

An Analysis of the Trends and Issues in Entrepreneurship Education

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education has become popular in the recent times and seems to be gaining more currency in the current world. Indeed there has been a lot of effort towards popularizing entrepreneurship education as a means of creating entrepreneurial culture in order to improve economic performance and attain the goal of vision 2030. Kenya faces a challenge of poverty and acute youth unemployment. Why has entrepreneurship gained currency in the current world? The assertion that entrepreneurs are born is dispelled by the fact that even those with business acumen and propensity to take risks are sharpened or whetted by education. It is now not a debate that Entrepreneurship is taught and learned and that they also 'become' through their life experiences. Entrepreneurship education is said to be a lifelong learning process which starts from elementary through graduate programmes and even to working life. Entrepreneurship education is also expected to be focused on skills rather than knowledge. It has two parts; awareness part and the skills development part. It is also believed that anybody can be an entrepreneur at any point in their life. The main challenge to entrepreneurship education is the method of teaching, that is, pedagogy that is using traditional teaching approaches which are non-entrepreneurial. The other is the curriculum which the learning institutions are still grappling with. This paper examines the trends in entrepreneurship education worldwide and narrows down to Kenya in particular through analyzing documents. It collates various feelings of various authors and scholars and proposes its relevance to the entrepreneurship environment and creation of entrepreneurial culture. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship is key to development and economic performance and entrepreneurship education should be able to improve creativity, innovation, opportunity recognition and exploitation and new venture creation.

Key words: *Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial culture, economic growth*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is emerging as a new way of creatively solving economic and financial challenges that face many countries in the world today. The most critical of these challenges being poverty and youth unemployment. Most economies are faced with issues of massive youth unemployment. Entrepreneurship has a link with economic growth (Ayuo & Rono, 2012). It is said that the more entrepreneurs are found in an economy, the higher the economic growth. With these two challenges, that is unemployment and economic growth (low growth of GDP), economies have no option but to find a way of encouraging entrepreneurship (Carree & Thurik, 2000). This can be achieved by creating an entrepreneurial 'culture' among the youth through entrepreneurship education and training. This offers a two way means of solving unemployment that is creating new jobs and making the youths self-employed.

Entrepreneurship education has gained a lot of currency as an innovative way of improving economic performance. Therefore the concern here is to discuss the trends and issues that have emerged in entrepreneurship education (Kuratko, 2005).

Education is broadly defined as a dissemination of knowledge. It is all or part of the knowledge which people acquire throughout their lives and which further their development. This broad view of education implies that its aim in all societies should be to socialize the young and the old alike into the fundamental values, norms and practice of that society (Ayuo & Rono, 2012). On the other hand entrepreneurship education seeks to provide the learner with the knowledge, skills and motivation, to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. The entrepreneurial characteristic of independence and self-confidence is enhanced through education. Developing new products and services or creating new ventures calls for some degree of education.

Literature Review

Katz (2007) posits that there seems to be some agreement on two dimensions of entrepreneurship education each of which is split into categories. The first is the awareness part and the second is the skills part. This means that for a society to have entrepreneurship spirit it must begin with knowledge acquisition and then move to the practical aspects where an individual learns the skills.

Entrepreneurship education should be more inclined to the skills rather than knowledge. A more holistic approach should be used in teaching entrepreneurship courses to give students (with or without prior entrepreneur experience) an opportunity to developing their skills, attributes and behaviour of a successful entrepreneur rather than focus solely on teaching students about entrepreneurship. Peterman & Kennedy (2003), argue that entrepreneurship education should emphasize on teaching skills rather than knowledge. Ayuo and Rono (2012) posit that the entrepreneurship education in University and Tertiary institutions are providing knowledge 'about' entrepreneurship and not skills 'for' entrepreneurship. It is obvious that they should not get stuck in the old school of pedagogy of teaching and learning. The system should encourage self-belief and self-confidence to be able to develop personality traits that enable prudent decision making, problem solving, taking calculated risks, creativity and innovation.

Entrepreneurship education has gained currency in the last two decades as the most potent economic force, the world has ever experienced. With that expansion has come a similar increase in the field of entrepreneurship education. The recent growth and development in the curricula and programs devoted to entrepreneurship and new venture creation have been remarkable (Kuratko 2005). This assertions points to the belief that entrepreneurship is the main driver of future economies. This therefore has led to the aspect of trying to impart skills, knowledge and attitudes that foster entrepreneurial spirit.

Each country in the world today faces this enormous economic challenge of

unemployment and low economic growth. Most countries have articulated and funded programs in entrepreneurship education, in order to encourage and motivate the youth to embrace entrepreneurship. This means entrepreneurship is strongly believed to be the driver of economic growth and job creation. We find that entrepreneurship education can encourage and make the youth acquire attributes of taking risks, belief in oneself have high self-esteem and self-confidence, to create new ventures which, in turn creates jobs or employment for this entrepreneur and others. This will also result in higher income for the entrepreneur and employees. This is the effect on the economy (Adeyemo, 2009).

According to Martínez et al. (2010), when the economic growth is higher, then the economy is vibrant and hence more ventures are created resulting in job creations' more employment opportunities and result in higher economic growth. This belief that entrepreneurship is the most potent economic force has led to almost all countries in the world trying to encourage and motivate youth to entrepreneurship through entrepreneurship education. Nelson & Johnson, (1997) posit that despite earlier that there are issues of curriculum and pedagogy in entrepreneurship education, it is proving to be a good vehicle to make youth and all people to be entrepreneurs. The governments have actually succeeded in almost all primary schools, secondary schools and universities have developed curriculum in entrepreneurship education.

Graduates of these programmes are not only increasing in numbers, they are reshaping our understanding of market, technology and management leadership. Bent on realizing their own personal opportunities, they continue to define the standards for business innovation and by doing so, will forever, alter the competitive landscape for future enterprise (Charney & Libegap, 2000). This implies that graduates of entrepreneurship education are seen as productive and are proving to be worth the mettle of going through the system. These entrepreneurs have also made progress and are influencing the economy. This means that there is innovation, creativity and initiative in the part of the economy. It also translates to more employment opportunities, appropriate technologies adopted, new products created survival rate of new ventures have improved and so forth.

So according to Charney and Libegap (2000), entrepreneurship education has picked and its impact is being felt. This could be true though more empirical research to back it up is required. For instance, graduates from Berger Entrepreneurship program were three times more likely to be involved in the creation of a new venture than were the non-entrepreneurship business school cohorts.

Charney and Libegap (2000), say that entrepreneurship education contributes to the growth of firms, it produces successful business and industry leaders, produces innovation champions and enhances the transfer of technology. This growth will make the economy to be vibrant and leads to better job creation. On the other side of producing successful business and industry leaders is that this will benefit the economy because success in business and industry leadership means sustainable job creation and economic growth. This will lead to production of more entrepreneurs. The production of entrepreneurs effects the economy to grow and the per capita income

improves. Entrepreneurship education will produce innovation champions which could mean new products, new services and markets in the economy.

Trends in Entrepreneurship Education

Kenya has 42 Entrepreneurship Education and Training (EET) programs identified by the World Bank Report (2005). Among the many program identified, nearly half are classified as entrepreneurship training programs targeting potential entrepreneurs. This reflects the imperative of employment creation in the Kenyan economy, where pervasive and growing youth unemployment is commonly perceived to be a major factor in the country's security problems and political instability. This, coupled with the slow job growth of recent years, has motivated the government to invest in large-scale training programs aimed at supporting youth and the unemployed to venture into self-employment (Bwisa, 2011)

In Kenya private, non-governmental organizations and development partners provide substantive support for EET programs. Private organizations dominate the EET landscape, both in implementation and in funding, and there is a high level of involvement of development partners in the field of business sector development. While the majority of programs are run and funded by nongovernmental organizations, some are supported by large private firms, both national and local.

Entrepreneurship Education: Secondary Education Students

Entrepreneurship education for secondary education students (EESE) refers to the building of capabilities, skills, and mind-sets about or for the purpose of entrepreneurship and is aimed at expanding the potential pool of future entrepreneurs. In Kenya, EESE is part of the curriculum in all educational streams and levels, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET), although it is offered as an optional subject. EESE is also integrated in teacher education programs at certificate and diploma levels—especially those programs focused on commerce—and in certificate programs for social and community development. While not compulsory within general secondary education, EESE is offered within the TVET system as a vocational subject aimed at imparting knowledge about economics and the business sector, designed to be useful to students planning a career in business later on or business studies in higher education (Nelson & Mburugu, 1991).

EESE programs are largely implemented in Kenya following the Know About Business (KAB) approach, a branded methodology developed and internationally disseminated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to build business awareness among students. KAB is structured as a pre-start-up program, based largely on hands-on, experiential learning (using role-playing games and simulations, for example). While KAB is an international brand, its curriculum is periodically revised (the latest revision known in Kenya is from 2010) and comprises nine modules, including: What Is an Enterprise?; Who Are Entrepreneurs?; Finding a Good Business Idea; and Developing and Operating a Business Plan. (Manu, Nelson, & Thiongo, 2002)

In Kenya, where entrepreneurship education has been a compulsory aspect of all levels of TVET since the 1990s, entrepreneurship education has been a part of all teachers' training

since 1993.

Entrepreneurship Education: Higher Education Students

Entrepreneurship education programs in higher education (EEHE) target students enrolled in undergraduate as well as graduate degree-granting programs. Notably, while some these programs claim to prepare students for careers as entrepreneurs, they also aim to prepare them for careers in entrepreneurship promotion as ‘entrepreneurship facilitators’.

Issues in Entrepreneurship Education

First is the study of enterprise creation and development of business plans allow students to integrate accounting, economics, finance, marketing and other business disciplines. This means that entrepreneurship education offers enriching integrative educational experience. Second, it promotes founding of new businesses by graduates and builds critical decision making skills that enhances the success of graduates in business work. Third, it increases technology transfer from university to the market through technology based business plans and students involvement with technology licensing. Fourth, entrepreneurship education forges links between the business and the academic communities. Finally, entrepreneurship education enhances the other areas of business (Carree & Thurik, 2000).

Further to the above Matlay (2005), adds that there are other basic foundation areas for the importance of entrepreneurship education are: Entrepreneurs are not ‘born’..... they ‘become’ through the experience of their lives; have great diversity of persons characteristics, the common one being willingness to take risks ; Anyone can be an entrepreneur at any time of one’s life; Although there is no educational degree requirement to become an entrepreneur it is helpful to have developed good support skills including communication, interpersonal abilities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing, management and numerical/financial skills. Entrepreneurship ventures are the major source of new jobs in the economy for the owner and for new employees. Entrepreneurship is not learned by reading a text book and then taking a test to prove you are one. Young people can build confidence in their abilities to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education activities are a real life value developing academic skills enabling employees to be more successful as a result of understanding the operations of a small business and the problems of their boss. Entrepreneurs are found in every occupation or career cluster. Entrepreneurship education opportunities are important at all levels of enterprise development. Hisrich, Peters & Shepherd, (2009) state that the definition of ‘entrepreneurship success’ varies with reaching the goals of the individual, from part-time income to fast-growing corporate structure. Entrepreneurship education should seek to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success.

There are a variety of settings. Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate programs. Education seeks to build entrepreneurs and a good example is Fraser a sixteen year old college

student who succeeded in manufacturing jam from his mother's kitchen (Lindner, 2008). This has been termed a kitchen success. He also says school should do more to increase teaching in self-belief. says he wants learners to 'be creative and innovative, to take risks and manage risks, and to do so with determination and drive'. According to Kuratko (2005), entrepreneurship has seven key 'competences' to be covered. These competences are: Numeracy, .Communication Information Technology (IT) skills, self-management, team building and team working, problem solving skills, business and customer awareness.

Benefits of entrepreneurship education are not limited to mere start-ups, entrepreneurship is a skill that is also useful in both personal and social aspects of everyday life. This brings in a serious dimension to entrepreneurship. That it is not merely for start but it can be in their work place, owner management and social environments. Entrepreneurship education is cross cutting, it can motivate one to start and run a business or just impart skills that will make an individual be socially and professionally apt (Arokiya & Anoruo, 2012).

Peterman & Kennedy (2003), argue that entrepreneurship education focuses on realization of opportunity, whereas management education is founded on the best way to operate existing hierarchies. Both approaches share an interest in achieving 'profit' in some form. It can be oriented towards:

First, the most popular approach of entrepreneurship opening a new organization (start a new business or venture creation). Second, is to promote innovation or introduce new products or service or markets in existing firms. This approach is called corporate entrepreneurship. Third is a recent approach which involves creating charitable organizations, social entrepreneurship. The late former prime minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher was quoted saying "young people ought not be idle. It is very bad for them". However many young people are idle according to statistics from OECD, ILO and World Bank. About 200 million people of which 75 million are under 25years old are unemployed. At least 600 million jobs are created over the next 15 years to keep current employment rates (European Commission Report, 2008).

Traditionally, according to Cordelia (2011), young people expect to find jobs either in public or private sector after they finish their schooling. Consequently many governments are looking for alternative innovative approaches of encouraging their youth to become entrepreneurs to create job opportunities for themselves and their peers. Being an entrepreneur means more than just knowing how to start up a small shop or business. Rather, entrepreneurship is about developing and cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit-creativity, innovativeness, curiosity, lateral thinking, adaptability, resourcefulness, risk taking and so on regardless of the profession or career path to be taken. From this perspective, entrepreneurship can be taught and learned but to nurture entrepreneurship requires rethinking of our education system, pedagogies, curriculum and other education service activities. This is the headache that bedevils those who offer entrepreneurship education with the purpose being to building the entrepreneurial spirit.

Are entrepreneurs made or are they born? Prof Albert Shapiro of Ohio State University (USA) says “Entrepreneurs are not ‘born’.....rather they ‘become’ through the experiences of their lives”. Prof implies that entrepreneurs are made through entrepreneurship education. It should also be recognized that there are people who are inclined to be an entrepreneur because of innate attributes and abilities. They can perform much better if they are exposed to entrepreneurship education (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003)

Entrepreneurship education is also seen to be a life-long learning process. It should start from early age up to the highest level of education. In some cases it starts from pre-school. Entrepreneurship education has five stages of basic elementary, competency awareness, creative applications, start up and growth (Cordelia, 2011).

Discussion

The findings of this study are that there is overwhelming consensus on the impact of entrepreneurship education and what it can do to the economy. However the real focus of its implementation may suffer the failure of other fads which were brought in like Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). The policy makers may shift their focus and this explains why they have a lackluster attitude towards the programme.

Bwisa, (2011) posits that entrepreneurship education is dual in approach and that it can be integrated or it can be taught as a stand-alone course. This poses a challenge as it becomes academic rather than practical subject. It also poses the danger of being treated as non-core course especially if integrated. In secondary and lower levels the emphasis is on examinations which mean that it can be relocated and learnt merely to pass the examination. This implies that skills are rarely learned and the attitudes may still be to get employment after education.

The third aspect is that the entrepreneurship education should be to impart skills through the practical teaching of the content and emphasis on creating positive attitude towards self-employment, venture creation, creativity and innovation. This can be through exposure and use of incubators.

Conclusions

To conclude, entrepreneurship education has grown over time and it is growing in terms of its demand and its content. Entrepreneurship education still has a lot to grapple with if entrepreneurs are ‘made’ or are they ‘born’. It seems it is broad and still non-specific. It is also a life - long learning process implying that learning entrepreneurship should start early and continue into old age. All in all, entrepreneurship education is seen as a very important means of solving economic and financial challenges. Entrepreneurship education is key to the development of a nation.

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