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A Transformative Social Justice and Human Rights Leadership Approach for Entrepreneurship Education in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract. Recently, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) emerged as a mechanism for mitigating youth unemployment and promoting economic inclusivity in post-apartheid South Africa. However, the current approach on the delivery of EE perpetuates capital-gain over societal benefits, leaving its potential contribution toward transformative social justice underexplored. This conceptual study investigates how transformative social justice leadership principles can be operationalised in entrepreneurship education in a humane way to redress the historical inequities and promote socioeconomic transformation in South Africa. Guided by the critical pedagogy theory, we applied a qualitative policy document analysis to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* and the country's *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* for secondary school Economic and Management Sciences. The paper adopts a qualitative research approach, Conceptual Research Design (CRD) and Policy Document Analysis (PDA) to comprehend meanings in the selected policy texts. The findings reveal two interlinked dimensions. First, UDHR Articles 3, 23 and 25, focus on dignity, work and social security, as well as the insight offers normative guidance for embedding rights-based content in entrepreneurship curricula. Second, CAPS provides entry points for aligning entrepreneurial skills with ethical and socially responsible practices. In addition, the findings exemplify the role of teachers as transformative leaders who can mediate this alignment not only by delivering technical content, but also by fostering critical consciousness and value-driven innovation. The study proposes a framework for integrating socially just human rights leadership practices into entrepreneurship teaching and offers curriculum-level recommendations.

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1. Introduction

Despite the cessation of apartheid and gaining independence, South Africa continues to grapple with entrenched socioeconomic inequalities as one of its enduring legacies (Saka, 2024). These legacies are evident in the entrepreneurial landscape, where access to capital, markets, and entrepreneurship opportunities remains disproportionately concentrated among privileged minorities (Leibbrandt & Díaz Pabón, 2021; Mbandlwa, 2023). Moreover, the South Africa's Gini coefficient stood at 0.67 in 2022, among the highest globally, highlighting the stark income divide (World Bank, 2022). Chancel et al. (2022) found that the top 10% of earners in the country earns over 65% of the national income, whereas the bottom 50% receive less than 6% of its income. This structural imbalance severely restricts upward mobility and undermines inclusive economic participation in the country's economy.

Statistically, the high unemployment rate in the country further widens the social class gap. As of the first quarter of 2024, South Africa's official youth unemployment rate between ages 15–24 and 25–34 stood at 59.7% and 40.7% respectively, which is alarmingly high (Statistics South Africa, 2024). These figures are symptomatic of a sluggish economy and an education system that frequently fails to equip learners with relevant and marketable skills (Mtotywa et al., 2024). Compounding this situation is widespread poverty. Studies have shown that nearly one-third of South Africans, approximately 18.2 million people, live below the upper bound poverty line of R1 417 per month (Statistics South Africa, 2023). These indicators point to a large segment of the population being excluded from meaningful economic engagement in the country. This paper argues for a transformative social justice human rights leadership approach to EE to enhance economic empowerment and alleviate poverty.

In South Africa, educational disparities further constrain social mobility, especially for learners in under-resourced schools in historically disadvantaged communities. In 2022, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate was reported to be 80.1%, yet only 36% of candidates qualified for university admission. This disparity was more pronounced in the country's poorer provinces, highlighting the unequal access to quality education (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2023). These limitations not only hinder access to higher education but also stifle the development of critical skills needed for productive economic participation.

Under these conditions, entrepreneurship education has gained attention as a potential pathway to economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. However, while South Africa's Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate was estimated at 17.5% in 2022, however, this growth has not translated into broad-based economic transformation (GEM South Africa, 2023). Studies have shown that entrepreneurship is more accessible to individuals from middle- and upper-income backgrounds, which reinforces existing inequalities, rather than alleviating them (Rani & Kumar 2021). These trends raise important questions about how entrepreneurship education is framed and whom it ultimately serves.

Despite the DBE's initiatives through various policy frameworks, intended to address injustices associated with human rights and curriculum implementations in South Africa, the implementation of entrepreneurship education is largely disconnected from transformative social justice imperatives (Ndofirepi & Rambe, 2018). For instance, the UDHR advocates for education that fosters dignity, equity and social cohesion, while the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasises active citizenship and redress through education (DBE, 2011; United Nations, 1948), but none of their principles appear to influence how EE is being taught in schools.

Research indicates that the delivery of CAPS content tends to prioritise market-driven, individualistic outcomes over collective advancement (Mensah-Williams & Derera, 2023). Scholars have identified this misalignment as a missed opportunity to utilise education as a tool for redistributive justice. Entrepreneurship education continues to focus on profit maximisation and individual success, often at the expense of community development, ethical engagement and historical redress (Ndofirepi & Rambe, 2018). The urgency to reframe entrepreneurship education as a site for critical consciousness and social transformation has intensified in recent years (Keim et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study investigates how the principles of the UDHR and CAPS may be used to inform a socially just transformative leadership approach to entrepreneurship education in South African secondary schools. Employing a qualitative research design and policy document analysis, alongside the critical pedagogy theory, the study examines how entrepreneurship teachers can be repositioned as agents of transformative social justice. The study proposes pedagogical shifts from the current content delivery approach to teaching methods that emphasize human rights, ethical reflexivity, and collective empowerment.

This practice holds the potential to redefine entrepreneurship as a force for equitable socioeconomic redistribution, rather than merely a vehicle for individual advancement. Hence, the study asks two pertinent questions: (1) How can the UDHR principles be operationalised in entrepreneurship education delivery to redress historical inequities and promote socioeconomic transformation? (2) How can teachers' human rights leadership roles contribute to the promotion of socially just transformative practices in entrepreneurship education?

2. Literature Review

This section reviews related literature on transformative social justice and human rights leadership in entrepreneurship education. It goes on to establish how UDHR and CAPS principles are imperative for the entrepreneurship teacher in imbibing a socially just, transformative leadership approach in South African secondary schools. This section is broken into four sections.

2.1 Human Rights, Social Justice, and Education Reform in South Africa

The UDHR adoption by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 stands as a reference point in world human rights protection (Baderin & Ssenyonjo 2016). This policy document articulates a comprehensive set of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, emphasising equality, dignity and non-discrimination (Chávez-Ruvalcaba et al., 2021). The UDHR's principles have significantly influenced educational policies worldwide, including South Africa's efforts to ensure equity and inclusive education (McKenzie & Dalton, 2020). The National Policy for Curriculum and Assessment in Schools (DBE, 2011) is the main policy for curriculum and assessment in schools in South Africa. It was implemented in 2011 to address socioeconomic disparities through curriculum reform. However, the effectiveness of these reforms in bridging long-standing socioeconomic gaps remains questionable (Ngobeni et al., 2023).

Studies have shown that despite the transformative intentions informing CAPS contents, the South African education system still grapples with socioeconomic inequalities, violence, and various forms of discrimination (McKenzie & Dalton, 2020; Ngobeni et al., 2023). These situations highlight the inconsistency between educational goals and outcomes (McKenzie & Dalton 2020). The challenges teachers face in translating universal human rights principles into practical outcomes are also taken into account. Moreover, the continuing inequalities in education across schools in South Africa raise questions regarding the effectiveness of current strategies for realising the right to education, particularly as contained in the UDHR.

This highlights the need for an understanding on how social justice principles can be effectively integrated into teaching practices in entrepreneurship classes. This contradiction suggests the imperative of curriculum reform that inculcates human rights and social transformation principles in learners. Given that studies have indicated that current instructional approaches lack transformative social justice elements (Chávez-Ruvalcaba et al., 2021; McKenzie & Dalton, 2020; Ngobeni et al., 2023), there is a need to re-evaluate the current instructional strategies and integrate transformative social justice principles into them.

Although the UDHR and CAPS provide a framework for human rights-oriented entrepreneurial education in South Africa, there is a need to bridge the gap between policy and practice. The effort will require innovative approaches that will effectively integrate social justice principles to create equitable and transformative learning experiences for learners.

2.2. Entrepreneurship Teachers as Transformative Social Justice Leaders

The concept of transformative social justice leadership in education is deeply rooted in the Freirean critical pedagogy theory. The theory asserts that education serves as a tool for empowering marginalised communities to challenge systemic oppression (Freire, 1970). The theory is particularly important when addressing entrepreneurship education teachers' roles in transforming the long-term effects of post-apartheid capitalism in South Africa (Vivek, 2024). Notably, critics argue that capitalism often prioritises market-driven outcomes, while neglecting the systemic injustices perpetuating marginalisation (Munchick, 2017). By adopting a

transformative perspective, entrepreneurship education transcends neoliberal notions of individual achievement (Luketić, 2016) and becomes a means of promoting reparative justice and collective economic agency (Dodd et al., 2022). Hence, infusing transformative social justice pedagogy in the teaching of EE in South African schools is crucial for positioning the subject as a vehicle for alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable job creation (DBE, 2011).

Integrating human rights frameworks, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), can help bridge this gap and achieve ethical recalibration. The UDHR's Article 25's guarantee of an "adequate standard of living" and Article 23's focus on the "right to just remuneration" (United Nations, 1948) provide moral imperatives for aligning entrepreneurial education with societal upliftment. This strategy is consistent with Sen's (1999) capability approach, which advocates for expanding individuals' freedoms to achieve socioeconomic equality and frames entrepreneurship as a means of dismantling structural barriers, rather than merely a path to individual wealth creation.

It is noteworthy that critical consciousness pedagogy is key in the transformational role of education. Hence, EE teachers are tasked with creating educational experiences that inspire learners to question historical injustices, such as land dispossession during the apartheid era and its ongoing economic ramifications (Ndimande, 2016). For example, CAPS initiatives, such as Entrepreneur's Day (Grade 7, Term 3) exemplify Fraser's (2008) concept of participatory justice by offering opportunities for teachers to assist students to demonstrate community-centred entrepreneurship spirit.

Such practices exemplify teachers' co-participants on initiatives towards dismantling inequities by bridging classroom instruction with grassroots activism (Baker, 2024). However, teachers face significant challenges in reconciling CAPS's emphasis on "profitability" with the ethical imperatives of the UDHR. This is because of the Neoliberal approach to teaching EE, which limits entrepreneurship to individual achievement, obscuring the collective reparative work required for social justice (Munchick, 2017). The situation demands pedagogical innovation, such as redefining business success to include metrics, such as community impact and environmental sustainability, which are principles enshrined in UDHR Articles 28 - 29.

2.3. The Imperatives of Infusing Human Rights Concept into Entrepreneurship Education

Integrating human rights principles into entrepreneurship education can transform the discipline from a purely profit-driven endeavour to a vehicle for ethical, equitable and socially responsible practice (Orts, 2023; Storm et al., 2022). As earlier mentioned, human rights principles enshrined in the UDHR provide a moral compass that challenges entrepreneurs to align their business objectives with societal well-being. Such alignment becomes essential in contexts characterised by historical injustices, such as post-apartheid South Africa, where entrepreneurship education can address systemic inequity and foster inclusive economic growth. In addition, human rights principles, such as dignity, equality and non-discrimination (UDHR Articles 1 and 2), reframe entrepreneurship as a

tool for advancing social justice by teaching learners to design business models that prioritise fair wages (Article 23) or sustainable resource use, as stated in UDHR Article 25. The article provides for the right of the individual to an adequate standard of living. Supporting such a practice may ensure that profit motives do not dominate ethical considerations. Gezer (2020) and Sen (1999) states that economic freedom is inseparable from human development, pointing out that entrepreneurship is a pathway to expand capabilities and dismantle barriers faced by marginalised communities. In South Africa, this approach directly confronts the legacy of apartheid by empowering learners from townships and rural areas to create ventures that address localised inequities, such as unemployment or lack of access to healthcare.

Pedagogically, human rights integration demands curricula that combine technical skills with a critical consciousness (Roy, 2025). Freire's (1970) concept of critical pedagogy encourages teachers to frame entrepreneurship lessons around real-world injustices, thereby prompting learners to question exploitative labour practices and environmental degradation. In addition, case studies analysing multinational corporations' human rights violations can inspire students to innovate alternatives that prioritise worker dignity and ecological sustainability.

Similarly, CAPS's emphasis on "sustainable job creation" (DBE, 2011) may gain deeper resonance when paired with UDHR principles, transforming projects, such as Entrepreneur's Day (CAPS Grade 7) into platforms for community-driven solutions. It is not only ethical to include human rights in entrepreneurship education; it is also a necessary pedagogic requirement. This is because it equips learners to challenge oppressive systems, innovate inclusively, and redefine economic success through the lenses of dignity and equity.

2.4. Entrepreneurship Teachers as Transformative Leaders

When positioned as transformative leaders, entrepreneurship teachers transcend conventional instructional roles to become architects of social change, merging economic skill-building with ethical imperatives, rooted in human rights and equity (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). This reimagined identity demands a unique set of competencies and pedagogical strategies that enable teachers to dismantle systemic inequities, while fostering learners' agency as socially conscious entrepreneurs (Adonis & Silinda, 2021).

In post-apartheid South Africa, where historical injustices, such as racialised poverty and spatial segregation persist, this transformative mandate is both urgent and complex (Smith, 2022). This requires teachers to navigate neoliberal curricular demands, while focusing on reparative justice (Day, 2023; Fraser, 2008). Human rights, social justice, leadership and entrepreneurship education are needed in this context. The cultivation of critical social justice literacy (Penna & Campelo, 2020), a competency that enables them to contextualise entrepreneurship within the framework of historical and systemic oppression (Dodd et al., 2022), is a key element in the role of transformative entrepreneurship teachers.

In addition, understanding apartheid's economic legacies, such as land dispossession and labour exploitation would allow teachers to frame business education as a tool for redress (Mhonda, 2020). The pedagogic approach is consistent with the provisions of the UDHR, in particular Articles 23 of the right to just working conditions and 25 of the right to an adequate standard of living and provides a framework for evaluating entrepreneurial ventures on ethical grounds. The social-justice leadership aspect of transformative entrepreneurship education is based on Freire's (1970) concept of critical consciousness. This involves integrating critical dialogue into lessons, including juxtaposing case studies of apartheid-era monopolies with contemporary social enterprises, addressing township unemployment (Kotsie, 2021). This approach could enable learners to question the dynamics of power and reimagine economic systems through the lens of justice (Omodan, 2024).

The entrepreneurship education component aims at developing ethical reflexivity and empowering teachers to model and teach business practices that align with human rights principles. For example, lessons on financial literacy (CAPS Grade 8) can expand beyond profit calculations (Gill-Simmen et al., 2025) to include assessments of a business's impact on community well-being, such as fair wages and sustainable resource use (de Sousa, 2021). This reflexivity requires pedagogical strategies, such as role-playing scenarios during which learners can negotiate dilemmas between profit maximisation and worker dignity, thereby fostering an ethos in which economic success is inseparable from social responsibility (Igwe et al., 2022).

In South Africa, this paradigm offers a pathway to address apartheid's enduring scars, while reimaging economic systems as spaces for dignity, inclusion and reparative justice (Ajani, 2024). The challenges faced by South African entrepreneurship teachers include addressing historical economic disparity and promoting inclusive economic growth. It is a challenge that necessitates a tailored approach that combines global best practices with local realities to counter the notion of imperialism in the teaching of EE (Chari, 2024). In view of the foregoing, a blend of critical consciousness, ethical reflexivity and contextually relevant pedagogies is necessary to profile entrepreneurship teachers as transformative leaders.

3. Theoretical Framework: Critical Pedagogy Theory (CPT)

The Critical Pedagogy Theory (CPT) by Paulo Freire (1960) is an educational theory propounded as a result of overarching authoritarian and social injustices experienced by educational systems. The CPT places emphasis on education as a means of emancipation and empowerment than on the passive transfer of knowledge (Freire, 1970; Piedade & Messas, 2025). The notion behind Freire's theory is based on translating ideas into action, problem-posing education, conversation and conscientization.

This theory was chosen for this study, because of its examination of inequality in the education system from the apartheid and colonial eras, and here in line with the entrepreneurial education in South African schools. It aligns with the goal of

using human rights policy texts to guide entrepreneurial teaching. The theory encourages critical consciousness and empowerment, which are in line with the UDHR and CAPS objectives to support empowerment, equity, and inclusion through education. These attributes are essential for fostering socially responsible entrepreneurship in secondary school learners. Moreover, this theory emphasises the importance of dialogue and empowering learners to challenge oppressive societal structures (Arévalo & García, 2023). Rather than treating education as a mere transfer of knowledge from teacher to learners, Freirean pedagogy conceptualised teaching as a collaborative process where knowledge is co-constructed by the teacher and the learners. This approach to teaching fosters critical awareness and action towards social justice (Gallagher et al., 2020).

Similarly, it is imperative that entrepreneurship teachers collaborate with learners to tackle socioeconomic inequalities and injustice through the appropriation of the UDHR and CAPS frameworks. Through dialogue, teachers could encourage learners to critically engage with content, with a view to developing a deeper understanding of their social realities. This engagement fosters critical-thinking skills, which are essential for personal and societal transformation, particularly in an entrepreneurship context (Joseph & Gandolfi, 2021).

Below is a conceptual framework (Figure 1) typifying the connections between CPT, UDHR objectives, CAPS values, and transformative entrepreneurial outcomes. This shows the basis for how theory supports the methodology, investigation, and justification of this study.

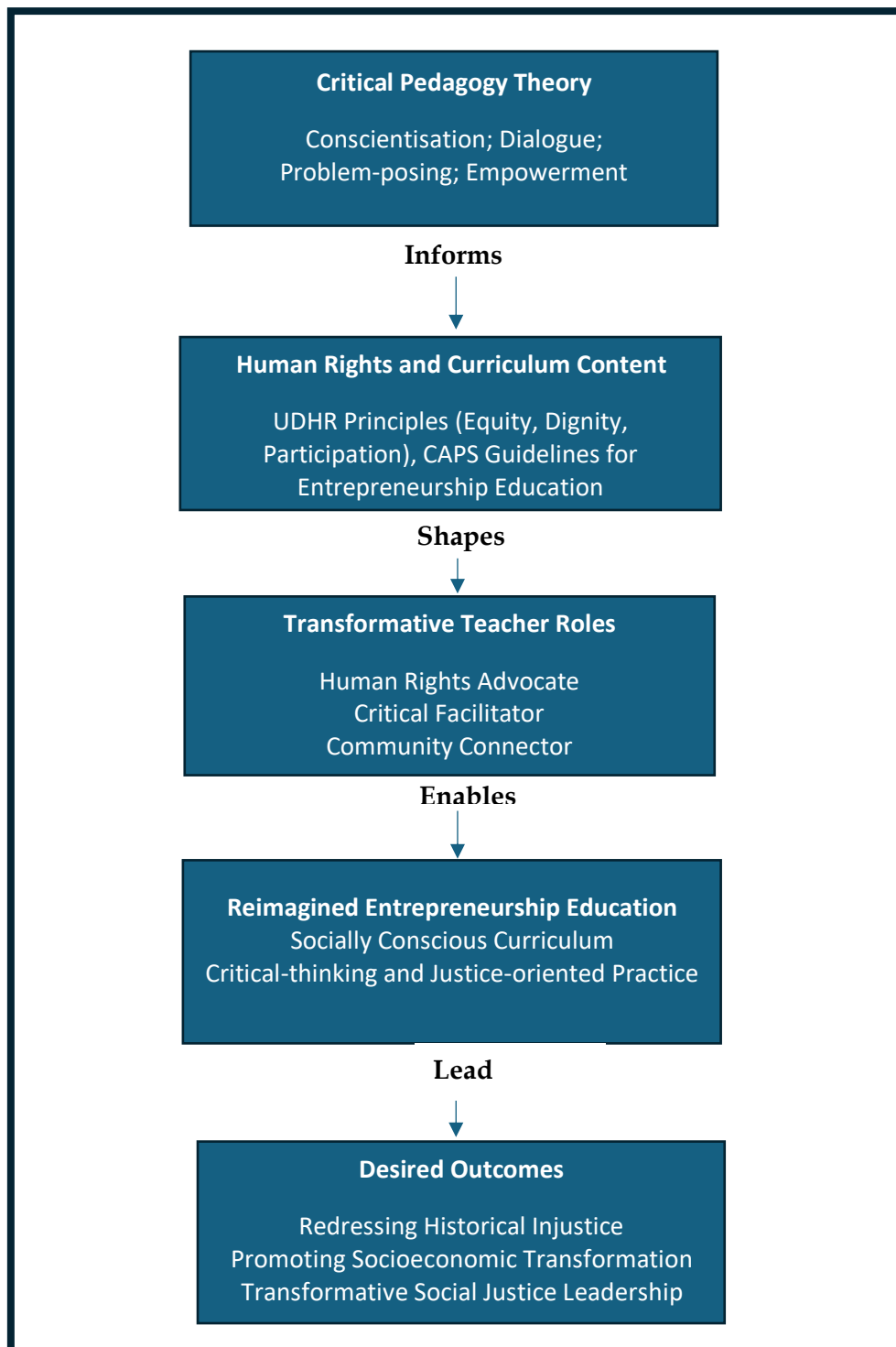


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of CPT, UDHR, CAPS, teachers' roles, and the transformation of entrepreneurship education (authors construction)

4. Methodology

The paper adopts a qualitative research approach, Conceptual Research Design (CRD) and Policy Document Analysis (PDA) to comprehend meanings in the selected policy texts. This is aimed to guide entrepreneurship teachers in becoming leaders, equipped with transformative social justice principles. A qualitative approach is suited for this study as it engages with non-numerical data, allowing the researcher to observe meanings, values, and ideologies that are inherent in policy documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This approach is supported by the Conceptual Research Design (CRD), which enables researchers to understand theoretical constructs embedded in pre-existing texts. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), CRD entails an inductive process of identifying and organizing data into relationships and patterns, which stems from joint observation, document reviews/analysis and/or interviews. This paper focuses on Policy Document Analysis (PDA), which we considered suitable, because of the methodological sequence in interpreting and analysing various types of text to attain a profound understanding of a specified phenomenon.

The pre-existing policy documents (UDHR & CAPS) were critically examined to identify meaningful trends and insights, consistent with the research objectives (Morgan, 2022). We scrutinized existing concepts from texts in policies and information already in the public domain (Heinonen & Gruen, 2024). The analyses of these texts were to conceptualise new ways through which entrepreneurship teachers could infuse their principles in teaching EE. This practice positions them as agents and leaders of transformative social justice. First, we paid attention to texts with the highest connotation of the phenomenon under study, which is transformative social justice leadership principles.

Second, we examined the document to familiarise ourselves with relevant texts that uphold respect for education as a human right, have the potential to redress past socioeconomic injustice, promote understanding, tolerance and equality. Third, the selected texts were coded to check for coherence and were labelled with phrases that represented their content (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Thereafter, two themes were identified from the document that could guide entrepreneurship teachers to become agents of transformative social justice leaders in their schools.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section shows the findings obtained from the document analysis of UDHR and CAPS. Two major themes and four sub-themes emerged from the analysis and were supported with evidence from the texts. By examining how UDHR might be operationalised in entrepreneurship education and how teachers' responsibilities might be refocused towards transformative practice, the findings directly address the study's problems.

5.1. Theme 1: Integrating UDHR Principles into Entrepreneurship Education for Socio-Economic Transformation

Table 1: Alignment between UDHR Articles and CAPS content on Entrepreneurship Education

Sub-Theme	Key UDHR Articles Referenced	Relevant CAPS Content Areas	Findings
Redressing Inequities	Articles 3, 22, 23(2), 25(1)	Grade 7 - 9 (Business Planning, Sustainable Job Creation)	Entrepreneurship can serve as a vehicle for redress and inclusive economic growth but requires rights-based framing.
Ethical Labour Practices	Article 23(1)	Grade 9, Term 3 (Functions of Business)	Integrating labour rights into business education, challenges exploitative norms, but conflicts with neoliberal underpinnings.

Redressing inequities (1.1), Articles 3, 22, 23(2), 25(1) and Grade 7 - 9 (Business Planning, Sustainable Job Creation) depict that entrepreneurship can serve as a vehicle for redress and inclusive economic growth, but requires rights-based framing. Ethical Labour Practices (1.2), Article 23(1) and Grade 9, Term 3 (Functions of Business) show that integrating labour rights into business education challenges exploitative norms, but conflicts with neoliberal underpinnings.

5.1.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Redressing historical inequities through inclusive economic participation

The policy document analysis of UDHR revealed pertinent ways in which entrepreneurship education could be leveraged to address the historical injustices in South Africa. The UDHR policy documents, Articles 3, 23(2) and 25(1) provide a rich framework for fostering an inclusive economic participation. These Articles counteract the black exclusions during apartheid and emphasise non-discrimination principles, the right to work and equal pay, and the right to an acceptable standard of living (UDHR, 1948). These principles are paramount in obliterating the systemic economic barricades that prevented black South Africans from exercising their full economic power, even in this post-apartheid era. The Gini coefficient, according to Stats SA (2022), which measures income inequality, stands as the highest in the world, underscoring the enduring economic disparities in the nation.

The focus of CAPS to enhance the nation's growth and development reinforces the UDHR principles, expressing the possibilities of aligning entrepreneurial endeavours as avenues to redress systemic inequities. For instance, in Grade 8, Term 3 and Grade 7, Term 4, which stipulates topics on '*sustainable job creation, urban and rural challenges*', the teacher could integrate definite instances of how entrepreneurship can be harnessed to mitigate the challenges of unemployment, underemployment and the disparities between urban and rural living standards. More so, the Grade 9, Term 4 contents on '*business plan*' could involve instances of

social businesses that particularly focus on marginalised communities, such as ventures led by the youths or township co-operatives advocating against poor wages, workplace discrimination and food insecurity. Business plans can be adapted to include models for inclusive hiring, ethical labour practices, and community-owned cooperatives.

To attain an inclusive and transformative classroom, it becomes imperative to teach learners to imbibe the act of conducting businesses in a manner that recognises marginalised communities; a practice that resonates with the UDHR's call for *social progress and better standards of living*. In this way, learners are not just taught entrepreneurship, but also impart a sense of social responsibility and awareness of historical contexts. Such an integration of UDHR principles into entrepreneurship education has the potential to advance a new set of business leaders, committed to inclusive economic growth and the rectification of historical economic inequalities. Thus, entrepreneurship can serve as a vehicle for redress and inclusive economic growth, but requires rights-based framing.

5.1.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Advancing ethical labour practices and economic justice

The UDHR Article 23(1), affirms the "*right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment*". These human rights can be ingrained in entrepreneurship to teach ethical labour practices that will combat social injustice and project economic justice. The above article supports an adequate working condition, which would contest the unruly labour system brought about by apartheid. In Grade 9, Term 3, the CAPS curriculum addresses the "*Functions of a Business*", offering a critical opportunity to infuse the concepts of fair labour practices, ethical entrepreneurship and social responsibility. This calls for integrating labour rights into business education to challenge exploitative norms that characterizes the South Africa's economic sector till date (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2023).

The CAPS does not explicitly invoke human rights, however, its stated commitment to redressing past inequities (DBE 2011, 4-5) creates a policy environment that supports such integration. For instance, Grade 8, Term 2 lessons on "*remuneration*" and "*labour relations*" can be reframed to include case studies on exploitative labour systems in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. This approach challenges students to evaluate how business can be a tool, not just for profit, but for justice, a core concern of Critical Pedagogy Theory (Freire, 1970).

Nevertheless, a tension emerges, teaching ethical entrepreneurship within a curriculum that remains silent on the systemic causes of inequality that may risk superficial engagement with justice-oriented practices. This finding calls for greater teacher agency in reinterpreting curriculum content through a rights-based perspective.

5.2. Theme 2: Reconceptualising Teachers' Roles in Delivering Transformative Entrepreneurship Education

Table 2: Integration of Ethical and Social Justice Dimensions into Entrepreneurship Education through UDHR and CAPS Alignment

Theme	Key UDHR Articles Referenced	Relevant CAPS Content Areas	Findings
Ethical Competence	Article 26	Grade 7, Term 3 (Projects, Financial Literacy)	CAPS supports business skill development but lacks explicit human rights framing; teacher mediation is essential to address this gap.
Social Justice Teaching	Articles 2, 23(4)	Grade 8,-,9 (Inclusivity, Trade Unions)	Teachers can position learners as social-change agents, but limited training and policy guidance hinder this role.

Ethical competence (2.1), Article 26 and Grade 7, Term 3 (Entrepreneur's Day) explain that CAPS supports business skill development, but lacks explicit human rights framing; teacher mediation is essential to address this gap. Social justice teaching (2.2), Articles 2, 23(4) and Grade 8 - 9 (Inclusivity, Trade Unions) depict that teachers can position learners as social-change agents, but limited training and policy guidance hinder this role.

5.2.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Fostering practical and ethical business competence
The promotion of practical and business competence is seen in CAPS as it seeks to foster technical and theoretical business insights through activity, such as *Entrepreneur's Day* (Grade 7, Term 3). This is a supposed activity day where learners ought to display goods for sale within the school premises and the public is invited, as well as parents, guardians and friends. This day is meant to be set aside for learners to bring their classroom theoretical learning to reality. Although this day is mainly for practical purposes, it can be transformed into ethical learning spaces when grounded in UDHR Article 26, which stipulates that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Thus, entrepreneurship teachers emerge as central to mediating the curriculum's potential for social transformation. Their role is not merely to transmit content, but to curate learning experiences that engage students in reflecting on the social implications of their business choices (Gcabashe, 2024). For example, projects may task students with developing business plans that explicitly address community challenges, such as youth unemployment or access to basic services.

However, the analysis revealed a systemic constraint. Although CAPS allows for practical learning, teacher training does not consistently equip teachers with the critical pedagogical tools to navigate and implement rights-based entrepreneurship education. This disconnect limits the curriculum's transformative scope.

5.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Embedding social justice and inclusivity in entrepreneurship classrooms

CAPS explicitly acknowledges inclusivity and redress as core principles of the national curriculum, stating that "*the curriculum aims to ensure that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed*" (DBE 2011, 4). This is in line with Article 23(4) of the UDHR, which affirms "*the right to form and join trade unions,*" and Article 2, which affirms *non-discrimination*. Content on "*labor organizations*" and "*trade unions*" is covered in Grade 9, Term 4, giving teachers the chance to talk about workplace inclusion, gender equity and workers' rights.

Classroom discussions, examinations of regional labor movements, or narrative projects showcasing marginalized business owners can all be used to examine these contents. The *sustainable job creation* as it appears in Grade 8, Term 3 emphasises a way that learners should think on how cooperative ownership models and inclusive employment practices can challenge socioeconomic marginalization.

An important finding is that this potential is often underused. Even though CAPS supports inclusive education, it proffers less direction on how teachers ought to apply these ideas, such as "social justice" or "human dignity." This underutilization by teachers brings about uneven implementation and systemic changes as a result.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the close relationship between human rights principles, entrepreneurship education, and social transformation within South Africa's secondary schools. Findings showed a significant difference between curriculum implementation and policy intentions. This highlights the need to integrate principles of UDHR into the CAPS curriculum. CAPS fails to adequately address the historical inequalities of profit maximization and individual success that undermines social responsibility and collective development. Teachers, as curriculum implementers, often lack the needed pedagogical training and tools to act as mediators to align classroom practices and policy aspirations effectively. Reconceptualising teachers' responsibility from the point of a simple content providers to initiators of change, who fosters ethical reflexivity and critical consciousness among students, requires them to imbibe a transformative social justice leadership approach.

7. Recommendation

This study recommends technical strategies for infusing human rights in entrepreneurship education. This could be in form of fostering discussions on economic inequality and labour rights, redefining business success parameters, and including case studies on local enterprises. Nonetheless, this implementation is met with several challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, systemic constraints, and pressures between justice-oriented and market-driven educational goals. From the findings, it is imperative to improve teachers' professional development, reform curriculum, and position entrepreneurship education in a wider social transformation objective in post-apartheid South

Africa. This study contributes to the ongoing debate on the role of education in promoting equitable development, and social justice by reimagining entrepreneurship education as a veritable tool for fostering ethical business practices, human rights, and inclusive economic participation. Future research should empirically explore how teachers enact and interpret these principles in real classroom settings to offer insights for teachers and policymakers. This study is a foundation for a more ethically and inclusive approach to entrepreneurship education that can contribute meaningfully to South Africa's socioeconomic transformation.

8. Implications

This study emphasizes the urgency for entrepreneurial education in South African secondary schools to be changed to become a useful instrument for eliminating historical inequalities and advancing social justice. The results demonstrate that attaining this objective requires bringing current curriculum policies, particularly the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (UDHR) tenets, which include the right to decent work, non-discrimination, and a sufficient standard of living. Training in ethical reflexivity, critical pedagogy, and policy literacy has to be fused into teacher training programmes to realise this alignment. Preparing entrepreneurial teachers to acquire these skills will facilitate them to become transformative leaders, who equip learners in boosting their critical consciousness on the socioeconomic issues faced by their communities.

Teachers can for instance, lead thoughtful conversations about human rights-based ethical entrepreneurship and integrate case studies of nearby companies confronting these challenges into their lesson plans. In addition, these suggestions can be put into practice outside of the classroom. Education institutions are encouraged to start community-focused enterprises that confront issues, such as unemployment and poverty. These business ideas give learners real-world platforms to engage in ethical business practices, hinged on human rights, while enhancing their entrepreneurial skills. For instance, learners can start fair trade to get a personal understanding on how entrepreneurship can help transform society or co-operative enterprises that aim at social impact.

Summarily, some challenges are envisaged in putting these propositions into action. These obstacles could be in the form of disparities in teacher preparedness, a lack of funding, and opposition to curricular adjustments. Teacher collaboration, community involvement, and continuous professional growth are important factors to be considered in subduing the named hindrances. In fostering the implementation of these strategies, government bodies are encouraged to support schools in the areas of training, funding and resist oppositions to this change.

9. Limitations of the Study

The study employed a qualitative approach and a document analysis procedure to examine how the UDHR principles can be operationalised in entrepreneurship education delivery to redress historical inequities and promote socioeconomic

transformation and how teachers' human rights leadership roles can contribute to the promotion of socially just transformative practices in entrepreneurship education. The limitation of this study is that it relied wholly on the information provided by the two policy documents (UDHR & CAPS) without adopting other means of qualitative data collection, such as classroom observation or semi-structured interviews to further test the evidence acquired.

Declaration of Interest

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Data Availability

Data was sourced from publicly available information online.

Ethics Statement

The study obtained an ethics clearance from North-West University Ethics Committee with ethics number NWU-01183-25-A2.

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