Inflection points- capability inflection point |
| 95 | Inflection points- disengagement from value destroying collaborations |
| 96 | Inflection points- point of no return |
| 97 | Inflection points- redirection at point of inflection |
| 98 | Learning support barrier- distorted perception of formal accelerators |
| 99 | Learning support barriers-ineffective formal entrepreneurial educational programs |
| 100 | Legitimacy- business opportunity as legacy creators-promoters |
| 101 | Life cycle support- absence of post opportunity development support (barrier) |
| 102 | Mentorship- continued reliance on mentors |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 103 | Mentorship- influence of multiple life cycle mentors |
| 104 | Mentorship- role model identity displacement |
| 105 | Mentorship- supports mental and emotional needs |
| 106 | Mentorship-emotional relatability with like-minded role models |
| 107 | Open-mindedness- acknowledgment of iterative process |
| 108 | Opportunity extension- alternative solutions from extensive research |
| 109 | Opportunity extension- current opportunities provide future avenues |
| 110 | Opportunity extension-pursue alternative income streams |
| 111 | Personal development- continuous learning by interpreting |
| 112 | Personal development- holistic self-mastery |
| 113 | Personal development- self-discovery of true identity |
| 114 | Prosocial motivation- adding an empathetic lever |
| 115 | Prosocial motivation- compassionate understanding propels opportunities |
| 116 | Prosocial motivation- societal issues drive opportunity development |
| 117 | Prosocial motivation- strong preferential social commitment |
| 118 | Purposive connections -strategic selection of networks- Promoters |
| 119 | Rebellious mind-set- defiance propels vision drive |
| 120 | Rebellious mind-set- hustle breeds creativity |
| 121 | Rebellious mind-set- return to entrepreneurial roots post formal education |
| 122 | Rebellious mind set-skin in the game elucidates emotional connection |
| 123 | Rebellious mind set-outsider status promotes receptiveness |
| 124 | Relationship building- collaborations creates enduring benefit |
| 125 | Relationship building- competitions provide enduring relationships |
| 126 | Relationship building- embedded relationship building |
| 127 | Relationship building- relationship building supports trust development - Promoters |
| 128 | Relationship building-bridging networks and community |
| 129 | Risk appetite- supportive risk taking learning |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 130 | Self-appreciation- unabashed wealth recognition |
| 131 | Self-constraint -entrepreneurial self-accountability |
| 132 | Self-constraint-self sacrifice |
| 133 | Self-doubt- constrained by personal confidence in ability (barrier) |
| 134 | Self-doubt- formal training inhibits entrepreneurial confidence- (barrier) |
| 135 | Self-identity - embedded dual profit and purpose intentions |
| 136 | Self- identity- desire to effect change |
| 137 | Self- identity- entrepreneurs crave challenge variably |
| 138 | Self-identity- imprinting of business identity |
| 139 | Self -identity- ingrained understanding of purpose |
| 140 | Self- identity- maintain independence post opportunity identification |
| 141 | Self- identity- pursuit of opportunities for autonomy and accountability |
| 142 | Self- identity- reputation drives moral compass |
| 143 | Self- identity- strict professional principles enhance reputation |
| 144 | Self-mastery- societal support during foundation years- Promoters |
| 145 | Self-reflection- entrepreneurship conflicts with traditional norms |
| 146 | Self-reflection- limitations of privileges in opportunity development |
| 147 | Self-reflection- non alignment with personal philosophy |
| 148 | Self-reflection- Reconfiguring personal societal bias norms |
| 149 | Self-reflection- serial failures met with acceptance |
| 150 | Self-identity- passion to succeed |
| 151 | Sense-making-community discussions feed opportunities |
| 152 | Sense-making barrier- lack of industry scanning |
| 153 | Sense-making- pre opportunity feasibility assessment- Promoter |
| 154 | Sense-making- signals in the market |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 155 | Sense-making- substantial needs drives boundless opportunities |
| 156 | Sense-making-an active search |
| 157 | Sense-making-purposive screening of environment |
| 158 | Serendipity- lucky support from external environment |
| 159 | Serendipity- reliance on luck increases failure |
| 160 | Serendipity-opportunity driven by serendipitous start |
| 161 | Societal perception barrier-counter productiveness of societal norms |
| 162 | Societal perception barriers - feeling misunderstood |
| 163 | Societal perception barriers- conflicted by personal societal allegiances |
| 164 | Societal perception barriers- entrepreneurship recognised as non-mainstream |
| 165 | Societal perception barriers- fixed mind-set hinders self confidence |
| 166 | Societal perception barriers- non-receptive entrepreneurial environment |
| 167 | Societal perception barriers/motivators- motivation to conform to societal expectations |
| 168 | Societal perception barriers-overcoming societal legitimacy doubts |
| 169 | Societal perceptions- ingrained behavioural practices |
| 170 | Societal perceptions- non-optimisation of financial support |
| 171 | Societal perceptions- social leanings influences strategic positioning |
| 172 | Stakeholder receptiveness-restrictive requirements and stakeholder apathy |
| 173 | Support program barrier-formal programs provide fall sense of security |
| 174 | Supportive learning programs- appeal to amiable entrepreneurs only |
| 175 | Supportive learning programs- provided transformational and nurturing change |
| 176 | Supportive learning programs-competitions unleashed creative freedom-Promoter |
| 177 | Sustainability -dilemma in developing sustainable business model |

| No | Codes |
|-----------|---|
| 178 | Sustainability- generating consistent revenue streams |
| 179 | Sustainability -lifetime of monetisation |
| 180 | Symbiotic engagement- co-sharing of knowledge in an ecosystem |
| 181 | Symbiotic engagement- reciprocal motivation |
| 182 | Symbiotic engagement-buy-in increases market access |
| 183 | Symbiotic engagement-combined ownership of innovation ideas- Promoters |
| 184 | Symbiotic engagement-operational efficiencies drive indirect social impact |
| 185 | Trust deficiency -collaborative relationship distrust |
| 186 | Validators- accelerated validation sought-promoters |
| 187 | Validators- confidence from communal engagement |
| 188 | Validators -critique learnings from international competitions- promoters |
| 189 | Validators- established business entities project confidence |
| 190 | Validators- formal education enhances entrepreneurial confidence |
| 191 | Validators- I still needed validation |
| 192 | Validators- international training endorsement-Promoters |
| 193 | Validators- winning competitions validates purpose |
| 194 | Validators-competition self-serving purpose |
| 195 | Validators-existence of pre engagement know-how |
| 196 | Value based engagement -ingrained & value alignment drive target market selection |
| 197 | Value creation - alignment drives opportunity development |
| 198 | Value creation adding more to status quo |
| 199 | Value creation- alternative solutions from extensive research |
| 200 | Value creation- creative problem solvers with continuous innovation |
| 201 | Value creation- current and future desires alignment |
| 202 | Value creation- driven by capacity and effort |
| 203 | Value creation- removing a pain point |

| No | Codes |
|------------|---|
| 204 | Value creation- undefined structure purpose and opportunity development |
| 205 | Value creation-creating your own intellectual property |

Appendix G – Code groups

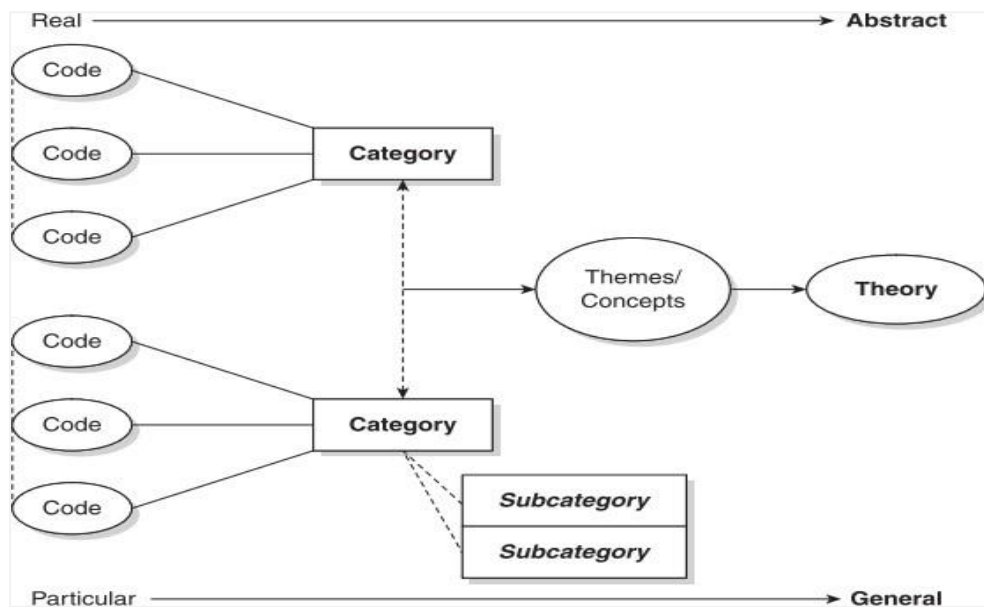
| No. | Code group |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Access |
| 2 | Adaptability |
| 3 | Agility |
| 4 | Awareness |
| 5 | Bricolage |
| 6 | Business process |
| 7 | Capacity limit |
| 8 | Communal respect |
| 9 | Community collaborations |
| | Community |
| 10 | embeddedness |
| 11 | Community engagement |
| 12 | Community respect |
| 13 | Critical events |
| 14 | Decision making |
| 15 | Ecosystem barriers |
| 16 | Emotional cognition |
| 17 | Emotional fortitude |
| 18 | Emotional needs |
| 19 | Emotional readiness |
| 20 | Emotional strength |
| | Emotional support |
| 21 | motivator |
| 22 | Entrepreneurial mind-set |
| 23 | Entrepreneurial drive |
| | Entrepreneurial |
| 24 | misdirection |
| 25 | Entrepreneurial support |
| | Forward looking drive- |
| 26 | looking |
| 27 | Grand Total |
| 28 | Identity dilemmas |
| 29 | Identity evolution |
| | |
| 30 | Inflection points |
| | |
| 31 | Learning support |
| | |
| 32 | Legitimacy |
| | |
| 33 | Life cycle support |
| | |
| 34 | Mentorship |
| | |
| 35 | Open mindedness |
| | |
| 36 | Opportunity extension |
| | |
| 37 | Personal development |
| | |
| 38 | Prosocial motivation |

| No. | Code group |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 39 | Purposive connections |
| 40 | Rebellious mind-set |
| 41 | Relationship building |
| 42 | Risk appetite |
| 43 | Row Labels |
| 44 | Self-appreciation |
| 45 | Self-constraint |
| 46 | Self-doubt |
| 47 | Self-mastery |
| 48 | Self-reflection |
| 49 | Self-identity |
| 50 | Sense-making |
| 51 | Serendipity |
| 52 | Societal perceptions |
| 53 | Stakeholder receptiveness |
| 54 | Sustainability |
| 55 | Symbiotic engagement |
| 56 | Trust deficiency |
| 57 | Validators |
| 58 | Value based engagement |
| 59 | Value creation |

Appendix H – Consistency matrix

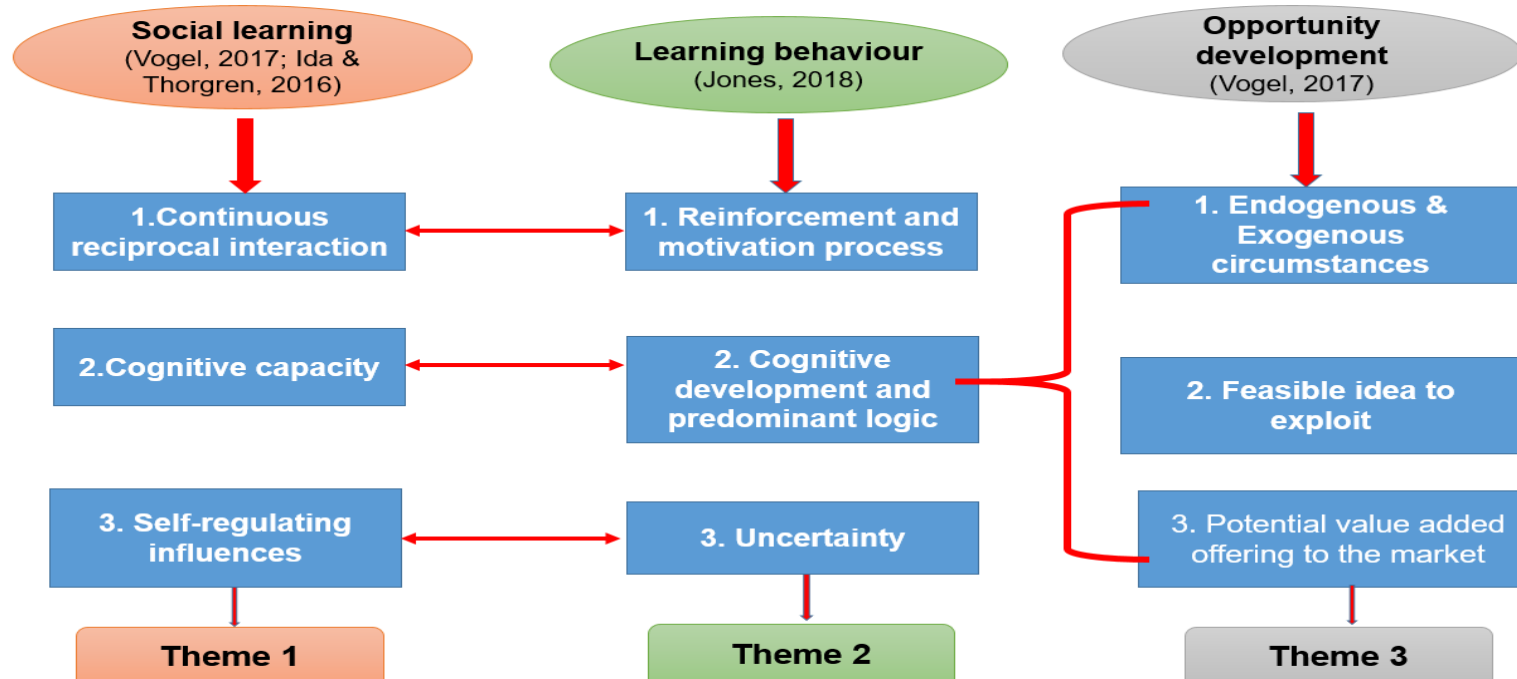
| Research questions | Literature review | Data collection tool | Analysis |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1. What are the social learning behaviours exhibited by entrepreneurs during opportunity development? | Bandura, 1977; Mckveer, 2015 Kolb, 1984 Vogel, 2017; | Semi-structured interview Question 1 | Semi-structure interview allows data to be thematically extracted and Section 1 allows interviewees to express their experiences in social learning within the context of opportunity development. This allows themes to be drawn. |
| 2. How do the drivers of these perceptions about social learning behaviours influence the inhibition or promotion of entrepreneurial ventures during opportunity development? | Fisher et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2018; Markowska & Wiklund, 2020 Vogel, 2017; Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020 Coping mechanism literature: Coping mechanism , (Amankwah-Amoah, 2018; Lattacher & Wdowiak Malgorzata, 2020; Secundo et al., 2017) | Semi-structured interview Question 2. | Semi-structure interview allows data to be thematically extracted and Section 2. Allows interviewees to express their experiences in learning behaviour within the context of opportunity development, the drivers, inhibitors and promoters during opportunity development. This allows themes to be drawn. |

Figure 5: A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry



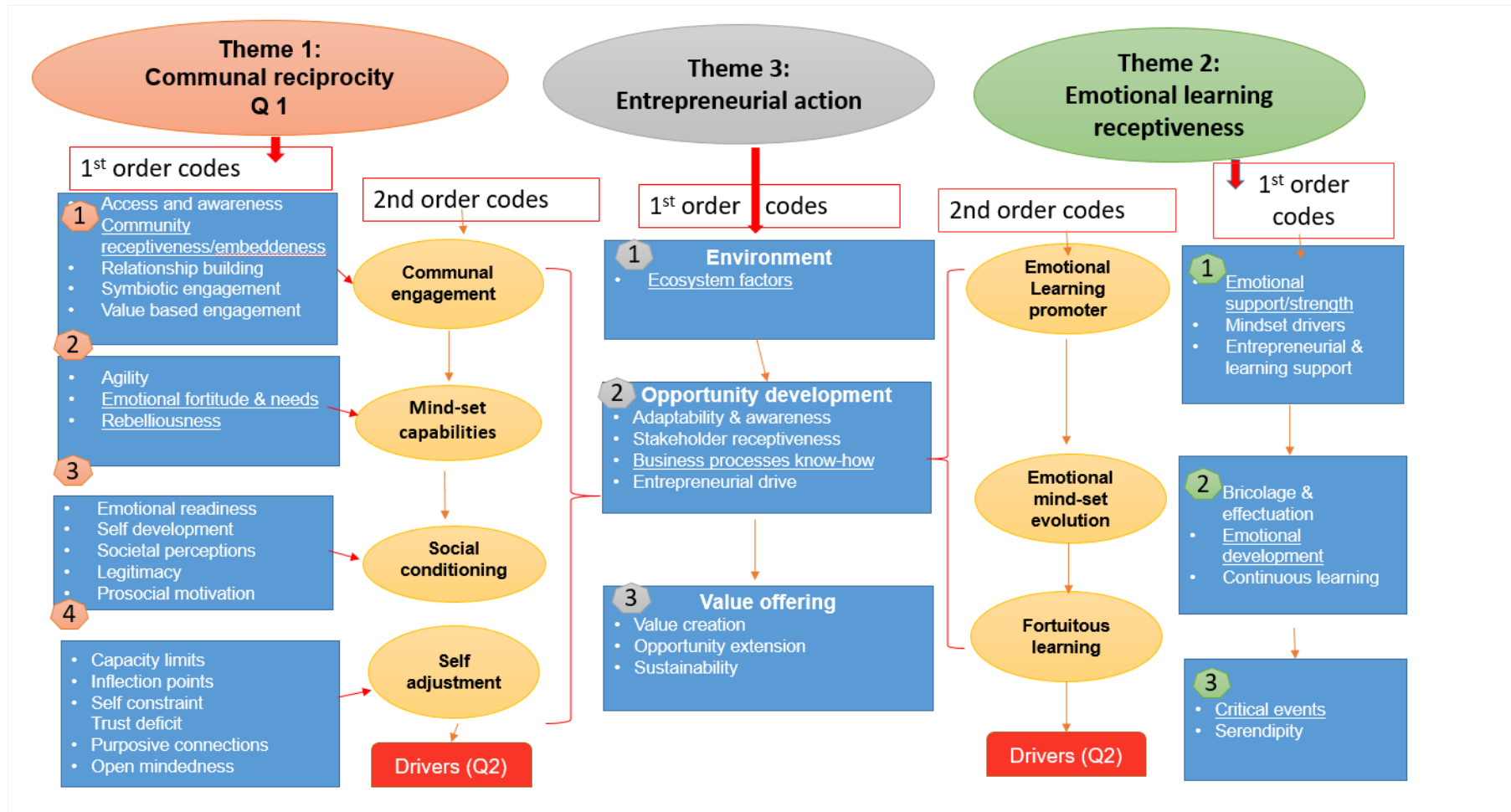
Note: This figure demonstrates a streamlined scheme of a basic codifying process by J. Saldaña, 2009, Sage Publications, p12. Copyright 2009 by Sage Publications Ltd.

Figure 6: Mapping of the research theoretical framework



Note: This figure demonstrates a theoretical mapping of the research study, reflecting the combined influences of social learning behaviours on entrepreneurial opportunity development, Adaption by author.

Figure 7: Thematic illustration of real codes and code groups



Note: This figure demonstrates a thematic mapping of the research study's 1st order, real codes, 2nd order group codes to the themes that emerged reflecting the combined influences of social learning behaviours on entrepreneurial opportunity development. Adaption by author.

Figure 8: Thematic illustration of the frequency distribution per participant on the top real codes

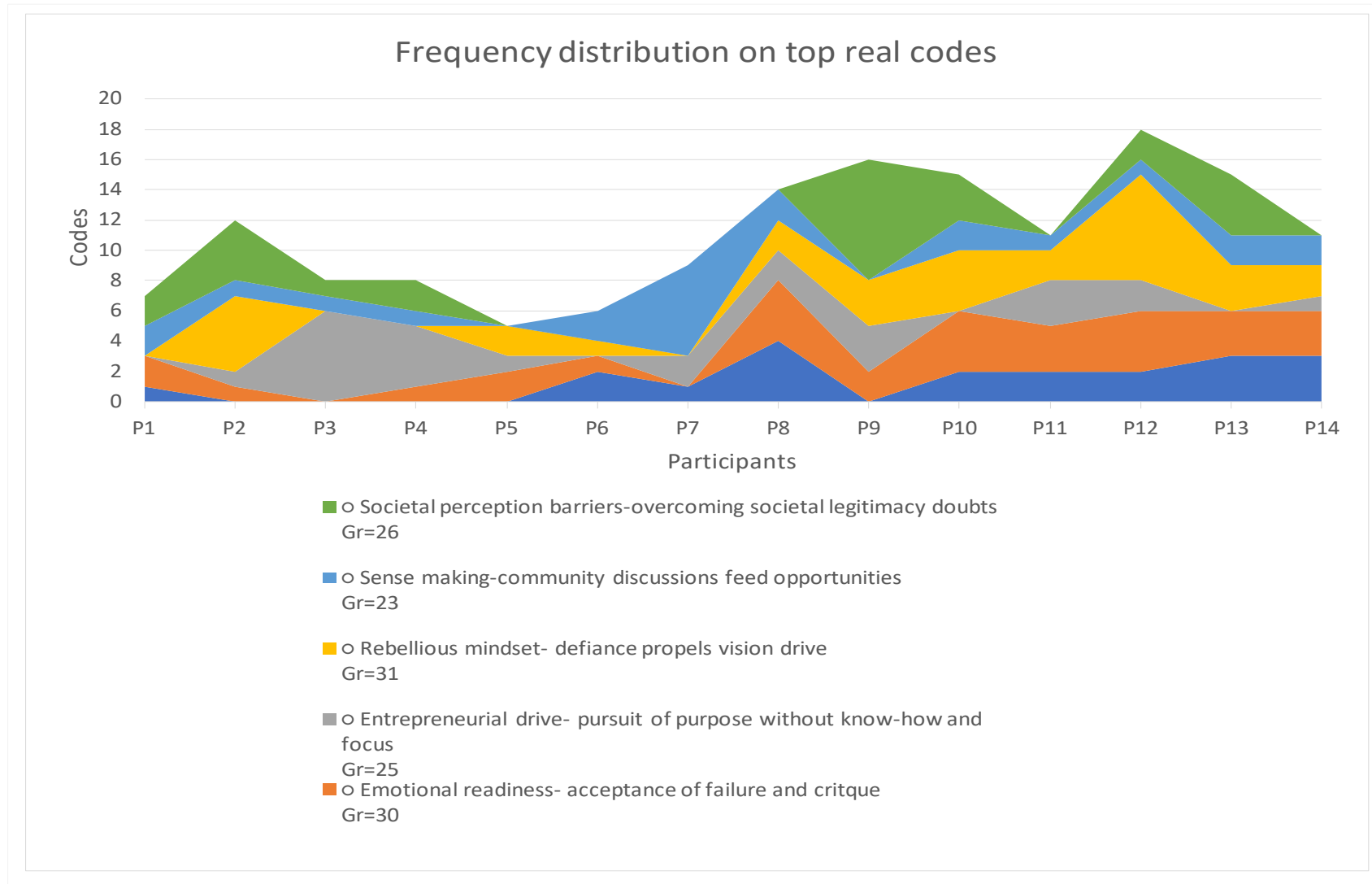
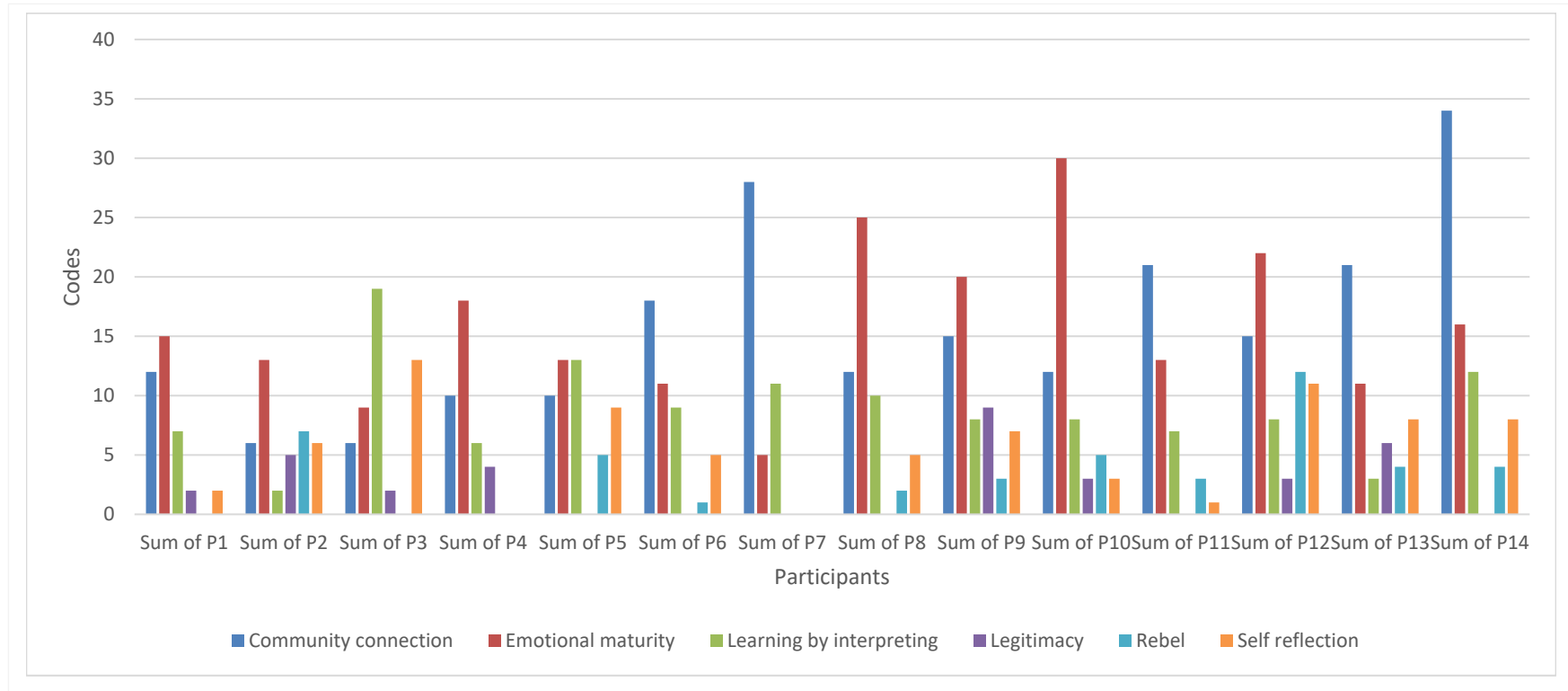


Figure 9: Thematic illustration of the frequency distribution per participant on all codes per key themes



List of tables

Table 1: Mapping of interview questions to research questions

| IQ No. | Interview question | Research question reference |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| <i>IQ 1</i> | <i>What are the experiences of entrepreneurs during the early phase of their entrepreneurial journey during opportunity development?</i> | RQ1 |
| <i>IQ 1.1</i> | What is your understanding, of opportunity development during an early stage entrepreneur's journey? | |
| IQ 1.2 | How have you taken advantage of opportunities that you have identified? | |
| IQ 1.2.1 | What principles have guided you or motivated you during the development of these opportunities during your entrepreneurial journey? | RQ1 |
| IQ 1.2.2. | How have they influenced your ambitions or desires as an entrepreneur in the pursuit of such opportunities? | RQ2 |
| IQ 1.3 | Have there been any circumstances where you have pursued an opportunity without following your guiding principles? | |
| IQ 1.3.1 | Under what circumstances were they under, and what were your motivations for pursuing them? | RQ2 |
| IQ 1.3.2 | What has been your personnel reaction to these success and/or failures in the pursuit of these opportunities? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.1 | What is your understanding, of the social learning behaviours during an entrepreneur's journey? | RQ1 |
| IQ 2.2. | Tell me about your attitude towards social learning behaviours in the context of your entrepreneurial journey? | RQ 1 |
| IQ 2.2.1 | In your view, what factors, have influenced your personal development in this area, be it within your closed circle or the external environment? | RQ1 |
| IQ 2.2.2 | How has it influenced the development of your business? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.3 | Can you think of any significant operational and strategic challenges where you had to draw upon those learning behaviours? | RQ1 |
| IQ 2.3.1 | How did it influence your approach towards the business development | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.3.2 | Can you elaborate on what your reaction to these challenges have been and how have they influenced your continued pursuit of the opportunity? | RQ2 |

| IQ No. | Interview question | Research question reference |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------|
| IQ 2.4 | Can you tell me about the key influential, drivers, that has changed or added value to the development of the entrepreneurial opportunity? | |
| IQ 2.4.1 | Why have you selected those options? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.4.2 | What other avenues have you considered or do you think could have assisted you during the opportunity development phase? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.5 | What has been your learning experiences in creating and developing your business during the early phases of your entrepreneurial journey in South Africa? | |
| IQ 2.5.1. | What do you think are the barriers or promoters of such ventures? Why do you think so? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.5.2 | What has influenced your decision to explore an opportunity at a particular point in time and locality? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.6 | In your view, what has been your experience of the level of support that entrepreneurs gain during the development of an opportunity in South Africa? | |
| IQ 2.6.1 | How has the environment in which your business is positioned as well as your social learnings influenced the type of support that you have pursued? | RQ2 |
| IQ 2.6.2 | What do you think are the barriers or promoters of such levels of support? Why do you think so? | RQ2 |

