



THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa men are more likely than women to undertake entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, White South Africans are more likely to start new business ventures than other ethnic groups. In order to establish why women and certain ethnic groups are less inclined to undertake entrepreneurial activities, the primary objective of this study was to establish whether the perceptions of desirability that some groups have of an entrepreneurial career differ from those of others.

Respondents were identified by means of convenience and judgemental sampling. In total, 739 usable questionnaires were returned. The validity and reliability of the measuring instrument was assessed by means of an exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach-alpha coefficients. T-test statistics were undertaken to establish significant differences.

The results show that female small business owners perceive that self-employment will allow them more *Flexibility* and *Autonomy* than do their male counterparts, whereas male students perceive that self-employment will allow them more *Time* than do female students. Black small business owners and Black student respondents scored higher mean scores than White respondents for the majority of work values investigated in this study. This seems to suggest that Black respondents perceive an entrepreneurial career more positively than White respondents do, despite White South Africans being more likely to start entrepreneurial ventures than Black South Africans.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial career, small business enterprises, career perceptions, work values, gender, ethnicity.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

As in all countries, venture creation in South Africa plays a vital role in stimulating economic activity and reducing unemployment (Malagas, 2003; Nieman, 2006; Timmons & Spinelli, 2009; Venter, Urban & Rwigema, 2008), and as such, is seen as a potential solution to some of South Africa's economic and social difficulties. However, it is reported that given the country's per capita income, South Africa has a lower-than-expected entrepreneurial activity rate. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey in 2009 (Herrington, Kew & Kew, 2010:59), the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) scored by South Africa (5.9%) is considerably lower than the average for all efficiency-driven economies (11.2%), as well as the average for all middle- to low-income countries (14.8%). The 2009 GEM survey also reported that although 64% of South Africans perceive entrepreneurship as a good career choice, this is lower than that reported (71%) in efficiency-driven economies. Furthermore, in comparison to other participating countries, who reported an average of 19%, only 11% of South African respondents reported having entrepreneurial intentions (Herrington *et al.*, 2010:61). Of particular concern are the low numbers of female and Black South Africans who are engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

Herrington *et al.* (2010:68) report that in South Africa, men are 1.5 times more likely than women to be involved in early-stage entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, White and Indian/Asian individuals are more likely to start new business ventures than are Coloureds or Black Africans (Herrington *et al.*, 2010:71). According to Urban (2010:1), both national and international studies show that the ratio of female to male participation in entrepreneurial activity varies significantly across countries. In a study spanning 17 countries, Langowitz and Minniti (2007:341) have found that significantly fewer women than men are involved in entrepreneurial activity. Differences in starting new businesses also appear to exist among various ethnic groups. Tracking a decade of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa across the four main racial groups, the 2009 GEM survey reported that Whites are more likely to be entrepreneurs than Blacks, although in more recent years this difference is becoming less marked (Herrington *et al.*, 2010:43). Studies have shown that racial differences in entrepreneurial intention and starting new business ventures can be attributed not so much to a lack of entrepreneurial activity by Black individuals, as to the existence of stronger barriers to entry and higher failure rates in this ethnic group (Köllinger & Minniti, 2006).

Despite several studies investigating the possible factors that contribute to the differences between gender, ethnic groups and entrepreneurial behaviour (DeTienne & Chandler, 2007; Gupta, Turban, Wasti & Sikdar, 2009; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Urban, 2010), understanding what drives entrepreneurship remains one of the most important questions being asked in management research (Drost, 2010:28). Given the findings by Herrington *et al.* (2010), it appears that gender and ethnicity perspectives of entrepreneurship as a career choice continue to plague the levels of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa. Fostering entrepreneurship among these disadvantaged groups is thus a topic in need of increased attention among educators, researchers and public policy-makers in South Africa. Furthermore, an understanding of which factors play a role in driving the career decision towards entrepreneurship of these groups should top the agenda.

Increasingly, researchers are turning to "intentions models" as a means of explaining why some individuals embark on entrepreneurial activity and others do not (Ariff, Bidin, Sharif & Ahmad, 2010; Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker & Hay, 2001; Degeorge & Fayolle, 2008; Gird and Bagraim, 2008; Kolvereid, 1996; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993). However, applying intentions models to entrepreneurial intentions is an area of research that is still in its initial stage (Autio *et al.*, 2001). Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour is one of the most commonly used intentions models to understand and predict human behaviour (Gaddam, 2008; Gray, Farrington & Sharp, 2010; Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011; Kuehn, 2008; Leffel & Darling, 2009). Central to this theory is an individual's intention to perform a given

behaviour, such as choosing a particular career path. According to Ajzen (1991:181), the general rule is that the stronger the intention to engage in a particular behaviour, the more likely will be the performance of that behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour proposes that three independent variables determine intentions, namely the *Attitude toward the behaviour*, the social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour (*Subjective norm*), and the *Perceived behavioural control*. The more favourable the attitude and subjective norm regarding a particular behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the more likely should be an individual's intention to perform the behaviour under consideration (Ajzen, 1991:188; 2006:1).

Several studies (Gird & Bragraim, 2008; Gray *et al.*, 2010; Lüthje & Franke, 2003; Pihie, 2009) report *Attitude toward the behaviour* as having the strongest influence on entrepreneurial intentions. According to Ajzen (1985; 1991), *Attitude toward the behaviour* refers to the degree to which a person makes a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question, and is a function of beliefs relevant to the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; 2006). The theory of planned behaviour asserts that one's attitude towards an entrepreneurial career or self-employment determines one's intention to embark on such a career path. One's attitude, however, is determined by one's beliefs or perceptions about such a career path. For example, Autio, Keeley, Klofsten and Ulfstedt (1997) report that career preferences and entrepreneurial conviction are influenced by the image of entrepreneurship as a career alternative. Similarly, Liñán (2008:260) argues that an individual's decision to create a new enterprise is based on personal preference or attraction towards entrepreneurship. According to Zaidatol Akmaliah (2009:340), an attitude towards self-employment is an individual's perception of working as the owner of a business, and one's attitude towards self-employment is associated with self-employment intentions (Kolvereid, 1996; Kolvereid & Isaksen, 2006).

Parr (2007) suggests that to fully benefit from the contributions that small businesses can make to the South African economy, entrepreneurship and self-employment should be positioned as highly desirable career options, and South Africans from all gender and ethnic groups should be encouraged to pursue this option. However, an individual's decision to follow a particular career path is influenced by their attitude towards that career, which in turn is influenced by their beliefs or perceptions of whether that experience would be desirable or not if they chose that particular career. According to Smith-Hunter, DeCasperis and Paul (2009:26), very few researchers have attempted to examine the role of career perceptions on entrepreneurial pursuits. The failure of past entrepreneurial research to highlight the role of perceptions on entrepreneurial choices has created a void in the entrepreneurship literature waiting to be addressed (Smith-Hunter *et al.*, 2009:26).

An individual's perceptions dominate both their thoughts and their behaviour as human beings, and perceptions are shown to differ across cultures, different life stages and genders (Smith-Hunter *et al.*, 2009:27). According to Smith-Hunter *et al.* (2009), it is these perspectives that raise questions about the role of perceptions in influencing entrepreneurial behaviour. One such question is whether gender or ethnic grouping influences one's perceptions or actual experience of an entrepreneurial career in South Africa. Another is whether the perceptions that women and Black Africans have of self-employment influence their decision to become self-employed. In pursuit of answers to these questions, this study aims to establish the influence of gender and ethnicity on the perceptions of several work values associated with an entrepreneurial career. If differences in perceptions of self-employment could be identified, possible explanations could be forthcoming with regard to why certain groups are more likely to embark on entrepreneurial careers than others. This study considers several work values associated with an entrepreneurial career because values are important determinants of behaviour, particularly values that influence work attitudes (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010:19). The primary objective of the

study is to establish whether the perceptions of desirability that women and Black individuals have of an entrepreneurial career differ from those of White males. These differences will be established in terms of several work values.

According to Urban (2010), by gaining an understanding of entrepreneurial perceptions, an understanding of intended behaviour increases. The results of this study provide insights into what the different gender and ethnic groups think it would be like to follow an entrepreneurial career, and how these perceptions differ between students and individuals who currently own and run their own businesses. These insights will be useful to policy-makers, education in general, educators of entrepreneurship and career advisors in particular, who are required to provide students, particularly women and Black students, with an accurate description of what owning and managing an own business entails. In addition, from these insights a more realistic perspective can be provided of what it might be like to be self-employed. Gaining insights into different viewpoints adds to the knowledge of how different individuals perceive and operationalise entrepreneurship (Urban, 2010).

In this study an 'entrepreneurial career' means *owning and managing one's own small business*, and a 'small business' is defined as a *business that is independently owned and managed and employs more than 5 but fewer than 50 persons*. First, a brief overview of the supporting literature is presented and relevant hypotheses are formulated. Thereafter, the research methodology is described and the empirical findings presented. The findings and their implications are discussed. Lastly, the limitations of the study are presented and opportunities for future research highlighted.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Attitudes, perceptions and work values

As mentioned above, *Attitude toward the behaviour* refers to the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 1985; 1991). It reflects a person's judgement about the impact of the desired behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). *Attitude toward the behaviour* is a function of beliefs relevant to the behaviour, beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour, and evaluations of these outcomes, which are assumed to influence attitudes towards the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; 2006). It is proposed that one's attitude towards performing the behaviour is influenced by perceptions of the personal desirability of performing the behaviour (Zellweger, Sieger & Halter, 2010:3), and related to the desirability of becoming an entrepreneur is the image of an entrepreneur in society (Veciana, Aponte & Urbano, 2005:174).

According to Douglas and Shepherd (2000), when choosing a career, an individual must decide whether the desirability of a specific career option is greater than that of alternative options. 'Desirability' is a form of value (Steel & Konig, 2006), and values are important determinants of behaviour, particularly values that influence work attitudes (Twenge *et al.*, 2010:19). A person's work values are the components of a job which are important to their work satisfaction (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007:359; Twenge *et al.*, 2010:5). Work values shape employees' perceptions of preference in the workplace, and as such have a direct influence on employee attitudes, behaviours, job decisions and perceptions (Twenge *et al.*, 2010:5). According to McKay (n.d.), taking one's values into account when choosing a career, could be the most important factor that determines whether one is satisfied or not with that aspect of life.

Several authors have recognised that work values are variables that influence career choice (Nelson, 1995; Rousseau & Venter, 2009; Stead & Watson, 1993). According to Rousseau and Venter (2009), work values are important career choice factors for both career choices

in general and for initial career choice. In addition, they maintain that understanding an individual's work values can provide insight into career aspirations. Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2010:4) suggest that the attractiveness of a career alternative can be rated in terms of various work values. Work values have also been shown to significantly predict career choice, and when work values are realised in the work environment, they significantly predict job satisfaction and job performance (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007:359).

In their article investigating differences in perceptions of self-employment between students and small business owners, Farrington, Gray and Sharp (2011) have identified numerous aspects influencing occupational choices. They have grouped these aspects into fourteen categories or work values, which together with several descriptive statements are summarised in Table 1. An elaborate theoretical discussion on the various work values identified is deemed beyond the scope of this article, and readers are referred to Farrington *et al.* (2011) in this regard. The fourteen work values identified by Farrington *et al.* (2011) have served in the present study as the factors to be investigated in establishing the perceptions of an entrepreneurial career among the different genders and ethnic groups.

The entrepreneurial attributes possessed, as well as the entrepreneurial intentions shown, differ between individuals depending on their demographic profile. According to Kristiansen and Indarti (2004), several studies support the argument that demographic variables such as age, gender and individual background (education and employment experience) influence entrepreneurial intentions. Similarly, Kiggundu (2002) asserts that various demographic variables appear to distinguish between successful and less successful entrepreneurs. The focus of this study is on the demographic variables gender and ethnicity.

TABLE 1
WORK VALUES

Work values	Statements reflecting work values
Time	Work-life balance; time to spend with friends and family; time for interests outside of work; time for a social life; working hours that allow one to have a good social life; regularity of work hours.
Flexibility	Flexible working hours; job and career flexibility; opportunity to move between workplaces.
Financial benefit	High salary; opportunity to earn lots of money; increased personal income; initial and future earning potential; salary and benefits; financial gain; economic reward; instrumentality of wealth; acquisition of personal wealth; financial success.
Challenging	Doing challenging work/tasks; challenging career; competing demands; challenging profession.
Stimulating	Doing exciting work; doing a variety of things; change and diversity in tasks, place and people; rapidly changing; interesting and exciting; enjoyable and stimulating; fun; adventure; doing what you love; happy to go to work; not mundane and repetitive.
Imaginative	Permits creativity and originality; opportunity to be creative; build on ideas and adapt or re-invent them; develop new ideas, innovation and initiatives.

Security	Being sure of a job; being certain of keeping a job; being certain a job will last; a stable future; employment security; job security; confidence in income; personal security; provide for retirement.
Prestige	Being looked up to by others; prestige; respected position in the community; gain public recognition; status in family and in society; status of profession; recognition.
Autonomy	Freedom, independence and choice; doing my work in my own way; make my own decisions; independence of actions; sense of freedom and power; maintain personal freedom.
Interaction	Getting to know fellow workers; developing close ties with co-workers; working closely with people; people-orientated; opportunity to work with people; working as part of a team; social interaction; having pleasant friendly contacts; interaction with others.
Serving the community	Being of service to society; making the world a better place; helping others; socially responsible; contribution to the community; contribution to society; helping and caring for others; opportunity to help others; worthwhile to society.
Stress*	Feeling threatened; feeling uncomfortable; gives one a sinking feeling when thinking of it; dealing with crises and conflicts; working under pressure.
Responsibility	Management responsibility; degree of responsibility expected to assume; responsibility for other people; responsibility for getting things done; responsibility for significant business activities.
Future prospects	Opportunities for promotion and advancement; future career progression; career advancement progress; promotion prospects for the future.

* Note: Stress is not considered to be a value, but being "stress-free" is. The reverse of this factor is considered a value for the purpose of this study.

(Source: Farrington *et al.*, 2011).

Gender and Entrepreneurship

Several studies (Delmar & Davidsson, 2000; Matthews & Moser, 1995; Veciana *et al.*, 2005) have found that males have a higher preference for entrepreneurial behaviour than females. For example, Zhao, Seibert and Hills (2005) found that women reported significantly lower intentions to become entrepreneurs than men, while Veciana *et al.* (2005:180) found relationships to exist between students' gender and perceptions of new venture desirability, as well as with their intention to create new firms, with males showing higher desirability and intentions to create firms.

In comparing background, culture and nationalities, studies show that there is a higher prevalence of entrepreneurship among men than women with similar backgrounds, across cultures and national boundaries (Zhang, Zyphur, Narayanan, Arvey, Chaturvedi, Avolio, Lichtenstein & Larsson, 2009). In their study across 17 countries, Langowitz and Minniti (2007:341) found that while entrepreneurship is a significant and growing source of employment for women, the level of female involvement in entrepreneurial activity remains

lower than that of men. Similarly, Urban (2010) contends that in comparison to men, South African women tend to have lower entrepreneurial career aspirations.

Drost (2010), Kakkonen (2010) and Ahmed, Nawaz, Ahmad, Sajukat, Usman, Rehman, and Ahmed (2010), as well as Gupta *et al.* (2009), however, have reported that gender has no significant influence on intentions to start an own business. Ahmed *et al.* (2010) have concluded that gender does not predict entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, most studies on entrepreneurs seem to suggest that few differences exist between male and female entrepreneurs (Mueller, 2004). On the other hand, according to Urban (2010:3), research shows that not only do the entrepreneurial intentions of women differ from those of men, but work values help to explain why gender differences lead to different self-employment choices. For example, women experience more complexity in their career choices for the work value *Time* than men, given their need to balance their work and family roles (DeTienne & Chandler, 2007).

Previous empirical studies (Cliff, 1998; DeTienne & Chandler, 2007) indicate that men tend to place a greater emphasis on economic values and on quantitative non-ambiguous measures, such as status and wealth, whereas women tend to assign more importance to social values and qualitative, ambiguous measures such as personal fulfilment and strong interpersonal relations. According to Duffy and Sedlacek (2007:360), men typically rate values related to prestige, responsibility, and pay as more important than do women. Conversely, women are more likely to rate social values, such as helping others and working with people, higher than do men. Duffy and Sedlacek (2007:61) concluded that men were more likely to espouse extrinsic values, whereas women were more likely to espouse social values. In their study on gender differences concerning various work values, Kakkonen (2010) reported no significant difference between the perceptions of an entrepreneurial career in terms of holding an esteemed position in society, having the chance to be independent, a job that is interesting and challenging, better income levels than in paid work, the time available for family and hobbies, responsibility, the amount of work needed to be done, independence, and earning potential. The only significant difference in perceptions between males and females in that study related to the quality of life one would have as an entrepreneur. Males perceived that being an entrepreneur would afford them a better quality of life than if they were in a paid job, more so than females did (Kakkonen, 2010).

Today, self-employment is widely recognised as an attractive and worthwhile career for women (Heilman & Chen, 2003) and in recent years the number of women entrepreneurs has increased dramatically (De Bruin, Brush & Welter, 2006; Kakkonen, 2010). Despite this increase, the rate of entrepreneurship among women remains much lower than among men (Kakkonen, 2010; Reynolds, Bygrave & Auto, 2004). Gender differences in entrepreneurial activity are well documented in the literature (Reynolds *et al.*, 2004). However, scholars have a limited understanding of the factors and decision processes that influence men and women differently to pursue entrepreneurship or not to do so (Zhao *et al.*, 2005). Yet the persistent and consistent differences in male and female entrepreneurial activity across the world makes it important to understand why fewer women than men choose to become entrepreneurs (Gupta *et al.* 2009:409). Against this background, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H₀1: Gender has no influence on the perceptions of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career.
- H_a1: Gender has an influence on the perceptions of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career.

Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship

Wherever society is highly differentiated along racial or ethnic lines, race and ethnicity have been used to predict entrepreneurial activity (Kiggundu, 2002:241) and several studies have examined the relationship between racial differences and self-employment (Bates, 2000; Fairlie, 2004), consistently reporting that Black and Hispanic Americans exhibit lower rates of self-employment than other ethnic groups (Köllinger & Minniti, 2006:59). However, studies show that African Americans are more likely than either Hispanic Americans or Caucasian Americans to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Dyck & Neubert, 2010:178). In their study measuring differences in the rates of entrepreneurial involvement between Black and White Americans, Köllinger and Minniti (2006:59, 63) found that although Blacks were almost twice as likely to start a business than Whites, Blacks were significantly less likely than Whites to own an established business that survived beyond the initial start-up.

Studies in Africa (Ramachandran & Shah, 1999) have shown that while European and Indian-owned firms registered positive growth, Black-owned firms recorded negative growth. The study noted, however, that Black entrepreneurs had significantly less formal education and business networks than their European and Indian counterparts. In South Africa, however, White and Indian/Asian individuals are more likely to start new business ventures than are Coloureds or Black Africans (Herrington *et al.*, 2010:71). These findings are supported by Fairlie and Meyer (1996) who found evidence that self-employment was higher among more advantaged racial groups. Giacomini, Janssen, Pruett, Shinnar, Llopis and Toney (2010) found that although students were motivated by similar factors and perceived similar barriers to business creation, American, Asian and European students did not share the same entrepreneurial intentions or dispositions.

According to Köllinger and Minniti (2006:73), the gap in entrepreneurial propensity between Blacks and Whites can partly be explained by individual perceptions. High levels of confidence and optimistic perceptions of entrepreneurship suggest that the subjective perceptions of Black Americans tend to be biased towards over-optimism more than the perceptions of Whites (Köllinger & Minniti, 2006:75). According to Kazela (2009) a general perception among disadvantaged communities is that one earns an academic qualification to be more suitably qualified for the employment market rather than for self-employment.

As in the case of gender, perceptions relating to work values could also influence entrepreneurial activity among ethnic groups. Duffy and Sedlacek (2007:361) found that African Americans and Asian Americans were more likely to express extrinsic values, while Whites were more likely to express intrinsic values. More specifically, Black adolescents tended to place a greater emphasis on social values, whereas adolescent White men tended to favour work values focused on economic rewards and job security. Kiggundu (2002:242) concluded that differences in race and ethnicity might be indicative of other variables more important for entrepreneurial success. In an attempt to identify these variables, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H₀2: Ethnicity has no influence on the perceptions of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career.
- H_a2: Ethnicity has an influence on the perceptions of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and sampling method

A comparison of student expectations of a particular career versus actual experiences of that career has been the focus of several studies (Daniel, Chamberlain & Gordon, 2001; Ferguson & Hatherly, 1991; Gedye, Fender & Chalkley, 2004; Scott & Gunderson, 2003). According to Rousseau and Venter (2009:5), one's expectations of a particular career and one's experiences in reality, do not always correspond. Furthermore, studies have shown that students have a more favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship than the population in general (Piipponen, 2000). In order to account for these differences between expectations and reality, two samples were identified to participate in this study, namely undergraduate students of Business Management and existing small business owners.

Convenience and judgemental sampling were used to identify potential respondents, and a survey instrument was administered. The Business Management students were conveniently selected from undergraduate students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, whereas specified criteria were used in judging the selection of small business owners operating in Nelson Mandela Bay, to participate in the study. Judgemental sampling was used to identify small business owner respondents because no complete lists of small businesses are available in the area, or in South Africa, for that matter. The criteria by which the small business owner respondents were identified, were as follows: the small business owner respondents had to be actively involved in running (owning and managing) the business, the business had to have been in operation for at least one year, and the business had to employ fewer than 50 persons.

The sample frame consisted of 803 students and 355 small business owners. In total, 739 usable questionnaires were returned, 454 from students and 285 from small business owners, yielding a response rate of 64%.

Data collection and statistical analysis

The fourteen work values under investigation were measured using several items developed by Farrington *et al.* (2011). By means of a structured self-administered measuring instrument, these items were then used to empirically measure the work values as applicable to an entrepreneurial career among both the student and small business owner samples.

In Section A, demographic information pertaining to the students and small business owner respondents, as well as the small businesses themselves, was requested. Section B of the measuring instrument consisted of 69 statements (items) relating to the fourteen work values under investigation. In the case of the student questionnaire, the items measuring the constructs were phrased to measure perceptions of "what it could be like to run one's own business". These exact items were used in the small business owner questionnaire, but in the latter case the items were phrased to measure perceptions of "what it is like to run one's own business". Using a 7-point Likert-type interval scale, respondents were requested to indicate their extent of agreement with regard to each statement. The 7-point Likert-type interval scale was interpreted as 1 = *strongly disagree* through to 7 = *strongly agree*.

The data collected from 739 usable questionnaires were subjected to various statistical analyses. In order to assess the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument, an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken and Cronbach-alpha coefficients were calculated. Descriptive statistics relating to the work values, such as the mean and standard deviation, were calculated to summarise the sample data distribution. Furthermore, t-test statistics were undertaken to establish whether differences in mean scores reported between males and females were statistically significant, as well as between the means of the various

ethnic groups. Cohen's *d* statistics were calculated to establish practical significance. Differences were only considered significant if found to be both statistically and practically significant.

Describing the sample

More than half of the student respondents were male (56%) and the large majority (99%) were under the age of 25 years. For the purpose of this study South Africans of colour, namely Blacks, Indian/Asians and Coloureds are grouped together as Black South Africans. The reason for this is the small number of Indian/Asian and Coloured respondents participating in the study. Of the student respondents, 67% were Black South Africans. Most respondents reported that none of their parents were self-employed (55%), but the majority (66%) indicated that they themselves undertook some form of employment (occasional, casual or full-time). The majority of respondents were completing a BCom degree.

With regard to the small business owners sample group, the majority of respondents were male (72%) and less than 49 years of age (69%). An even number of White and Black respondents participated in the study. Most respondents (66%) indicated that they possessed a tertiary qualification. A little over half of the respondents (52%) reported that none of their parents were self-employed. On average, respondents had owned their own business for 9.72 years. Small businesses participating in the study employed an average of between 9 and 10 people, and most operated in either the retail (30%) or services (36%) industries. Just less than half (49%) considered their business to be a family business.

Validity and reliability

The validity of the measuring instrument was assessed by conducting an exploratory factor analysis. The software program Statistica Version 8.0 was used for this purpose. Principal component analysis with a varimax rotation was specified as the extraction and rotation method. In determining the factors to extract for the model, the percentage of variance explained and the individual factor loading were taken into account.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed fourteen distinct factors. The items measuring the fourteen work values loaded as expected. However, only three of the five items originally intended to measure *Time* and *Stimulating* loaded onto these factors. Similarly, only four of the five items measuring the factors *Flexibility*, *Challenging* and *Interaction* loaded as expected. The fourteen work values cumulatively explained 43% of variance in the data. Factor loadings of ≥ 0.6 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006) were reported for all factors, with the majority having loadings of ≥ 0.7 . This result provides evidence of a factor structure which has been well defined. Evidence of validity for the measuring scales is thus provided.

Despite several items not loading as expected, it was unnecessary to reformulate the operational definitions. The operationalisation of the fourteen work values identified, the minimum and maximum factor loadings, as well as the Cronbach-alpha coefficients for each of these constructs, are summarised in Table 2. Cronbach-alpha coefficients of greater than 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Peterson, 1994) were reported for all constructs, suggesting that reliable measuring scales were used to measure the constructs under investigation.

TABLE 2
MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT ANALYSIS

Operationalisation of work values	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach-alpha values
Time: Allows for a balance between work and leisure time i.e. time for friends, family and outside interests.	3	Max: 0.808 Min: 0.769	0.776
Flexibility: Allows for freedom to vary activities and to regulate own working hours.	4	Max: 0.758 Min: 0.644	0.774
Financial benefit: Allows for a rewarding income level and increased personal wealth.	5	Max: 0.767 Min: 0.642	0.838
Challenging: Requires performing activities that are difficult and highly demanding.	4	Max: 0.776 Min: 0.650	0.789
Stimulating: Requires performing activities that are interesting, exciting and adventurous.	3	Max: 0.770 Min: 0.752	0.771
Imaginative: Requires creativity, innovation and original thinking in performing activities.	5	Max: 0.750 Min: 0.686	0.833
Security: Provides regular income and secure employment	5	Max: 0.864 Min: 0.778	0.905
Prestige: Earns respect and approval from friends, family and the community.	5	Max: 0.812 Min: 0.610	0.878
Autonomy: Allows for working independently and the making of all operational decisions	5	Max: 0.833 Min: 0.601	0.836
Interaction: Requires being people-orientated and working closely with others.	4	Max: 0.768 Min: 0.642	0.780
Serving the community: Provides opportunity to help others and be of service to the community.	4	Max: 0.847 Min: 0.683	0.868
Stress: Is a source of worry and constant pressure.	5	Max:-0.890 Min:-0.671	0.872
Responsibility: Requires taking full responsibility for activities and outcomes.	5	Max: 0.810 Min: 0.642	0.816
Future prospects: Provides one the opportunity to grow personally and professionally.	5	Max: 0.784 Min: 0.617	0.855

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise the sample data distribution. The means and standard deviations of the various work values were reported for business owners and students, firstly in terms of gender (Tables 3 and 4) and secondly in terms of ethnic group (Tables 5 and 6). In order to establish whether gender and ethnicity have an influence on the perceptions of an entrepreneurial career, the mean scores of the fourteen work values reported by the different sample groups were investigated. Statistical significance was established by means of t-tests, while Cohen's d statistics were calculated to establish practical significance. The two sample groups, namely small business owners and students, were separately analysed.

With regard to the work value *Flexibility*, significant differences ($p < 0.10$; Cohen's d 0.237) were found between the mean scores reported by male and female small business owners (see Table 3). Females (5.20) reported significantly higher mean scores than males (4.87). This finding suggests that female small business owners perceived that an own business allowed them freedom to vary activities and regulate working hours, more so than male small

business owners did. Significant differences ($p < 0.05$; Cohen's d 0.283) were also reported between the mean scores of male (5.95) and female (6.22) small business owners for the work value *Autonomy*. Females perceived that an own business allowed for autonomy and independence, more so than males did.

TABLE 3
GENDER OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND WORK VALUES

(MALE N = 206; FEMALE N = 79)

	Mean Female	Mean Male	Std.Dev. Female	Std.Dev. Male	t-value	df	P	Cohen's D
Time	4.650	4.382	1.45	1.53	1.34	283	0.180	0.178
Flexibility	5.196	4.867	1.27	1.43	1.79	283	0.074*	0.237*
Financial benefit	5.192	5.209	1.09	1.26	-0.10	283	0.919	0.013
Challenging	5.696	5.799	0.97	1.00	-0.78	283	0.436	0.103
Stimulating	5.304	5.058	1.14	1.18	1.58	283	0.114	0.210*
Imaginative	6.139	6.014	0.78	0.94	1.05	283	0.293	0.139
Security	5.068	5.181	1.20	1.26	-0.68	283	0.497	0.090
Prestige	5.261	5.092	1.16	1.30	1.01	283	0.316	0.133
Autonomy	6.218	5.948	0.58	1.06	2.14	283	0.033**	0.283*
Interaction	6.500	6.414	0.54	0.68	1.00	283	0.316	0.133
Serving community	5.785	5.846	1.05	1.02	-0.45	283	0.655	0.059
Stress	4.425	4.657	1.47	1.49	-1.18	283	0.239	0.156
Responsibility	6.352	6.411	0.64	0.83	-0.57	283	0.571	0.075
Future prospects	6.008	5.974	1.01	0.93	0.27	283	0.789	0.036

(* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$) (* small $0.2 < d < 0.5$; ** medium $0.5 < d < 0.8$; *** large $d > 0.8$)

No other significant differences between the mean scores of male and female small business owners were reported. For the small business owner sample, the null hypothesis stating that gender has no influence on the perceptions of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career, can thus be rejected in favour of the alternative for the work values *Flexibility* and *Autonomy*, but cannot be rejected for the other work values investigated in this study.

For the work value *Time*, significant differences ($p < 0.05$; Cohen's d 0.236) were found between the mean scores reported by male and female students (see Table 4). Males (4.93) reported significantly higher mean scores than females (4.66). Male students perceived that owning their own business would allow them to maintain a balance between work and leisure time (*Time*), more so than female students did.

TABLE 4
GENDER OF STUDENTS AND WORK VALUES

(MALE N = 254; FEMALE N = 200)

	Mean Female	Mean Male	Std.Dev. Female	Std.Dev. Male	t-value	df	p	Cohen's D
Time	4.655	4.929	1.25	1.09	-2.50	452	0.013*	0.236*
Flexibility	5.360	5.234	0.91	1.08	1.32	452	0.188	0.125
Financial benefit	5.686	5.804	0.90	0.79	-1.48	452	0.139	0.140
Challenging	6.034	5.974	0.80	0.78	0.80	452	0.427	0.075
Stimulating	4.950	5.000	1.05	1.10	-0.49	452	0.624	0.046
Imaginative	6.157	6.031	0.66	0.77	1.85	452	0.065	0.175
Security	4.832	5.065	1.42	1.36	-1.78	452	0.076	0.168
Prestige	5.400	5.506	0.98	0.96	-1.16	452	0.245	0.110
Autonomy	5.948	5.806	0.81	0.97	1.66	452	0.098	0.157
Interaction	6.348	6.268	0.61	0.72	1.26	452	0.209	0.119
Serving community	5.901	5.832	0.84	0.99	0.79	452	0.427	0.075
Stress	4.422	4.368	1.23	1.29	0.46	452	0.649	0.043
Responsibility	6.294	6.254	0.61	0.64	0.67	452	0.504	0.063
Future prospects	6.343	6.256	0.62	0.68	1.41	452	0.160	0.133

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01) (* small 0.2 < d < 0.5; ** medium 0.5 < d < 0.8; *** large d > 0.8)

No other significant differences were reported between male and female students. For the student sample, the null hypothesis can thus be rejected in favour of the alternative for the work value *Time*, but cannot be rejected for the other work values investigated in this study.

The results of this study (see Table 5) showed that Black small business owners reported significantly higher mean scores than their White counterparts for five of the work values associated with an entrepreneurial career. The work values were *Flexibility* (p < 0.05; Cohen's d 0.246), *Security* (p < 0.05; Cohen's d 0.310), *Future prospects* (p < 0.05; Cohen's d 0.250), *Prestige* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.557) and *Serving the community* (p < 0.01; Cohen's d 0.302). Black respondents (5.13) perceived that owning one's own business allowed for autonomy and independence (*Flexibility*) more so than White respondents (4.79) did. Black small business owners reported mean scores of 5.35 for *Security* and 6.10 for *Future prospects*, whereas White respondents reported significantly lower mean scores of 4.96 and 5.87 for these work values. This finding suggests that Black respondents perceived that owning their own business provided them with a regular income and secure employment (*Security*), as well as the opportunity to grow personally and professionally (*Future prospects*), more so than White respondents did. Similarly, Black small business owners reported mean scores of 5.48 for *Prestige* and 5.99 for *Serving the community*, whereas White respondents reported significantly lower mean scores of 4.80 and 5.68 for these work values. In other words, Black respondents perceived that owning their own business earned them respect and approval (*Prestige*) and gave them opportunities to serve the community (*Serving the community*), more so than their White counterparts did.

As with the work values discussed above, a significant difference exists between the mean scores reported by White and Black small business owners for the work value *Stress* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.589). However in contrast to the above, White respondents (5.02) reported significantly higher mean scores than Blacks (4.17). White small business owners perceived that their own business was a source of worry and pressure, more so than Black respondents did.

TABLE 5
ETHNICITY OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND WORK VALUES

(WHITE N = 142; BLACK N = 143)

	Mean White	Mean Black	Std.Dev. White	Std.Dev. Black	t-value	df	p	Cohen's D
Time	4.383	4.529	1.54	1.48	-0.82	283	0.41	0.097
Flexibility	4.787	5.128	1.50	1.27	-2.07	283	0.04*	0.246*
Financial benefit	5.104	5.303	1.27	1.15	-1.39	283	0.17	0.164
Challenging	5.713	5.827	1.03	0.95	-0.97	283	0.33	0.115
Stimulating	5.077	5.175	1.17	1.18	-0.70	283	0.49	0.083
Imaginative	6.006	6.091	0.89	0.91	-0.80	283	0.43	0.095
Security	4.958	5.340	1.28	1.18	-2.62	283	0.01*	0.310*
Prestige	4.797	5.478	1.29	1.15	-4.70	283	0.00***	0.557**
Autonomy	6.128	5.917	0.96	0.95	1.86	283	0.06	0.220
Interaction	6.428	6.448	0.70	0.60	-0.26	283	0.80	0.030
Serving community	5.674	5.983	1.12	0.91	-2.55	283	0.01**	0.302*
Stress	5.015	4.173	1.31	1.54	4.97	283	0.00***	0.589**
Responsibility	6.423	6.366	0.87	0.68	0.60	283	0.55	0.072
Future prospects	5.865	6.101	1.03	0.85	-2.11	283	0.04*	0.250*

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001) (* small 0.2 < d < 0.5; ** medium 0.5 < d < 0.8; *** large d > 0.8)

For the small business owner sample, the null hypothesis stating that ethnicity has no influence on the perceptions of the work place values associated with an entrepreneurial career, can thus be rejected in favour of the alternative for the work values *Flexibility*, *Security*, *Prestige*, *Serving the community*, *Stress* and *Future prospects*. The null hypothesis can, however, not be rejected for the other work values investigated in this study.

As in the case of Black small business owners, Black students also reported significantly higher mean scores than their White counterparts for the factors *Flexibility* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.354), *Security*, (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.510), *Prestige* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.693), *Serving community* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.593) and *Future prospects* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.390). In addition to the aforementioned factors, Black students also reported significantly higher mean scores for the factors *Imaginative* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.534) and *Interaction* (p < 0.001; Cohen's d 0.345).

The results of this study (see Table 6) show that Black students (5.40) perceived that owning their own business would allow for autonomy and independence (*Flexibility*) more than White students (5.05) did. Black students reported mean scores of 5.18 for *Security* and 6.37 for *Future prospects*, whereas White respondents reported significantly lower mean scores of 4.48 and 6.12 for these work values. In other words, Black students perceived that owning their own business would allow for a regular income and secure employment (*Security*), as well as the opportunity to grow personally and professionally (*Future prospects*), more so than White students did. Black students also reported mean scores of 5.66 for *Prestige* and 6.03 for *Serving the community*, whereas White students reported significantly lower mean scores of 5.02 and 5.50 for these work values. This finding suggests that Black respondents perceive that owning their own business would earn them respect and approval (*Prestige*) and would provide them with an opportunity to serve the community (*Serving the community*), more so than their White counterparts did.

TABLE 6
ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS AND WORK VALUES

(WHITE N = 139; BLACK N = 315)

	Mean White	Mean Black	Std.Dev. White	Std.Dev. Black	t-value	df	p	Cohen's D
Time	4.986	4.730	1.05	1.21	2.16	452	0.03*	0.220*
Flexibility	5.045	5.398	1.01	0.99	-3.48	452	0.00***	0.354*
Financial benefit	5.718	5.767	0.80	0.86	-0.57	452	0.57	0.058
Challenging	6.022	5.991	0.71	0.82	0.38	452	0.71	0.038
Stimulating	4.916	5.005	0.99	1.11	-0.81	452	0.42	0.083
Imaginative	5.826	6.201	0.76	0.67	-5.24	452	0.00***	0.534**
Security	4.483	5.174	1.48	1.29	-5.01	452	0.00***	0.510**
Prestige	5.016	5.655	0.95	0.91	-6.81	452	0.00***	0.693**
Autonomy	5.869	5.869	0.78	0.96	0.01	452	1.00	0.001
Interaction	6.144	6.373	0.75	0.62	-3.39	452	0.00***	0.345**
Serving community	5.495	6.025	0.91	0.89	-5.82	452	0.00***	0.593**
Stress	4.612	4.295	1.16	1.29	2.48	452	0.01*	0.253*
Responsibility	6.265	6.275	0.63	0.63	-0.16	452	0.87	0.016
Future prospects	6.119	6.371	0.70	0.62	-3.83	452	0.00***	0.390*

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001) (* small 0.2 < d < 0.5; ** medium 0.5 < d < 0.8; *** large d > 0.8)

Black students reported means of 6.20 for *Imaginative* and 6.37 for *Interaction*. White students on the other hand reported significantly lower means of 5.83 and 6.14 for *Imaginative* and *Interaction* respectively. This finding suggests that Black students perceived that owning their own business would require creative thinking to perform activities (*Imaginative*), that they worked closely with others and that they were people-orientated, more so than White students.

A significant difference also existed between the mean scores reported by White and Black students for the work values *Time* (p < 0.05; Cohen's d 0.220) and *Stress* (p < 0.05; Cohen's d 0.253). In this case, however, White students reported significantly higher mean scores for *Time* (4.99) and *Stress* (4.61) than Black students who reported mean scores of 4.72 and 4.30 respectively for these factors. White students perceived that owning their own business would allow them to maintain a balance between work and leisure time (*Time*), more so than Black students did. White students perceived that their own business would be a source of worry and pressure, more so than Black students did.

For the student sample, the null hypothesis can thus be rejected in favour of the alternative for the work values *Time*, *Flexibility*, *Imaginative*, *Security*, *Prestige*, *Interaction* *Serving community*, *Stress* and *Future prospects*, but cannot be rejected for the other work values investigated in this study.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to establish whether the perceptions of desirability that women and Black individuals have of an entrepreneurial career differ from those of White males. These differences were established in terms of the fourteen workplace values identified by Farrington *et al.* (2011) among both students of Business Management and existing small business owners.

A significant relationship between the gender of the small business owner and the work values *Flexibility* and *Autonomy* is reported in this study. Female small business owners perceived that having their own business allowed them autonomy and independence as well as freedom to vary activities and regulate working hours, more so than males did. Given the household and child-rearing responsibilities which still dominate for most women, having one's own business would allow them greater flexibility and autonomy to meet these commitments. Men, on the other hand, are less likely to see themselves as being responsible for household and child-rearing duties, but are more likely to see their role as one of providing for their families – thus creating the perception that having their own business would require more work and less flexibility in order to meet these commitments. With regard to the student sample, *Time* was the only work value that was influenced by gender. Male students were under the impression that owning their own business would allow them to maintain a balance between work and leisure time, more so than female students did. This opinion changes over time, as can be seen from the business owner results.

The findings of this study suggest that Black respondents perceived that owning their own business provided them with a regular income and secure employment, as well as the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, more so than White respondents did. In addition, Black respondents perceived that owning their own business earned them respect and approval and gave them opportunities to serve the community, more so than their White counterparts perceived. White small business owners perceived that their own business was a source of worry and pressure, more so than Black respondents did.

Black students perceived that owning their own business would provide a regular income and secure employment, as well as the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, more so than White students did. The findings also suggests that Black student perceived that owning their own business would earn them respect and approval, and would provide them with an opportunity to serve the community, more so than their White counterparts did. Black students perceived that owning their own business would require creative thinking to perform activities, working closely with others, and be people-orientated, more so than White students did. White students perceived that owning their own business would allow them to maintain a balance between work and leisure time, more so than Black students did. However, White students also perceived that their own business would be a source of worry and pressure, more so than Black students did.

IMPLICATIONS

Studies report that males and particularly White males are more inclined towards entrepreneurship than females. The reasoning behind undertaking this study was that if differences in perceptions of self-employment could be identified, possible explanations could be forthcoming with regard to why certain groups are more likely to embark on entrepreneurial careers than others. The results of this study show, however, that with the exception of perceptions relating to *Flexibility*, *Autonomy* and maintaining a balance between work and leisure time (*Time*), males and females do not differ in their perceptions of what an entrepreneurial career could be like (for students) or is (for small business owners). Female small business owners associated higher levels of *Flexibility* and *Autonomy* with self-employment than their males counterparts did. Given that more men embark on entrepreneurial careers than women, but women perceived these benefits more than men did, it can be assumed that the way the different gender groups perceive self-employment is not a factor influencing their choice of pursuing an entrepreneurial career. Considering the household and child-rearing responsibilities of most women, one would expect self-employment to attract women to such a career. However, the perceptions relating to

Flexibility and *Autonomy* differed only between male and female small business owners, and not between male and female students. This could imply that only through the experience of self-employment would women be aware of this advantage. With an increasing number of women embarking on entrepreneurial careers (De Bruin *et al.*, 2006; Kakkonen, 2010), it is assumed that as the word spreads among the female community, women will become more aware of the advantages of flexibility and autonomy experienced when self-employed.

Interestingly, male students perceived that self-employment would allow them time to maintain a balance between work and leisure (*Time*), more so than female students did. A possible explanation for this finding is that male students perceive time not at work as leisure time, whereas because of anticipated household and childrearing responsibilities, female students do not necessarily regard all time not at work as leisure time. According to Langowitz and Minniti (2007:341, 347), men tend to perceive the entrepreneurial environment in a more positive light than do women. The results of this study, however, show that women are more positive in terms of the flexibility and autonomy of self-employment, whereas men are more positive in terms of the leisure time that self-employment will permit. Unfortunately the findings of this study do not offer an explanation as to why more males are likely to become entrepreneurs than females, only that explanations should be sought elsewhere.

The results of this study show that Black small business owners and Black student respondents scored higher mean scores than White respondents for the majority of work values investigated in this study. This seems to suggest that Black respondents perceive an entrepreneurial career more positively than White respondents do, specifically in terms of *Flexibility*, *Security*, *Future prospects*, *Prestige*, opportunity to serve the community (*Serving the community*) and stress levels (*Stress*). In addition, Black students believe that self-employment will allow for greater imagination and interaction with others, than White students do. Despite the more positive perception of self-employment among Black respondents, the GEM survey suggests that Black individuals, and in particular Black South Africans, are less likely than White South Africans to embark on an entrepreneurial career (Herrington *et al.*, 2010). This raises the question of whether the perception of, or the attitude towards, an entrepreneurial career is a factor contributing to the low levels of entrepreneurial activity among Black individuals in South Africa. Should an explanation rather not be sought from the other determinants of intentions, as implied by the theory of planned behaviour? Another possible explanation for the low levels of entrepreneurial activity among Black South Africans is the many opportunities now available to them in the corporate and government sector as a result of affirmative action and employment equity. Future studies could shed light on this aspect.

In their study, Köllinger and Minniti (2006:72) also reported that Black individuals perceive themselves and their entrepreneurial environment in a much more optimistic light than Whites do, despite Black entrepreneurs being more likely to fail than Whites in the early stages of the entrepreneurial process (Köllinger & Minniti, 2006:61). According to Köllinger and Minniti (2006:75), high levels of confidence and optimistic perceptions of entrepreneurship in the face of high failure rates suggest that the subjective perceptions of Black Americans tend to be biased towards over-optimism, more so than the perceptions of Whites. Given their findings, Köllinger and Minniti (2006:61) conclude that constraints and not preferences are behind racial differences in business ownership. Black individuals embarking on entrepreneurial careers face numerous constraints, such as discrimination and lack of access to finance, as well as lack of business and managerial skills. The identification of these constraints is of utmost importance if solutions are to be found and entrepreneurial activity among Black individuals in South Africa is to be enhanced.

Furthermore, the Government and policy-makers should take cognisance of the results of this study, and future efforts to encourage entrepreneurship should not only focus on

creating a positive perception of self-employment as a career, but also on facilitating an enabling environment for prospective women and Black entrepreneurs.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As in all studies of an empirical nature, the findings of this study should be interpreted in the light of several limitations. The use of a convenience and judgemental sampling technique is a limitation of this study. Non-probability sampling introduces a source of potential bias into a study, and consequently the findings cannot be generalised to the general population. Future research should strive to develop a more comprehensive database from which probability samples can be drawn.

Another limitation of this study is that the data collected relied on one-time individual self-report measures to assess constructs. Self-reporting potentially leads to common method bias. However, Meade, Watson and Kroustalis (2007) are of the opinion that the use of common assessment methods does not necessarily lead to the problem of common method bias, and in many cases common method bias may be small and will not necessarily jeopardise the validity of the results. It is, however, acknowledged that common method bias could have influenced the results of this study.

The results of this study show that statistically significant differences exist between males and females as well as between White and Black respondents regarding how an entrepreneurial career is perceived. However, given the small to medium-size effect as determined by Cohen's *d* statistics, it is questionable whether these differences in perceptions are large enough to have an effect in practice (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:51). The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of the levels of practical significance reported.

Given the importance of entrepreneurship to the economies of countries, it would be useful to replicate this study throughout South Africa among the general working population, in an attempt to establish the perceptions of an entrepreneurial career on a broader scale. Investigating relationships between the various work values and entrepreneurial intentions could also provide some valuable insights into why more South Africans are not entrepreneurial. Whether other demographic factors such as socio-economic status, age and having entrepreneurial parents influence the perception of an entrepreneurial career, is also worth further investigation. Furthermore, the significant differences reported in this study concerning how the different ethnic groups perceive an entrepreneurial career suggest a need for more cross-cultural research relating to entrepreneurial activity in South Africa.

Despite the limitations identified, this study has added to the field of entrepreneurship research and has provided valuable insights into how existing and potential entrepreneurs from different gender and ethnic groups perceive an entrepreneurial career.

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