

An evaluative study on the effect of entrepreneurial education curriculum on students at the University of Venda, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted amid wider recognition and adoption of the idea of entrepreneurship education within the broader school curriculum. Policymakers, economists and academics' agendas across the globe emphasise entrepreneurial culture and foster entrepreneurial intentions and attributes as mechanisms that provide self-employment which helps re-educate unemployment particularly for vulnerable youth graduates. A survey was conducted amongst 46 out of 69 final year entrepreneurship students from the University of Venda whose data were captured through self-administered questionnaires and interviews. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Findings thereof revealed that the majority of the respondents had a significantly high entrepreneurial intention and attributes to start their own business within two years from their graduation. In addition, the majority of the students indicated that the course delivery should be practical and be learnt through business activities or application of practical cases instead of learning 'about' business. In order to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum, it is recommended that the content, teaching approaches, assessment, etc., be better adjusted to the original intention of entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, a tracing system is recommended in order to follow students' progress over two successive years from their graduation.

Keywords: entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial attributes, entrepreneurial learning

INTRODUCTION

Low economic growth is according to Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom (2010) a result of an inadequate number of people involved in small businesses or entrepreneurship. There is a high unemployment level in South Africa which in 2013 stood at 24.10% (Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Survey 04, 2013). As articulated by Kabongo and Okpara (2010), entrepreneurship could be a panacea for declining economic activity and rising youth and adult employment. The phenomenon is a means through which new ventures are created (Fatoki, 2010) to support everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society (Gibcus, De Kok, Snijder, Smit & Van der Linden, 2012).

In support of entrepreneurship education, an increasing number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in many countries, including the University of Venda in South Africa, continue to use resources and expertise in developing the increasing number of graduates to become entrepreneurs (Ndedi, 2009). The demand for entrepreneurial learning has been and is still steadily increasing (Gibcus et al., 2012).

In addition, the South African government has provided and continues to provide a great commitment to promoting entrepreneurship education in anticipation that it will increase entrepreneurial intentions for learners in the country (Solesvik, 2013). The introduction of entrepreneurship education is underpinned by the fundamental premise that intentions translate to action in terms of actually starting a business the same way as nursing schools produce nurses (Fatoki, 2010).

Karimi, Biemans, Lans, Mulder and Chizari (2012) found that there are few empirical studies regarding the effects of entrepreneurial education curriculum on entrepreneurial intentions, and attributes on students to set up businesses is poorly understood at present and remained untested. It is in the light of the above that the objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of the entrepreneurship education curriculum on the entrepreneurial intentions and attributes of the students at the University of Venda.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite all the institutional and other conducive developments, South Africa's total entrepreneurial activity (TEA), as revealed in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2013 report that South Africa is at the lowest percentage level when compared with other Sub-Saharan African Countries (Amoros & Bosma, 2013). Zambia topped the group at 39.9% followed by Nigeria at the average 26.6%, Ghana at 25.8%; Angola at 22.2% and Botswana at 20.9% whilst South Africa lies low at 10.6% in the group.

Many firms in the formal and the public sector today fail to absorb the growing number of job seekers particularly the graduate students (Fatoki, 2010). The low TEA level causes graduate entrepreneurship students, who are supposed to be creating jobs, to hunt for employment in the job market. This is a contradiction of intent because employment is not the aim of graduate entrepreneurs (Shepherd, 2008). Entrepreneurship education should raise the entrepreneurial intentions which then capture the motivational factors that influence the behaviour for prospective students to start a business (Collet, 2013). The current economic situation is desperately in need of skilled labour and does not need to have this high unemployment rate particularly amongst graduates (Fatoki, 2010).

Currently there is a lack of research specifically on entrepreneurial intentions and development experiences in the country (Ghulam & Holden, 2008). Studies on graduates' entrepreneurial intention have focused on the developed countries (Fatoki, 2010). However, there is a need that they be conducted in South Africa especially because of the persistent high unemployment rate suffocating the country's graduates. Therefore as noted above, this article investigates the effect of entrepreneurship education on students to determine if they have developed entrepreneurial intentions and attributes as a result of the training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Fuchs, Wallau and Werner (2008), the three main objectives of entrepreneurship education are to develop students' personal enterprise ability, their propensity towards self-employment as an occupational option, and conveying knowledge about how to start and run a business. The following section discusses in detail entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial attributes and entrepreneurial intention as important aspects of this study.

Entrepreneurship education

Dugassa (2012) identifies two types of entrepreneurship education including education about entrepreneurship, and education for entrepreneurship. According to this author, education about

entrepreneurship aims at studying theories and is referred to as entrepreneurship whilst education for entrepreneurship aims at developing and stimulating entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education at the University of Venda is for entrepreneurship, i.e. students are taught and expected to start their businesses even before graduating.

Entrepreneurship education according to Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich and Brijlal (2007) is delivered in five stages including; general business knowledge, competency awareness, creative applications, start-up and growth. Five modules are offered at the University of Venda, which include general entrepreneurial knowledge (Entrepreneurship & Intrapreneurship); competency awareness (the entrepreneur), creative applications (Entrepreneurial process), start-up (Routes to entrepreneurship) and growth (Post-start-up challenges). Through the teaching process, students are taught insight, self-esteem and knowledge in order to promote entrepreneurial self-efficacy or entrepreneurial abilities (Syed: 2013). The next section discusses entrepreneurial attributes and skills, which can be acquired through entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurial Attributes

Research shows that entrepreneurial skills can be learnt and the attributes of students towards entrepreneurship can be influenced through entrepreneurship education (Panagiotis: 2012). The study by Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012) revealed that there is a sound relationship between the entrepreneurial intention to start a business and entrepreneurial attributes, control behaviour (Panagiotis: 2012), i.e. these attributes can be developed through educational programmes where students are formally evaluated on the tasks they are required to accomplish including the following:

- observe and report on a successful entrepreneurial role model
- undertake business simulation games
- set up business plans for actual businesses
- take part in national road shows and workshops on entrepreneurial issues.

According to Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012), a person who possesses these attributes is more likely to embark on a successful entrepreneurial career than one who does not. They further argue that it is the responsibility of HEIs to foster an enabling environment where entrepreneurial attributes of students are developed so that they are more likely to perceive themselves as capable, able and competent entrepreneurs.

The following section focuses on entrepreneurial intention as another aspect that can be discovered and enhanced through entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012) hold that entrepreneurial intentions provide the 'fertile ground' from which the seeds of entrepreneurial activities can sprout. This study assumes the same sentiment which stresses a strong relationship between entrepreneurial intention and starting a business. Through initiative, willingness to take risks, resourcefulness, imagination (Urban, 2006) and strong belief for being in control, an entrepreneur makes things happen by fulfilling the intended goals and objectives (Ndedi, 2009).

Graduate Unemployment in South Africa

Sub-Saharan is probably one of the worst poverty-stricken regions worldwide (Abubakar, Mitra & Sagagi, 2011). One way of fighting the scourge of poverty is by stimulating economic growth through new venture creation. Venture creation creates wealth and a significant number of jobs (Syed, 2013). Moreover, South

African graduates are not easily employable or do not necessarily consider self-employment as their first choice, and have to wait for many years after graduation to secure jobs (Akinbami, Obisanya & Fayomi, 2010). It is on this note that the current study wants to investigate the expectation that entrepreneurship education results in a proportionate number and quality of entrepreneurs entering the economy (Matlay, 2006).

In order to achieve this proportionate growth, it is imperative that the abilities and skills of entrepreneurs are developed (Chimucheka, 2014). For the sake of many benefits associated with a growing national economy, entrepreneurship education is one of the interesting and challenging areas of research in HEIs. Findings of this study will assist stakeholders in strengthening discussions on course offerings for the betterment of the entrepreneurship education curricula designs.

As noted above, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of the entrepreneurship curriculum on the entrepreneurial intentions and attributes on students at the University of Venda. Its dominant theme is based on the hypothesis that more and better entrepreneurship education positively affects the development of entrepreneurial intentions and attributes of students to start-up new business ventures in order to negate graduate unemployment (Panagiotis, 2012).

In addition, the study is building on the assumption by Greenbaum and Rycroft (2014) and Urban (2006) that entrepreneurship skills, concepts and mentality, i.e. intention and attributes, are linked to an entrepreneurship education curriculum. With the introduction of entrepreneurship education curricula in many HEIs, it is timely to assess the extent to which it stimulated the intentions and attributes of students (Zhang & Zhang (2013).

Entrepreneurship education in HEIs is discussed in the following section.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

According to Kabongo and Okpara (2010), commitment to entrepreneurship education programme offerings is increasing within HEIs. The increase since 1988 is attributable to the obligation of HEIs to be entrepreneurial and secondly, to redefine their role in instilling a greater entrepreneurial character amongst students throughout the country (Nicolaidis, 2011).

The previous economic structure of South Africa provided the human resources for big businesses as small, medium and micro enterprises contributed to a lesser proportion to the economic activities (Department of Trade and Industry, 2005). Castillo, Jorge-Moreno and Triguero (2012) further argued that HEIs should redefine their roles and serve as knowledge producers that provide the required research and skilled workforce. However, millions of young South Africans remain entrenched in cycles of poverty, unemployed and economically excluded from wealth creation opportunities, there is then an urgent need for them to be better educated and entrepreneurship education can play a big role in achieving this goal (Lebusa, 2011). The models referred to by Ndedi (2009) who identified the four stages of entrepreneurship education, and the five stages model identified by Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich and Brijlal (2007) is worth considering for teaching and learning purposes. It is however, important for HEIs to make the right decision as to whether to teach for entrepreneurship or teach about entrepreneurship.

The pressure is with the HEIs to deliver what will make students think 'out of the box', that is, for students to be able to manage complexity, start and successfully run their business ventures (Cheung, 2012; Collet, 2013). This challenge concerns a need to embrace entrepreneurship education in such a way that it is radically different from the current traditional offerings. Many entrepreneurship centres or departments or schools offer entrepreneurship as an elective, resulting in only a few students who show interest in the

module and as such fails to be relevant to the needs of the changing business environment (Castillo, Jorge-Moreno & Triguero, 2012).

It is clear there is still substantial confusion and debate in most of the HEIs including the University of Venda, around what should be taught, how it should be taught, and who should do the teaching. Hence, investigative evaluations should be done in order to avoid the expectations of failing the entrepreneurship education agenda before it has a chance to really get started (Collet, 2013).

The success of delivering the entrepreneurship education programmes depends on the ability of the lecturers to reflect on:

- (a) what actually should be taught
- (b) creating the conducive or appropriate learning environment
- (c) alignment between what should be taught and with the intended incomes and assessment processes (Collet, 2013).

In addition, the study by Urban (2006) outlines the impact which entrepreneurship education might have on prospective students. These include:

- starting more ventures
- growing larger ventures and also grow existing ventures larger
- accumulating more assets
- bringing impacts on the organisation they work through new job creation
- being a way of increasing entrepreneurial intention.

Many researchers including Panagiotis (2012) and Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012) expressed a concern that entrepreneurship education is still in its infancy stage and a lot still has to be done in order to fill the huge gap existing in its literature. This is quite surprising given the considerable research that has been conducted, the increase in the number of institutions offering a course, the number of courses currently on offer, the various conferences and symposia conducted as well as the vast array of experiences shared and good practices identified (Collet, 2013). Nevertheless, a study is needed to evaluate the entrepreneurship education curriculum at HEIs especially in a rural set up as in the Limpopo Province.

Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012) argued further that it is important for HEIs not only to foster an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to be taught but they must also be informed of the type of skills and competencies and to deliver on quality training programmes that will assist in producing future entrepreneurs with quality business and management skills as well. On this note, it is therefore imperative that during the education phase of the entrepreneurial process, HEIs, particularly the related centres/institutes, identify entrepreneurial attributes related to entrepreneurial intention and their shortcomings in order to address them by means of didactic and programme improvements (Farrington, Neethling & Venter, 2012).

Below is an outline of the entrepreneurship programmes offered at various public universities in South Africa:

- **North-West University:** the university offers entrepreneurship programme as part of its Bachelor, Honours, Masters and PhD degree.
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- **University of Pretoria:** in addition to the short courses, the university offers entrepreneurship in its Bachelor of Commerce, Masters and PhD degree.
- **University of Johannesburg:** the institution offers entrepreneurship through short courses, a course both in Bachelor of Commerce Business Management and Master of Business Administration degree.
- **University of Cape Town:** the institution offers entrepreneurship in a post-graduate diploma and as part of its Master of Business Administration programme
- **University of Stellenbosch:** the institution offers an entrepreneurship degree in the Department of Business Management.
- **University of Kwazulu-Natal:** it offers entrepreneurship in two different Bachelor degrees (Business Science and Human Resource Management and Administration and Commerce) and in a postgraduate diploma.
- **University of Western Cape:** the university offers both undergraduate and postgraduate entrepreneurship programmes. It offers entrepreneurship education in certificated courses and a course as part of the Honours programme; a number of students have completed mini-theses with Entrepreneurship as a focus.
- **University of Free State:** the university offers entrepreneurship through the Business Management department as well as the Centre for Development Support Unit. The course is offered as part of the Bachelor of Commerce degree, an Honour's and Master's degree.
- **University of Witwatersrand:** the university offers a variety entrepreneurship courses through its Centre for Entrepreneurship, graduate degree (Master in Entrepreneurship) and a course in Master of Business Administration.
- **University of Limpopo:** the institution offers entrepreneurship as part of a course in both the Bachelor of Commerce in Business Management and Master of Business Administration (Fatoki, 2010).

As can be seen from the above, many of the entrepreneurship curricula offered in different South African public universities are not on their own or are not viewed as separate stand-alone degrees, but are mostly designed as part of a Business Management qualification or an interdisciplinary qualification.

The current study evaluates the effect the entrepreneurship education curriculum at the University of Venda has on the entrepreneurial intention and attributes of students. This forms part of a step towards addressing a challenge of a low entrepreneurship level amongst students in South Africa (Amoros & Bosma, 2013). The objective of the study is to determine whether or not the curriculum achieves its intended output towards students. The curriculum is discussed in the next section.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The review on the relevant literature demonstrated the expectations of what the HEIs are required to deliver continue to be raised and produces a long list of learning outcomes that go beyond what any single module in an academic setting could be realistically achieved (Collet, 2013). According to Dugassa (2012) and as noted above, there are two types of entrepreneurship education, namely, education about entrepreneurship and education for entrepreneurship. Education about entrepreneurship aims at studying theories and it is referred to as entrepreneurship. The second type is education for entrepreneurship. Its aim is to develop and stimulate the potential entrepreneurs (students) to become real entrepreneurs. According to Urban (2006), this type of education is concerned with the learning and facilitating of

entrepreneurship and less with studying theories about it. Following recommendations of Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012), learning experiences, games, role models and any other influential variable should be incorporated and integrated in the curriculum that would be developed into attributes.

Holden and Nabi (2008) define entrepreneurship education curriculum as made up of four phases that follow each other swiftly. According to Holden and Nabi (2008), Ndedi (2009), and Farrington, Neethling and Venter (2012), the phases include:

- The education phase: This is the consolidation, designation of the contents of the programme including awareness of the education.
- The training phase: It involves teaching/lecturing the entrepreneurship education courses or contents and remains the easiest part of entrepreneurship education. Accordingly, this phase complements the early/first phase by providing the practical skills that entrepreneurs require when they are ready to set up their business.
- The intention phase: this is the phase where personal skills, attributes and behaviour are developed or capacitated through education.
- The actual career phase: this is the final phase and entails the behaviour of starting a business venture. Owing to limited understanding of the attributes and the decision processes that lead a person to become an entrepreneur, this phase remains the most complex of the phases outlined above.

A well-designed entrepreneurship education curriculum discusses the value of embedding the education within the existing course provision, i.e. the pathways of students graduating into self-employment (Castillo, Jorge-Moreno & Triguero, 2012). The curriculum should be, in other words, designed in order to attain appropriate and achievable objectives, to cater for futuristic content development and value attributes (Urban, 2006). Such curriculum designation calls for text and programmes to be structured to allow for the introduction of the entrepreneurship concept and the provision of hands-on experience and working models for students to develop skills (Ndedi, 2009). In addition, Castillo, Jorge-Moreno and Triguero (2012) further suggest that a quality entrepreneurship education curriculum focuses on specific factors that potentially influence students' readiness for start-up activities. These according to Urban (2006) include the identification of the theory-based competencies to be mastered, motivational value and a mind-set that stresses action-learning.

Many of the entrepreneurship centres across the globe design the course with contents which include the following attributes or sub-topics (Ndedi, 2009; Panagiotis, 2012):

- The basics of Entrepreneurship
 - Entrepreneurship and small business management
 - Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development
 - Innovation and creativity
 - Opportunity recognition and business planning
 - Entrepreneurship and new venture creation
 - Small business consulting
 - Small business financing
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- Technology and innovation
- New product development
- Venture capitalist
- Franchising.

In order to implement entrepreneurship programmes that equip students with self-confidence, self-efficacy and leadership attributes required to help them in the context of setting up their new business ventures, Collet (2013) and Urban (2006) suggest the parallel-integrated methods of teaching to be implemented as a mixture of the following:

- Lecturing
- Project assignments
- Presentations
- The use of case studies
- Guest-speakers invited to class lessons
- Multiple contacts with local industries and entrepreneurs or role models
- Internships
- Innovation hubs
- Broader SMME support networks.

Entrepreneurship education has many challenges which should be given further considerations (Collet, 2013). The next section focuses on the University of Venda as the case study for this paper.

University of Venda's Entrepreneurship Curriculum Content

The University of Venda offers entrepreneurship education as part of its Bachelor of Business Management degree (Univen, 2003). The courses are Entrepreneurship (BMA 3543) and Business Planning (3643) and are offered to the third-year level Commerce students during the first and second semester respectively. The contents of Entrepreneurship training is made up of five modules which cover the introduction to entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial process, the alternative routes to entrepreneurship and post-start-up challenges (Univen, 2003). Business Planning includes four modules covering legal aspects when starting and operating a business, getting started activities, business plan and networking, support, harvesting as well as e-commerce (Univen, 2003). The next section discusses the choice and rationale for the research design of the study.

CHOICE AND RATIONALE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Atkins and Wallace (2012), a case study approach investigates phenomena within their real-life context in order to capture the real world of participants under study. In addition, according to Algozzine and Hancock (2006) and Atkins and Wallace (2012), through the case study approach, researchers study individuals, programmes, events, processes, social groups, institutions in depth for a defined period of time. The population of the study is students who were registered in 2014 for the entrepreneurship course, BMA 3543 at the third year at the University of Venda. Interviews, using a structured questionnaire are used to collect the necessary data.

There is no sampling because all the students are involved in the study. The sample size of the study therefore is comprised of the total population of students studying the Entrepreneurship course at the University, i.e.

60 students. The procedure fits this study because participants are readily available on campus. Face-to-face interviews are optimal for collecting data from participants' perspectives and responses that are meaningful to each participant (Matlay, 2006). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) also add that face-to-face interviews enable the researcher to gain participants' co-operation by establishing a relationship with them, which facilitates the production of high response rates.

The sample for the study included all the 60 students who are studying the two modules as mentioned in the previous section. Fifty questionnaires were distributed to 50 students whilst the remaining 10 students were involved in face-to-face interviews. The same questionnaire was used both for self-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with the students. On a four-point Likert scale, the respondents were required to indicate their opinion on whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree with the given statements in the questions.

Reliability and validity of the instruments

The criteria for measuring instruments that are used for data collection is reliability and validity. The validity of the research instrument entails the extent to which an empirical measure reflects the real understanding of a concept in question (Babbie, 2007). In addition, Gravetter and Forzano (2009) assert that for an instrument to be reliable, it does not fluctuate even if the same variables are measured. For this study, the questionnaire was piloted to 10 students before data was collected. The students were interviewed and they gave their inputs to the questionnaire before its final roll-out. The student inputs were factored in the final questions, which were used to collect data.

Ethical considerations

Participants need to know that their privacy, and sensitivity will be protected, and what is going to happen with their information after recording (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). These basic ethical principles and standards of practice of research were observed in this study. Firstly, the researchers sought permission to conduct the study from the UNIVEN executive management and ethical clearance procedures were followed before the study was conducted. Thereafter the researchers were allowed to contact the students, explain the purpose of the study, how data will be collected and for what the data will be used. Secondly, the students were also advised that they could terminate their involvement in the study for any reason at any time. Thirdly, their anonymity was guaranteed by asking them not to write their names on the questionnaires. And even during the interviews, their names were not recorded, their identities were not revealed and no harm was done to them. In this way the participants in the study were afforded an opportunity to give their informed consent freely to participate in the study.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The first objective of the study was to evaluate how the entrepreneurial education curriculum stimulates students' entrepreneurial intention and attributes. These were the two variables used to investigate the first objective of this study. The two focused on the probability that respondents will start their new businesses at some time in the future. Out of 60 students, 46 (77%) participated in the study. After analysis of students' responses on questions prepared to capture their entrepreneurial intentions and attributes, it was found that both were higher than before the students were taught the entrepreneurship course. The respondents were required to indicate their opinion on whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree with the given statements:

- a) Question 1: Participants were asked to respond to the statement: 'I have already prepared everything for starting a business'.**
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Figure 1:
Participants' Preparedness

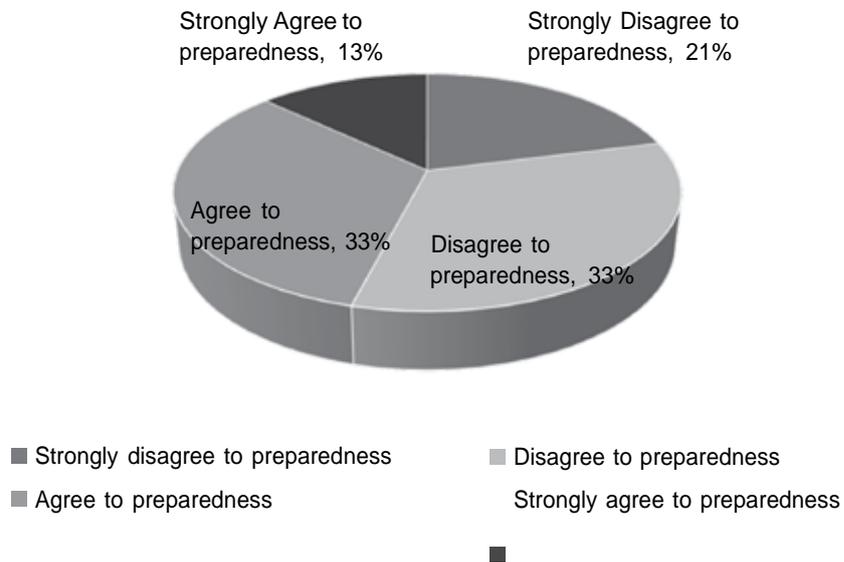
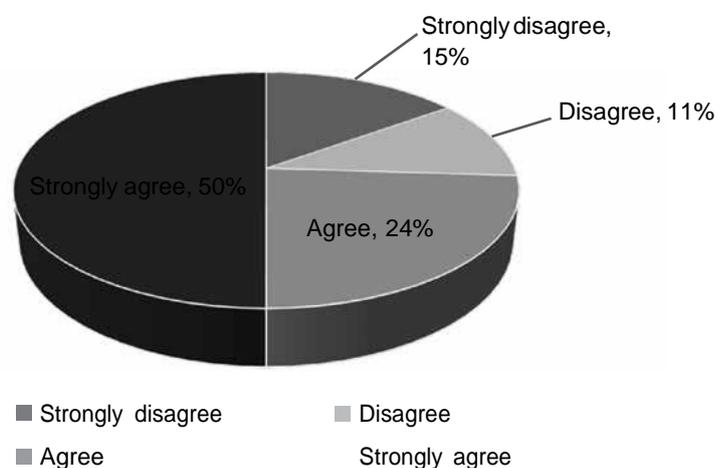


Figure 1 shows participants' readiness for starting a business, whereby (10) 21% strongly disagree; (06) 13% strongly agree, (15) 33% agree and (15) 33% disagree that they have prepared everything for starting a business. In total, 54% (which is the addition of 33% and 21%) of the respondents were reportedly not yet ready at the end of the course to start their own businesses. However, it can be seen below, the respondents were confident that within two years after graduation, they will be able to be self-employed and start their own businesses.

Question 2: Participants were asked to respond to the statement: 'Self-employment within two years of my graduation is attractive to me'.

Figure 2, shows the participants' response on self-employment within two years of their graduation:

Figure 2:
Self-employment within 2 years of graduation





As can be seen the figure shows the percentages of participants' response as follows, (07) 15% strongly disagree, (05) 11% disagree, (11) 24% agree whilst (23) 50% strongly agree to be in self-employment within two years of their graduation. In total, 74% agreed to be that within two years of their graduation, they would be self-employed. The students' responses on starting with entrepreneurship within two years was undoubtedly an indication that they were widely exhibiting higher entrepreneurial intentions.

Question 3: Participants were asked to respond to the statement: 'I am ready to do everything to become an entrepreneur'.

*Figure 3:
Participants' response to their readiness to do everything to become an entrepreneur*

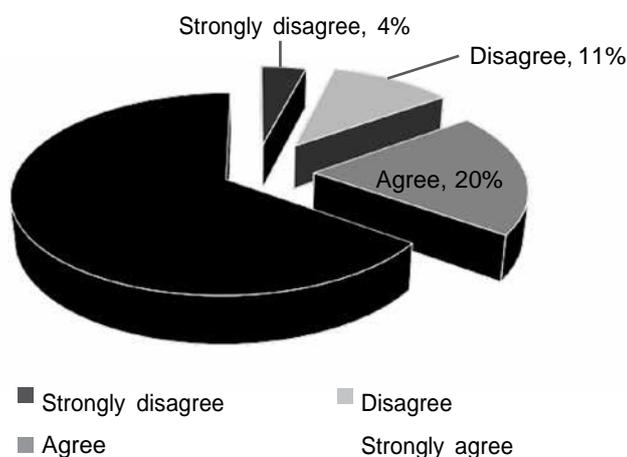


Figure 3 shows the percentages of participants' response on their readiness to doing everything to become an entrepreneur. The results of the question shows that, (02) 4% strongly disagree, (05) 11% disagree, (09) 20% agree whilst (30) 65% strongly agree that they will do everything to become an entrepreneur. The students were hopeful to achieve their goal (for being entrepreneurs) as 85% of them responded to be ready to do everything to become an entrepreneur. This is an indication of positive, entrepreneurial intentions from the students.

Question 4: Participants were asked to respond to the statement: 'I will continue to create my own business until I succeed'.

*Figure 4:
Participants' response to their continuous attempts in creating their own businesses*

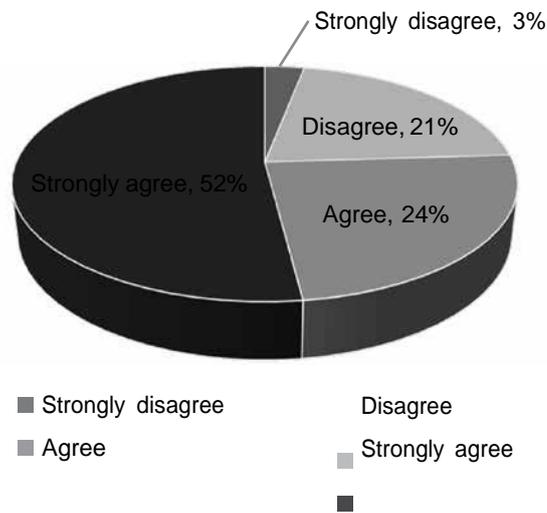


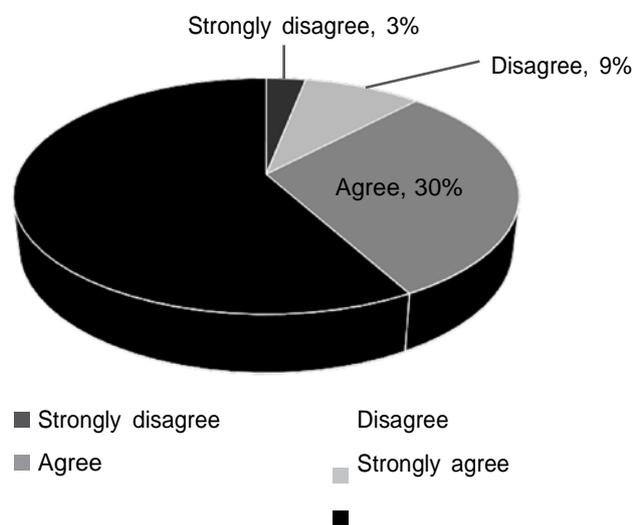
Figure 4 above shows the percentages of participants' response on their continuous attempt to create their own businesses until they succeed. Amongst others, (01) 3% strongly disagree, (10) 21% disagree, (11)

24% agree whilst (24) 52% strongly agree with continuous attempts in creating their own businesses until they succeed. 76% of the respondents agreed to become committed and to continue creating their own business until they succeed. This did not come as a surprise because through the training that they had received from the University of Venda, the students had acquired enough skills to believe that they can achieve success in business.

Question 5: Participants were asked to respond to the statement: ‘I know the necessary practical details to start a business’.

Figure 5 shows the participants’ response on them knowing the necessary practical details to start a business.

*Figure 5:
Percentage knowing practical details to start a business*



The above figure shows the percentages of participants’ response as follows, (01) 3% strongly disagree, (04) 9% disagree, (14) 30% agree whilst (27) 58% strongly agree to know the necessary practical details to start a business. In total, 88% of the students agreed that they know the practical details of how to start a business which is a positive sign that the courses offered have increased their skills and knowledge on how to start a business.

All of them indicated that the curriculum helped them acquire entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes including entrepreneurship knowledge, how to start a business, how to meet entrepreneurship challenges, acquisition of interested and motivation of entering into entrepreneurship. In addition, all of the students are of the view that the entrepreneurship course has increased their interest in starting their own businesses. As they acquired entrepreneurship knowledge, they now find it easy to draw business plans, now understand procedures for establishing a business, are now informed of the opportunities and resources required in forming a business and are now motivated to enter into entrepreneurship.

All the students responded that the content was not difficult and that the lecture sessions matched their expectations. They indicated that they never received any form of entrepreneurial training in any academic institution prior to starting with their university degree. This might have influenced them to suggest secondary schools as the appropriate level of introducing entrepreneurship education. 60% of them having rated the content structure as good, 58% rated teaching methods and approaches as good, practicality rated by 42% as good, assessment 66% as good, understandability by 50% as better and 52% rated the relevance

of the course as good. These could be possibly the reasons why 83% of the sample indicated that the course prepares students well for an entrepreneurial career.

The last question was for the students to give recommendations for the improvement of the entrepreneurship courses offered at the university. Half of the respondents (23 students) suggested no changes whilst few cited changes such as practicality, research assignments and evaluation, a suggestion was made to meet successful fellow students who graduated from the course and now own their own businesses, more assessments and related feedback, introduction of the course in the secondary schools, learning materials to be made available, mentorship programme, workplace skills programme and field trips.

CONCLUSIONS FROM EMPIRICAL DATA

The empirical data demonstrated that the entrepreneurial intention and attributes that students had acquired is as a result of the entrepreneurship education they were taught. They felt that they were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge by preparing them to be prospective entrepreneurs. Furthermore, an analysis of students' recommendations shows they wanted the curriculum content to be increased and include practical aspects such as field excursions and other immersive commitments in its teaching or delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the data collected, entrepreneurship curriculum has an effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions and attributes. Furthermore, the educational systems need to be oriented to emphasise and value entrepreneurship in order to promote an enterprise culture. Methods to teach, assessment and a practicality component should all be incorporated during course or content delivery without hesitation.

For universities in particular, they can foster confidence in entrepreneurship by designing and enhancing the entrepreneurship course structure and to organise more entrepreneurial-related activities including for example, inviting guest speakers, affording students opportunities for visiting established entrepreneurship ventures, field trips and experiential learning.

CONCLUSION

High youth unemployment is a pressing issue facing the world today. Along with the accumulation of evidence supporting the role of entrepreneurship, many governments have persisted in encouraging people to become entrepreneurs. In response, educational institutions have started implementing learning courses associated with entrepreneurship education including business concepts, business planning, and collaboration with practitioners and networking. It is believed when this is introduced in HEIs that the entrepreneurial education curriculum will stimulate the entrepreneurial intention and attributes to students to achieve self-reliance and self-employment.

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