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SUMMARY

UNIVERSITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: Teaching Context, Students' Profiles, Expectations and Outcomes

Introduction

Entrepreneurship education has attracted the attention of many. For the past few decades, teaching programs have mushroomed at universities across the globe, leading to massive resource allocations. This is done to stimulate new venture creation leading to new jobs, new innovations and country's general level of competitiveness. Student numbers have been rising rapidly and with this growing popularity have come the academic debate. Questions that need clearance, range from the popular discussion regarding whether entrepreneurs can be made at universities, to the more practical ones relating to the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the currently applied teaching methods (Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Hannon, 2006).

This study is therefore focused on assessing the impact of university entrepreneurship education. The study was conducted in Tanzania, where the boosting graduate entrepreneurship is a national development agenda (URT, 1999b), which has led to curricular reviews and over a decade of teaching of entrepreneurship at universities, and almost in all fields of specializations. With recently reported falling levels of graduate entrepreneurship (cf. Al-Samarrai and Bennell, 2003; Mukyanuzi, 2003), Tanzania is sharing a global concern on whether entrepreneurship courses actually lead to any fruitful results. In this study it is asked: *“What is the influence of the Tanzanian University Entrepreneurship Education on students' entrepreneurial intentions; and which characteristics of University Entrepreneurship Education hamper and or facilitate their inclinations towards entrepreneurship as a possible career?”*

While the main drive behind the thesis was to measure the impact of the Tanzanian UEE, the study has a number of important theoretical and practical implications that apply both to the Tanzanian context and to the general field of entrepreneurship education. The study is based on a number of concepts and theories (e.g. theory of planned behavior, entrepreneurial embeddedness, and the 3P model of teaching and learning). From the tests results, a number of theoretical and practical implications are given in terms of the relevance of these theories and meaning of impact

assessment results to the field of entrepreneurship education and in the Tanzanian context. From the results a number of reflections are made that either confirms the validity of these theories or bring new insights and questions on the same. The practical side of the study is vested in the fact that the study, first attempts to characterize or map the teaching model that is applied in Tanzanian universities, and later assesses the level of success that universities achieve (against the pre-determined teaching objectives). Second, from the assessment of teaching model, attempts are made in identifying the factors that facilitate/hinder the achievement of the teaching objectives in entrepreneurship courses, and in suggesting what need to be done (by policymakers, course designers and educators) towards the improvement of the course impact.

Conceptual framework

As hinted above, and depending on each of the research questions, this study is informed by three main concepts namely: the 3P Model of Teaching and Learning (Biggs, 2003); the Theory of Planned Behaviors – TpB (Ajzen, 1991); and the concept of entrepreneurial embeddedness (cf. Kloosterman, 2003; Jack & Anderson, 2002). The three concepts are brought together to form a conceptual framework, where it is viewed that the entrepreneurship course as a teaching and learning model (represented by the 3P model of teaching and learning) targets to influence the students' entry-level factors (represented by attitudes, perceptions and intentions in the Theory of Planned Behavior). But both the UEE and students' entrepreneurial profiles are subject to the contextual conditions, which present both the enablers and inhibitors for the effectiveness of the UEE, and the ultimate career progression of the graduates from entrepreneurship courses (i.e. contextual embeddedness).

Data collection and analysis methods

The data was collected in four Tanzanian higher learning institutions namely: Mzumbe University and Sokoine University of Agriculture (in Morogoro), Institute of Finance Management and College of Business Education (in Dar es Salaam). The research adopted a mixed research design, where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in accordance to the nature of the research question. Specifically, a semi-systematic literature review was applied in answering research question 1 in chapter 2, where the main aim was to establish the state-of-art of global entrepreneurship education. Research question 2 which was a basis for chapter 3 was qualitatively

approached using story-telling interviews with 10 Tanzanian graduate entrepreneurs. Chapter 4 (for research 3) aimed at characterizing the Tanzanian, hence collected both qualitative data (documents and interviews) and quantitative data (survey of university students). Chapter 5, for research question 4, was entirely based on survey data from the target university students (n = 932).

At the analysis stage, the qualitative data (i.e. interview transcripts and literature) was content-analyzed by thematically observing the most recurring topics which became the basis for qualitative findings and conclusions. INVIVOTM software was used in the analysis of interview transcripts for chapter 3. Using SPSS, quantitative analysis ranged from simple mean analysis, correlation analysis, paired samples t-tests (to observe changes before and after the UEE) and multiple regression analysis was used in establishing the predictive significance of variables in the TpB model of entrepreneurial intention.

Main conclusions

A general response to the first part of the main research question is that the Tanzanian UEE seems to achieve a significant level of success in influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions. Although the UEE influence on intentions mainly used as the main topical theme for impact assessment, this issues was widened to include how the UEE had met students' learning expectations and how it had influenced their career attraction (entrepreneurship vs. salary-employment). In all scenarios, students had showed an upward increase both in their attraction towards entrepreneurship as a possible career and in their intentions to become entrepreneurs sometimes after graduation. The only sign of negative impact was however on comparing between the learning expectation of the students and on how the UEE had met them at the end of the courses. This somehow created a paradox within the same results, and raises one important question on how the students would evaluate a course achievement vs. evaluate their own capabilities. Nevertheless, the dissatisfaction among the students may as well be explained by looking at their entry-level profiles, which to a large extent show that the students had entered the UEE with a good set of entrepreneurship knowledge, motives and experience both from their parents and own entrepreneurial attempts. This profile, as shown in the results, had links with their learning expectation and motives, which again became a little too high for the UEE to have any significant effect. The focus of this argument could probably be directed to one learning/teaching objective - to learn *for* entrepreneurship. From this study, there is enough evident that when entrepreneurship

education is in discussion, most stakeholders equate it with venture creation and hence will rest their teaching objectives (by policy-makers and educators) and learning expectation (by the students) on how the UEE will respectively create more graduate entrepreneurs or build personal abilities to become an entrepreneur. In this study, it is evident that both the lecturers and students don't have the confidence that this has been achieved by the UEE, implying that the UEE, despite its current success level, it has been more on teaching/learning *about* than *for* entrepreneurship.

In response to the second part of the overall research question, it is concluded that the Tanzanian UEE model is characterized by a number of factors that facilitate or/and hamper its effectiveness. Overall, entrepreneurship courses have emerged as result of strong policy, which also came as a result of the changed political arena which has influence the overall perceptions and support among different stakeholders (e.g. politicians, development partners, academicians, the media and students etc.). As reported in this work, these not only work to the advantage of the UEE, but has also created more pressure on universities to accommodate issues of entrepreneurship development in their curriculum. It is also noted that there has been an increased investment in the field of entrepreneurship, where within universities there more lecturers that are trained (both at masters and PhD levels) and which is supported by research efforts in the topic. As pointed out in previous section, the Tanzanian UEE is also enjoying a student population that has very positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The overall student profile is more entrepreneurial than perceived by the lecturers. This forms a very good starting point in the intervention process. Although the study did not go as far as investigating the source of students' positive attitudes and attraction towards entrepreneurship, it is however thought that the improved entrepreneurial environment may have contributed to the perception of feasibility of this career among graduates. This also is an enabling factor to the UEE where students become assured of the possible success and can readily identify the possibilities of obtaining start-up capitals, new market opportunities both local and international, and improved business registration and taxation systems.

Looking at the negative side, apart from common problems affecting Tanzanian universities (cf. Abeli, 2010) the Tanzanian UEE is characterized with a number of hindrances that limit its achievement. A review of policy documents (compared to university documents) saw a dilemma in defining the objectives of teaching entrepreneurship at university. There is a problem that universities face in descending from policy objectives to their specific teaching objective, again with the strong emphasis on start-up; there is also an internal mismatch between official course objectives

vs. teaching objectives by among individual lecturers. This has the potential to create yet another hindrance - misalignment between: objectives, teaching methods, facilities, course duration and assessment methods. For example, in a semester long course, the objective will include to educate *for* entrepreneurship, where the teaching/learning activities are mostly lectures and group discussion, which are assessed through tests and examinations.

Also the findings show a limited understanding of the students' entry profile in relation to entrepreneurship. In this study, this is seen to be one among the major huddles which led to students' dissatisfaction with the UEE achievement. Understanding of the students' profile enables a teacher to adjust both the methods and emphasis of particular learning activities that match with the students' profile by targeting their most important needs or long-held beliefs about the subject and confidence in facing the related real world challenges. Another obvious hindrance, as noted in the interviews with graduates, is the limited connection between entrepreneurship courses at university and the practical world of entrepreneurship. Courses are not contextually aligned with the local business environments; this is due to the fact that there is little or no connection with the business sector or involvement of local entrepreneurs and other practitioners both in the design and teaching of the courses. This to a large extent make the current success level seems more superficial because the students from the UEE will hardly be able to implement their intentions when faced with contextual challenges.

It should be noted that, both the UEE and graduate entrepreneurs are operating in a less friendly environment. The fact that improvements in the business environment are noted in the contextual analysis, these improvements are not as conducting as in other context (e.g. the Europe and America) where most textbooks and case-studies originated. A discussion on contextual hindrances, in the instructional design sense, means two things: one for the UEE to be context-rich (i.e. to give the students the learning activities that reflect what is in the local business context), and for policy-makers behind promoting graduate entrepreneurship to introduce and implement other macro-level interventions that will support graduate in implementing their entrepreneurial intentions created by the UEE.

Limitations and future research

The study, as in most impact assessment studies, could be improved by the use of a control group, and the extension of the impact assessment into much extended longitudinal study that would follow UEE graduates into their career progression. This later research direction would indeed provide evidence both on the sustainability of the UEE impact and on the transition process of intentions created at the university into real world start-ups.

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