

# MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study explored the importance of management and implementation of entrepreneurship in institutions of higher learning, using a selected university in South Africa as a case study. Qualitative method was adopted for data collection from eight (8) randomly selected students from four (4) faculties in that particular institution of higher learning. The findings of the study show that infrastructures, policies, university curriculum, amongst others affect the management and implementation of entrepreneurship in the selected university. Further findings suggest that if students registered at the university graduate with entrepreneurial skills and ideas of how to become entrepreneurs, it will be easy for them to be able to start and run their own businesses. However, few responses of participants suggest indifference in the idea of managing and implementing entrepreneurship as a module in higher institutions of learning. The study recommends amongst others that the curriculum at universities should include core module(s) that are centred on entrepreneurship, while policies are made to promote entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial activities in institutions of learning. Also, students studying at universities should be encouraged to start entrepreneurship projects and seek funding from industries.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Institution of Higher Learning, Management and Implementation, South Africa, University.

## INTRODUCTION

Significant strides are being made in promoting entrepreneurship in Education by the nation South Africa. This is done due to the rate of unemployment as many graduates from colleges and universities continue to struggle to secure employment. Gamede & Uleanya (2018) aver that entrepreneurship has the potency of reducing the rate unemployment. However, in their view, it must be well managed. Thus, they advocate for its implementation in institutions of learning, especially higher learning. Entrepreneurship is envisaged to impart people with desired skills to start and run their own businesses (Gamede & Uleanya, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Nicolaidis (2011), entrepreneurs are faced with different forms of challenges ranging from policy and decision making to economic and financial crises. Sequel to the policy viewpoint, supporting small businesses has been largely motivated by the widely held belief that entrepreneurship plays an important role in the South African economy through job creation (Nicolaidis, 2011). The report of Small Business Promotion Project (2014) on SMME, and the work of Vuba (2019) support that entrepreneurship leads to job creation and the establishment of Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) is a means by which economic growth can be promoted, thereby helping to reduce the high rate of unemployment in the nation. According to Statistics South Africa (STAT SA) (2019), unemployment rate in South Africa is 29.1%. Meanwhile further statistics from STATs SA (2018) and the work of Katua (2014) indicate that SMMEs play crucial roles in job creation

and resolving unemployment issues in South Africa and Africa as a continent. A review of the work of Katua (2014) suggests that majority of the jobs in South Africa and many of African employment are constituted by SMMEs. In a bid of promoting SMMEs and entrepreneurship, different programmes such as Enactus, Small Enterprise Financial Agency (SEFA), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Isivande women fund to support SMMEs, SEDA, amongst others are designed, sponsored and promoted by the South African government, especially in rural areas (Bhorat et al., 2018). Suffice to state that efforts are being made by the Government to ensure that entrepreneurship is promoted. However, the concern bothers around the effect such efforts from the government makes on the economy and the people. For instance, despite the importance of entrepreneurship and the support that small businesses get from the South African government, entrepreneurship in South Africa remains low by international standards due to various constraints such as policy (Bhorat et al., 2018). Conversely, according to Lings (2014); Bushe (2019), many new business ventures fail to survive after their established despite the support of the government. They aver that factors such as unconducive entrepreneurial environment, policies, amongst others affect the desired improvement of the performance of SMMEs. On the other hand, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2016) the biggest challenge facing the entrepreneurs and one that should be considered by policymakers relates to the low level of education and training, suggesting that academic institutions might have an important role to play in improving the performance of entrepreneurship and SMMEs through skills and capacity development. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the factors that can promote or hamper the management and implementation of entrepreneurship at higher institutions of learning, using a selected university in South Africa. In other words, the present study seeks to survey the role(s) played by institutions of higher learning in the enhancement of entrepreneurship and job creation among South African youths at university level, while seeking for relevant approaches to eradicate challenges faced by entrepreneurs and advance entrepreneurship education. Moreover, according to Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich and Brijal (2007); Chimucheka (2012) better entrepreneurial education could make an important contribution to job creation and to poverty alleviation and also towards greater economic development. Isaac et al. (2007); Chimucheka (2012) further state that the key to the establishment and survival of entrepreneurial ventures in South Africa is education. Thus, considering the importance of entrepreneurship in the society, its management and implementation in institutions of higher learning, as well as the achievement of the aim of the present study, the identified research questions serve as guide to the study.

1. What are the factors that can be used to promote management and implementation of entrepreneurship as an academic module at universities?
2. Can entrepreneurship be used as a tool to curb poverty and unemployment from university graduates?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted qualitative method as a research approach to collect primary data. Qualitative method was used because of the nature of study which seeks to collect in-depth information on the management and implementation of entrepreneurship at universities. Creswell (2014); Kumar (2014) view qualitative research method as being good for gathering in-depth information though not from a representative sample and may therefore not be suitable for generalization to the population. The study used participants from one selected university which comprises students from different faculties. The total population for this case study was eight (8) students which were drawn from four (4) faculties. The sample of the study includes the following: 2 students from the Faculty of Arts, 2 students from the Faculty Commerce, Administration and Law (FCAL), 2 students from the Faculty of

Education and lastly 2 students from the Faculty of Science. The sample size for the university students and participants of the study were drawn using a nonprobability sampling method for explorative objectives. According to Du Plooy-Cillers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), interviews are an effective qualitative tool for getting information to people about their personal feelings, opinions and experiences. They are also an opportunity for researchers to get insights into how people interpret their surroundings (Ang, 2014). Shao (2011) point out that the importance of the interview is that the participants described the conditions under which they actually live Hence, the study face-to-face semi-structured interview method of data collection was adopted. This gave the students from the selected university who participated in the study, the opportunities to freely expatiate on the subject matter as much as they wanted.

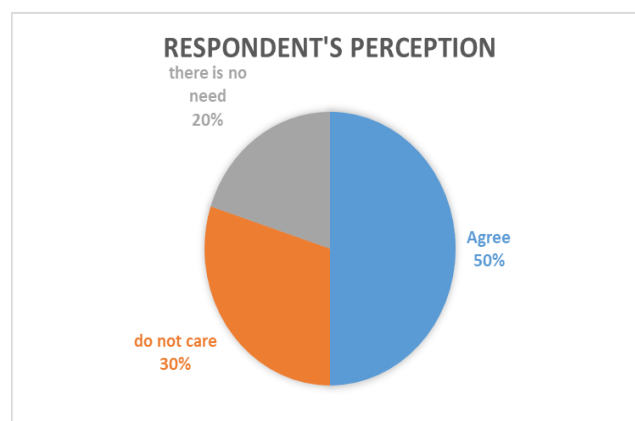
### Instruments and Analysis

The study aimed at researching into the importance of managing and implementing entrepreneurship in universities to all students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for 8 randomly selected students who took part in the study. The collected data from the semi-structured interviews were coded and thematically analysed. Meanwhile, some data were presented using graph for easy comprehension.

## RESULTS

The research findings for the study are presented below Figure 1 and are based on each research question.

Research question 1: What are the factors that can be used to promote management and implementation of entrepreneurship as an academic module at universities?



**FIGURE 1**  
**MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN ACADEMIC MODULE AT UNIVERSITIES**

The results from participants are discussed here. Out of 8 students from selected university (which is 100%) 4 which are 50% of the students agree on managing and implementing entrepreneurship as an academic module because they were saying it is very difficult to get job after completing their studies. They agree that if all students who have registered at the university come out with entrepreneurial skills and ideas of how to become entrepreneurs, it will be easy for them to be able to start and run their own businesses. This

will enable them to employ other people to earn a living through entrepreneurship. The 30 % of participants stated that they do not care whether entrepreneurship is implemented or not because they already have jobs, one was saying her father has a business so she is here just to get a degree. Meanwhile, 20% of the participants stated that there will be no difference if they add it or not because what they are studying does not relate to entrepreneurship.

The factors promoting management and implementation of entrepreneurship at universities in South Africa with respect to the selected university. The responses of the participants are presented below:

### **Theme 1: Infrastructure**

Majority of participants shows that infrastructure is enough for both personnel and physical structures. The responses of participants are listed below. ('P' is used to mean Participants):

*P5: Entrepreneurship as a programme is good and I feel it will help our people, because university has enough infrastructures which will promote entrepreneurship.*

*P1: I feel that the university has infrastructure that can enhance entrepreneurship education. I have got also a feeling that entrepreneurship education can work well at this institution.*

*P7: Provision of Entrepreneurship will be poor at the university because of the shortage of infrastructures. For instance, our university is in rural area and can't be compared with urban universities.*

*P8: I am for the opinion that we firstly need to consider the resources that university has at disposal before venturing into entrepreneurship education, but I strongly believes that entrepreneurship education will be a useful tool for promoting development in our Country.*

*P3: My belief is that if, infrastructures can be improved and entrepreneurship education is implemented in universities, the productive capacity the Country can increase and more jobs will be created.*

This finding suggests that infrastructures are a contributing factor promoting or hampering entrepreneurship in universities. Participants however, indicated that they will be pleased to have entrepreneurship in their university; they will like it to be included as a programmer of study or module in the university. Nevertheless, the issue of available infrastructures remains vital. Findings from the work of Uleanya & Gamede (2019) as well as Uleanya et al. (2019) indicate that lack of adequate infrastructures affect the quality of teaching and learning activities experienced in institutions of learning.

### **Theme 2: The institutional and government policies**

The participants' responses suggest that policies seem to contribute to the enhancements of entrepreneurial growth at universities. This includes both university and government policies. Some of the responses from participants are listed below.

*P4: The Government Policies are so important and can affect the implementation of entrepreneurship at universities.*

*P6: For the government to promote entrepreneurship Government must make policies that will encourage people to become entrepreneurs and funding must also be provided to emerging entrepreneurs*

*P2: University must learn from the policies which favors universities where entrepreneurship is successful. The Government is willing to help universities make and implement policies that will promote entrepreneurship.*

*P3: I think universities must develop entrepreneurship policy that will enhance entrepreneurship programmer at universities. I believe that the government should help schools universities to have such policies so that entrepreneurship can be implemented at universities and this can help improve economic growth of the Country.*

The responses from participants suggest that policies affect entrepreneurship implementation. The university seems not to have policies on entrepreneurship; hence, the need for government intervention. Meanwhile, review of the works of Uleanya et al. (2019); Uleanya & Gamede (2019) indicates that policies are the bedrock upon which institutional activities are predicated in institutions of learning. Suffice to state that for entrepreneurship to be promoted in institutions of learning, provisions are to be made for such in the policies guiding such institutions. These policies include both government and institution based.

### **Theme 3: Guidance on entrepreneurship**

The study reveals that many students are not well guided the need for entrepreneurship, but they are made to believe in the idea of getting job after they have completed their studies. Some of the responses from participant on guidance given to them on entrepreneurship are listed below:

*P3: In my whole life at university no lecturer has ever talked about issues on entrepreneurship.*

*P1: The biggest worry is that universities tell students that they prepare the students for the real World which is the world of work.*

*P4: The majority of us as students lack entrepreneurship skills because we are not taught about entrepreneurship even at High School level.*

*P6: I believe that the rate of unemployment very high in our Country because students are not given proper guidance when comes to entrepreneurship matters.*

*P4: The orientation and guidance that we get from university at the beginning of the year is only meant to indoctrinates us to make pass and succeed academically. This is good, but I believe that there is need for us to be given guidance on entrepreneurship.*

*P5: I personally, I am selling some sweets but nobody has taught me or assist me as to how should I run my business as part of entrepreneurship skills development.*

*P8: Most of lecturers do teaching and they only teach their own modules and they never even mention that there is something called entrepreneurship, we only see in news whereby people talk big English business language.*

This finding of the study indicates that majority of the students lack proper guidance on entrepreneurship as well as how they can become entrepreneurs. This finding agrees with the work of Gamede & Uleanya (2019) who aver for the need for entrepreneurship education in order to intimate and guide students towards getting involved in entrepreneurial activities.

#### **Theme 4: University curriculum**

Findings from participants ensures that curriculum at the university contributes to the failure of implementing entrepreneurship as an academic module. Some of the responses of participants are listed below:

*P1: I do not believe if anything like entrepreneurship does exists in the university curriculum.*

*P7: If entrepreneurship education was to be implemented in the university curriculum as an academic module, its effect would be felt at the end.*

*P8: Curriculum is like an engine of all university programmers, I think if entrepreneurship is included in the curriculum of the university, students would have known and been offered with some entrepreneurship modules.*

*P6: I believe that we would have been made better if we were made to do some of entrepreneurship modules. I guess that, some of us would have been good entrepreneurs by now.*

The responses reveal that curriculum of the institution lacks entrepreneurship programmes and that has a negative impact on the students. This finding corroborates the work of Uleanya et al. (2018) who state that the curriculum of institutions of learning should be designed to meet the needs of the students and the host communities. This implies that considering the effect that entrepreneurship can have on the students and the society, the curriculum is expected to be designed to accommodate such demand.

#### **Theme 5: Socio-economic circumstances of students and family**

The reveal that one hampering factor of entrepreneurship in universities is the socio-economic background of students. Below are some of the responses:

*P3: The major problem is that our parents want us to graduate, get a job and start helping the family financially.*

*P7: My family has no money hence no one is working in my family so they are expecting me to get a job in one of the factories around.*

*P8: My family has a belief that if I graduates, I needs to work and make money. They don't take serious the concept of entrepreneurship as an option.*

*P6: Colleagues if I was thinking about being an entrepreneur, I can't because of the family financial condition and need for money as well as the belief system of the family that after graduation from university a person must go and find work in the firms.*

*P2: How are so I wish that my family can give me opportunity to do business as an entrepreneur. Unfortunately, that is impossible. The only prayer that I pray is that I must get job after I have graduated.*

This finding shows that the socio-economic circumstances of students affect their chances of being entrepreneurs, though they may choose such. This finding agrees with the works of Uleanya (2019a) as well as Uleanya (2019b) who opine that the socio-economic status of students and that of their family have effects on their learning abilities. This by extension includes their abilities of learning and acquiring entrepreneurial skills.



## **Theme 6: Lack of collaboration with Firms and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Collaboration with firms and NGOs is said to be the major factors that can improve entrepreneurship at universities. But, the study ensures that there is little or no collaboration between the university and firms that can aid entrepreneurship. Some of the responses of participants are as presented below:

*R3: We have not yet heard of any collaboration that exists between university and any company that can help promote entrepreneurship.*

*P2: I am made to believe that collaborations between university and companies can help students and our Country, but I am not sure if anything like that exists. I have only heard of many collaborations but not entrepreneurship.*

*P1: I think because our university doesn't run entrepreneurship programmes that is why we don't hear about collaboration on entrepreneurship.*

This finding suggests that there is no collaboration between the university and firms. Lack of such collaboration affects the implementation of entrepreneurship at university. This finding coincides with the works of Gamede and Uleanya (2018) and Gamede and Uleanya (2019) who advocate for collaborations between institutions of learning such as universities and firms within and around the communities where the institutions are situated.

**Research question 2:** Can entrepreneurship be used as a tool to curb poverty and unemployment from university graduates?

## **Theme 7: Entrepreneurship as a tool to curb poverty and unemployment**

The responses of participants to the second research question which is explained under theme 7: 'Entrepreneurship curb Poverty and unemployment from university graduates' reveals that majority of the students agree that entrepreneurship can help reduce the rate of poverty from university graduates. Some of the responses are as presented below:

*P2: If Entrepreneurship is implemented it will make people to busy and be productive useful to the families and community at large. That will also lead to personal wealth creation and job creation.*

*P1: Entrepreneurship can help people to create and manage their own jobs and be able to support their families. This will make them respond positively to their family needs.*

*P4: We must consider entrepreneurship as a tool for Economic development and ensure that unemployment becomes a thing of the past in our Country.*

*P6: There are very few jobs available in the Country. Many students do not know what will happen after they have graduated from these universities, but If entrepreneurship is managed well and is well implemented at university level people will be better off than before they were taught entrepreneurship.*

*P8: I have a strong feeling that students need entrepreneurship. The time people become entrepreneurs, they will be able to create new jobs and provide jobs for other people.*

*P7: When unemployment rate is reduced, poverty is reduced too. I have a strong belief believe that entrepreneurship can contribute to the reduction of poverty in a Country.*

*P2: Entrepreneurship is also a tool for crime reduction and that will help to promote peace in a Country.*

*P6: Many Countries practicing different types of economy has identified the importance of entrepreneurship and it is has worked for them.*

*There are only few entrepreneurs who are South Africans living in the country. This gives an insight to the way entrepreneurship is embraced in the country.*

This finding suggests that entrepreneurship can contribute to the reduction of poverty. This finding corroborates the work of Gamede & Uleanya (2017) and Gamede and Uleanya (2018) who opine that raising the number of entrepreneurs in a nation will aid reduction in the rate of unemployment, consequently poverty. Meanwhile, when people are gainfully employed or busy with entrepreneurial activities, the rate of crime tends to reduce. Suffice to state that one way of reducing poverty and promoting peace in the nation could be through entrepreneurship.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of the study reveal that entrepreneurship in universities will cause people who have graduated or have studied at university to be found wanting if they do not have Entrepreneurial skills to start and run their own businesses.

The finding of the study on managing and implementation of entrepreneurship in universities will make the ideas of becoming entrepreneurs easy and people will be able to start and run their own businesses. People with entrepreneurial skills will be able to employ other people to earn a living out of entrepreneurship.

Some studies consider the role of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. The example of the studies is the study by Gamede & Uleanya (2017) on the role of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools at further education and training (FET) phase in the context of South Africa. The findings revealed that there is entrepreneurship module gap at universities which need to be implementing so that people who have graduated from these universities will be able to start their business and provide employment to other people.

The findings of the study show that availability of infrastructures, Institutional policies, guidance to students, curriculum of the university, socio-economic circumstances of students, collaboration between universities and organizations, among others are the factors promoting Management and implementation of entrepreneurship in South African universities.

The findings of the study on infrastructures contributing to good intentions to manage and implement entrepreneurship in the community coincides with the work of Murioz, et al. (2016) who opine that infrastructures are highly needed for entrepreneurship to thrive in any community. Suffice to state that infrastructures in the institution of learning and community contribute to lack of entrepreneurship growth in the selected rural community.

Finding of the study also suggests that institutional policies contribute positively on entrepreneurial activities in the selected community. According to Folster (2000); Kritikos (2014) policies are important factors that can ensure the survival and growth of entrepreneurship in any society is promoted. The finding of the study also concurs with the work of Leibowitz & Bozalek (2014) who state that the guidance given to students determines their level of awareness and decisions made in life.

The study displays that the curriculum of the university contributes to the challenges of entrepreneurship in the selected university. This agrees with the works of Grisham-Brown



& Hemmeter (2017); Smith et al. (2019) who hold the views that the curriculum of an institution has the potency to mar the abilities of students and affect their decisions in life. The findings on socio-economic background of students corroborates the work of Okioga (2013) who stated that socio-economic background of students influence the abilities to learn. The findings on collaboration between universities and organizations being a contributing factor in promoting entrepreneurship at universities coincides with the work of Connor (2014) who emphasizes the need for mentor-ship in building entrepreneurs. The researcher believes mentor-ship will be relevant when institutions of learning are able to partner with experts who can help students through mentee-mentor relationship. The finding of the study further reveals that many students agree that entrepreneurship can help to curb poverty and unemployment. This finding agrees with the works of Gamede & Uleanya (2018) as well as Glotko et al. (2019) who state that entrepreneurship is a lasting solution to unemployment issues in societies.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions of learning are designed to produce graduates with the ability to create opportunities and be self-reliant. Meanwhile, despite the high number of graduates being produced annually in the nation: South Africa, the rate of unemployment remains high. On the other hand, entrepreneurship has been considered as a viable tool for curbing unemployment. Hence, various scholars have advocated for the use of entrepreneurship to resolve unemployment and poverty issues. Thus, this study investigated the need for entrepreneurship to be implemented as a tool to curb poverty and unemployment among university graduates with emphasis on South Africa. Therefore, the factors promoting entrepreneurship in South African universities were investigated. The study shows that universities are built with an aim of promoting economic development in their Countries and entrepreneurship is seen as a tool that can drive sustainable development. However, universities seem to overlook the role of entrepreneurship as a tool for curbing poverty and unemployment in their societies, whereas, it can be used judiciously. Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The partnership between universities and Government organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is very important if we want to promote entrepreneurship in our communities.
2. The curriculum of universities should include and promote entrepreneurial activities. This will help student to be productive after they have graduated from these institutions. It will also help to be able to create jobs and run their own businesses. University graduates can also be able to create and employ other people which will make people to be able to be productive and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Country.
3. Funding should be given to students who have completed their programme on entrepreneurship. This will help to encourage the students to become entrepreneurs.
4. Universities should consider introducing short term courses on entrepreneurship. These short term courses must be credit bearing and must also be accredited, this will help people who may be interested in becoming entrepreneurs.
5. The curriculum at universities should include at least a core module which teaches about entrepreneurship. This module will help to introduce all students at university to have basic knowledge of entrepreneurship.
6. Students studying at universities should be encouraged to start entrepreneurship projects and seek funding from industries. This will help students to become entrepreneurs before they even graduate from the university. Such students after graduation can become employers of labour.
7. Students should have special days to show case their produce after they have completed their projects. The special day, can be called university shows students talents and the whole university community should come and support students by buying the products from students.

## SUGGESTION OF FURTHER STUDY

The study focused on factors promoting management and implementation of entrepreneurship in universities. However, only eight participants from one university was selected for the purpose of this study. This of course affects the generalization of the research findings. Thus, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted using two or more universities as there are various types of universities ranging from traditional universities, mainline universities and universities of technologies within South Africa. Also, other tertiary institutions of learning can be considered in a study such as this. Additionally, only qualitative method was used for this study, hence, it is suggested that quantitative or mixed methods be adopted for similar studies to aid generalization of findings.

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