Developing South African School Leaders' Entrepreneurial Skills: A New Frontier for Fostering School Innovation in the Digital Age

By

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Introduction

- The digital era is characterised by rapid advances in technology which increasingly dictates the way in which people live, work, and relate to each other (Jardim, 2021).

- This rapid changes affects virtually all areas of human endeavours including the education sector (Souza, 2018).

- Several conferences and workshops around equipping (Audretsch and Tamvada (2022, Leffler & From (2015) have emanated in order to ensure that management teams of schools are equipped with globally relevant skills in order to cope with the demands of the 4IR.

Intro. Cont.

- Many Schools in South Africa seem to focus mainly on the present, not exploring the future and the future of education in the continent.

- Entrepreneurship education is on the agenda in almost every country, and the concept has been successfully infused into the school curricula in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, the United States, and Japan, to name a few (Mamabolo, 2020).

- How prepared are African school leaders?

We provide preliminary findings from a systematic review of literature. This approach considers three aspects: time, journals and topic.
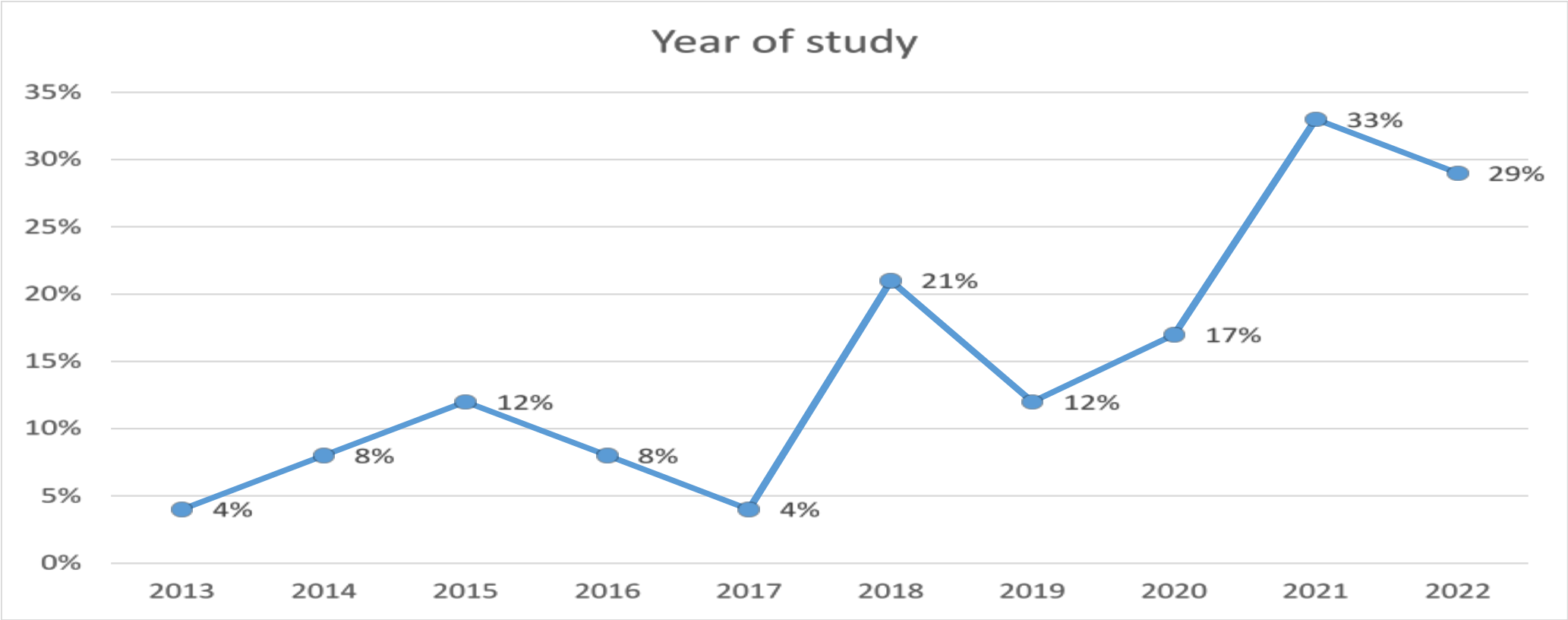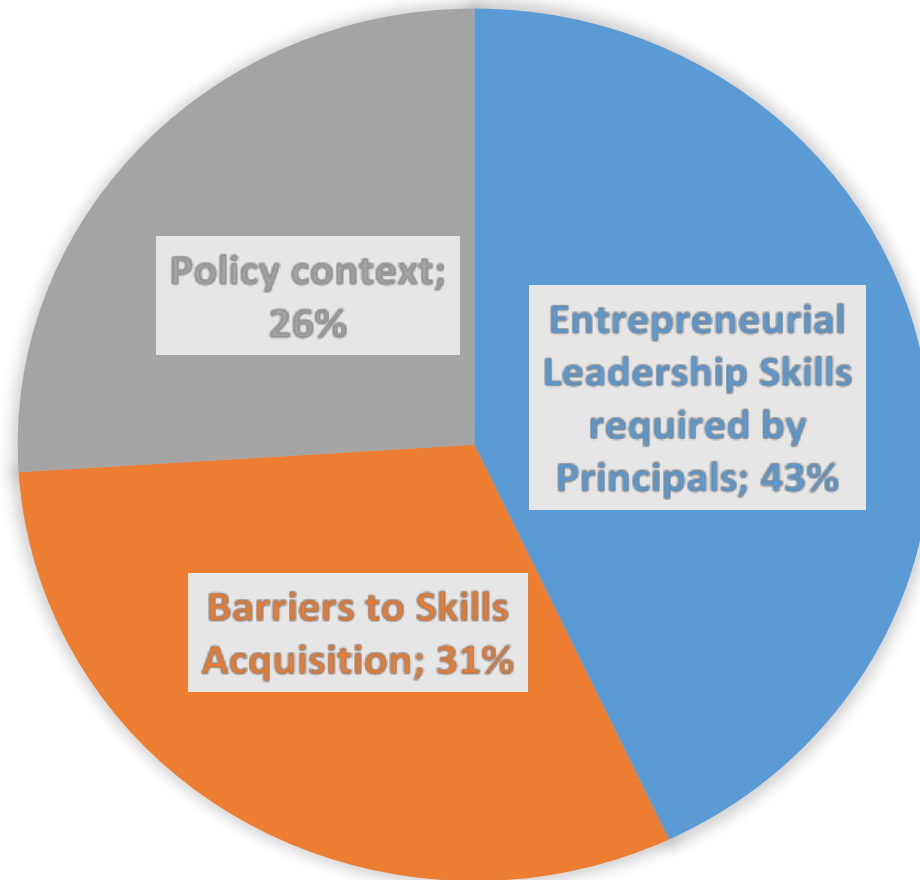

Figure 1. Year of study

Journals and country rank impact factor

Journal	Number of Articles	Impact Factors JCR Index 5 years
Journal of Innovation & Knowledge	1	12.20
Small Business Economics	2	8.65
International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	3	7.50
Prospects	2	7.12
Wiley	4	6.65
The Journal of Technology Transfer	3	5.78
Management Review Quarterly	7	5.37
Policy Studies Journal	1	5.14
European Journal of Innovation Management	1	4.69
Leadership, Education, Personality: Interdisciplinary Journal	3	3.72
MDPI - Journal of open innovation technology market and complexity	1	3.61
Journal of Small Business Management	1	3.46
Operations Research Forum	1	3.41
Education + Training	3	3.32
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development	3	3.29
MDPI - Sustainability	6	3.25
Leadership & Organization Development Journal	1	3.24
Education sciences	2	2.92
Journal of Management Development	1	2.82
Cogent Business & Management	1	2.02
Journal of Curriculum Studies	1	2.18
Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	1	2.02
South African Journal of Education	3	1.19
International Journal of Leadership in Education	1	1.45

Analysis Based On Research Objectives

- Entrepreneurial Leadership Skills required by Principals; 43%
- Barriers to Skills Acquisition; 31%
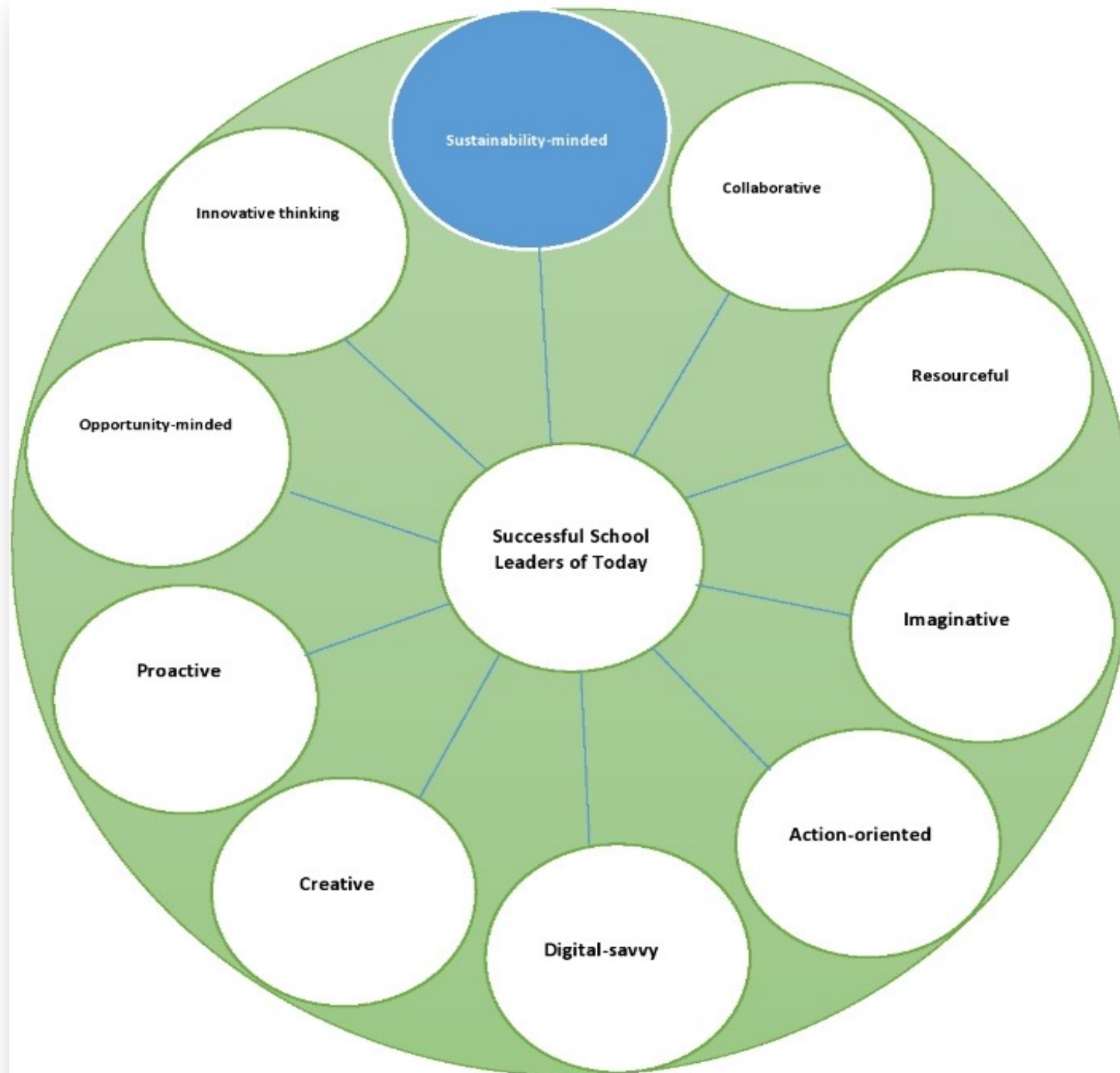- Policy context; 26%

Research objectives

Findings

Entrepreneurial skills needed by school leaders to meet the demands of the 4IR?

This article does not set out to provide a general review of what constitutes entrepreneurial attributes or practices for all adults as this has been done in many contexts. The literature was reviewed to specifically explore attributes considered entrepreneurial in the context of school leaders and educators in South Africa's basic education sector.

European Union (2019), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020), and (OECD) (2021) have indicated certain skills as essential to being successful in the 21st century, the identified skills include creativity, digital communication, action orientation and innovative thinking, collaborative, imaginative, proactive, opportunity-minded, resourceful, i.e. becoming entrepreneurial.

Findings cont.

Diagram of "Successful School Leaders of Today" surrounded by: Sustainability-minded, Collaborative, Resourceful, Imaginative, Action-oriented, Digital-savvy, Creative, Proactive, Opportunity-minded, Innovative thinking

Source: Authors based on literature review

Findings cont.

Identified barriers to entrepreneurial leadership in South African schools

School leaders operating in isolation

Internal resistance

Behavioural disorder amongst learners

School leaders rarely have entrepreneurial experience during their years of training in the faculties of education.

Narrow concept of entrepreneurship education is being offered in institutions of learning.

Political connotation. DBE emphasizes nominal increase in students' performance without a corresponding improvement in the students' capacity.

Summation

- Based on the reviewed literature, the majority of school leaders in African nations have a long way to go in order to meet up with the demands of 4IR.

- South Africa, Mauritius and Tunisia are however considered as few among African countries which has begun to make attempts through innovative research.

- African countries, especially Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, are particularly vulnerable to the 4IR, owing to their large populations and political instability.

Way Forward

- We do not advocate for a one-size-fits-all strategy to promote school sustainability.
- Entrepreneurial abilities do not develop overnight.
- Constraints in South African schools must be acknowledged.
- The cascade model Vs the collaborative model.
- Challenging the status quo requires a strong will.
- Teacher education in the 4IR style.
- A lesson from Finland's educational system.
- Upgrading schools with a focus on sustainability.

Thank you