

WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL): SOLUTION TO ENTREPRENEURIAL CHALLENGES IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship remains a major subject considered relevant to proffering solutions to challenges of unemployment across various continents of the world, South Africa inclusive. However, in spite of the need for entrepreneurship, the approach with which entrepreneurial activities are conducted contributes to the success or challenges experienced in various entrepreneurial spaces. This study explores the role of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in proffering solution and contributing to the success of entrepreneurial activities in developing nations, using rural areas in South Africa as a case study. Relevant literatures were reviewed in relation to the subject matter. The findings of the study show amongst others that Work Integrated Learning aids collaboration between institutions of learning and firms within and around the host communities of the universities. Also, such collaborations tend to help students practically in their academic pursuits. Hence, the study recommends that Work Integrated Learning should be promoted in various higher institutions of learning.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Work Integrated Learning (WIL), South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment continues to linger in various parts of the world. It remains a major concern in South Africa (Gamede & Uleanya, 2018). According to Statistics South Africa (2017), the unemployment rate is approximately 28% in South Africa. This has affected the economy of the nation. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship has been described as a tool for job creation and for people pursuing careers in various fields (Arthur et al., 2012; Galvão et al., 2018 and Gamede & Uleanya, 2018). According to Sanyal (2014), entrepreneurship is recognized throughout the world as one of the major factors which contributes immensely to the development and progress of any nation economically. In other words, one major way by which the economy of a nation can be boosted to experience progress is through entrepreneurship. Suffice to state that entrepreneurship plays a pivot role in the society. Sanyal (2014) as well as Gamede & Uleanya (2018) further highlight that entrepreneurship provides employment opportunities to people in different locations: rural and urban alike, it sometimes acts as support to many by helping to generate extra income. Also, entrepreneurship is considered as a tool which aids sustenance of development and improvement of the standard of living of people (Sanyal, 2014). The highlighted benefits of entrepreneurship indicate its importance to any society. However, entrepreneurship does not function or work by itself in isolation, people make it happen. It is controlled and managed by people, and tends to function following certain intentional actions. A

review of the findings of the research conducted by Pienaar (2016) on entrepreneurship in a bid to enhance return on investment shows that mentorship is needed in promoting entrepreneurial activities. Thus, the need to explore Work Integrated Learning in entrepreneurial activities. Work Integrated Learning is an approach to teaching which enhances individuals in any teaching and learning environment. The finding of the work of Pienaar (2016) indicates that Work Integrated Learning is potent in enhancing entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities in teaching and learning environments. Thus, the need for this present study which sought to explore the Work Integrated Learning in proffering solutions to challenges of entrepreneurship. In other words, this study focuses on reviewing relevant literatures that are targeted at the importance of Work Integrated Learning, and how it can be used as a tool for providing answers to challenges of entrepreneurship. The aim of this present paper is achieved using review of relevant literature for various headings such as: understanding the meaning of Work Integrated Learning, understanding entrepreneurship and its importance in the society, and entrepreneurial challenges in rural areas of developing nations.

Understanding the Meaning of Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

It is a common view that people learn best by doing/practice. Thus, Jonsson et al. (2014) hold the view that following urge for people to learn through doing or practice, the rise to *Work Integrated Learning*' birth. In other words, Work Integrated Learning came into existence with the need for people to put into practice what they have been taught or further learn by doing. According to Lantos (2014), Work Integrated Learning is an approach in learning which aligns itself with theory and practical. In other words, Work Integrated Learning make even workplace practices and academic for common goal for both the learner and the workplace. According to Stirling et al. (2016), Work Integrated Learning is a learning/teaching norm where students learn the combination of practices in educational and workplace settings. Stirling et al. (2016), considers Work Integrated Learning as a laudable practice. According to them, WIL comprises effective practices which boosts the learning value of organized work know-how that are obtainable through institutions of learning such as colleges, universities, amongst others. Stirling et al. (2016) further opine that tertiary institutions of learning are beginning to focus majorly on the provision of quality teaching and learning exercises, as well as high standard of educational experiences for students in different learning situations. Suffice to state that Work Integrated Learning avails students the opportunity to learn in various circumstances and settings: theoretically and practically. Additionally, in view of this, students, academic institutions, host institutions, employers and the communities are anticipated to benefit from Work Integrated Learning, however, it is expected that the WIL programme is well-designed and structured to achieve such (Stirling et al., 2016). This implies that WIL is of benefit to different sectors and of the society when it is appropriately planned, designed and structured. Some benefits of Work Integrated Learning as highlighted by Stirling et al. (2016) are as follows:

- Work Integrated Learning enhances students towards having an understanding of the type of learning style desired by them. As well as their own learning process.
- Work Integrated Learning develops students' knowledge and skills of critical reflection which in turn makes them better able to direct thoughtful and insightful practices in their places of work with little or no supervision.

- It furnishes students with the desired basic knowledge and skills that are required to structure formative and summative reflection assignments.
- It improves the abilities of students to link theory and practice together as well as testing and trying new concepts/ideas.
- It promotes individual and professional growth and enriches the higher education experiences of students.

Considering the benefits of Work Integrated Learning highlighted by Stirling et al. (2016), it is pertinent to state that if such is applied entrepreneurial training, certain challenges facing entrepreneurship in South Africa will be resolved. For instance, people seeking to be entrepreneurs will be exposed to getting first hand quality information from entrepreneurs. Also, upcoming entrepreneurs will be exposed to the challenges as well as issues of decision making, amongst others faced by entrepreneurs and how such are tackled and resolved. This will enable the upcoming entrepreneurs to be better in their entrepreneurial pursuit. Additionally, Work Integrated Learning if well planned, designed and discharged will expose upcoming entrepreneurs to the pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages of the entrepreneurship. This will enable them to decide how to carry-on with the pursuit. Moreover, since, the upcoming entrepreneurs are likely to be exposed to the disadvantages of the venture, they get the opportunity to make decision whether to continue or back out.

Understanding Entrepreneurship and its Importance in the Society

A review of the work of Gamede & Uleanya (2019), indicates that entrepreneurship is the process of doing something new and different for the purpose of creating wealth for the people and add value to the society, whereas economic growth is an increase in productive capacity of the country. Entrepreneurship possess the potency to contribute to economic development in different nations (Kakouris et al., 2016 and Naudé, 2016). A review of the work of Kakouris et al. (2016) suggests that entrepreneurship is expected to be a major component of any strategic plan for any nation and continent. For instance, they opine that entrepreneurship constitutes one of the main components of the Europe 2020 strategic plan which is responsible for the European integration. This implies that entrepreneurship is a cogent phenomenon which is to be desired in strategic plans of different nations of the world. This is due to the perception that entrepreneurship aids economic growth and development. Sequel to the importance of entrepreneurship to the society, Usaci (2015) as well as Gamede & Uleanya (2018), suggest the need to increase entrepreneurship. They further opine that the increase of entrepreneurship can be achieved through education. In other words, education can be adopted as a tool for increasing and improving the trend of entrepreneurship in the society. Moreover, education bridges the gap between entrepreneurship and economic development (Kakouris et al., 2016). This is achieved through various ways such as research, innovations, amongst others. A review of the work of McCann & Ortega-Argilés (2016) shows that entrepreneurship promotes innovations across various regions of the world.

Entrepreneurial Challenges in Developing Nations

The role of management is a major challenge faced in organisations in developing nations, especially as it concerns rural areas (Gamede & Uleanya, 2019). This implies that managerial roles are some worth cumbersome and tend to pose immense challenges which affect

the organizations which they serve, consequently the nation and possibly its economy. According to a study conducted by Sanyal (2014), using Dhofar Region of the Sultanate of Oman, majority of the challenges experienced by entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship is due to lack of training. Sanyal (2014) posits that development of personnel creates opportunities for people contribute to economic growth of a nation. However, an increase in the number of institutions of learning providing such development training will be needed (Sanyal, 2014 and Gamede & Uleanya, 2018).

Kaburi et al. (2012) conducted a study on the challenges facing entrepreneurship in developing nations using Kenya as a case study. The findings of the study indicate that the major constraints hindering entrepreneurship in developing nations such as Kenya includes the following: lack of capital, entrepreneur's family responsibilities and issues with extended family, untimely death of parents, misplaced priorities, poor government policies in entrepreneurship, poor or no knowledge in business management, lack of role models, amongst others. This present study however, only focused on the last two identified challenges. Lack of knowledge in business management according to Kaburi et al. (2012) constitutes one of the challenges experienced in entrepreneurship. This is sometimes due to the quality of provided education, as well as the system. In cases where there are good educational systems and quality education are provided for upcoming entrepreneurs, certain challenges will be avoided or easily overcome. Thus, Gamede & Uleanya (2018) in support of this, suggest the need for entrepreneurship education. Additionally, lack of role models or poor role modelling constitutes challenge in entrepreneurship. Upcoming entrepreneurs are expected to be role modelled by professional entrepreneurs, however, where good role models are lacking, challenges are inevitable (Kaburi et al., 2012). Thus, Pienaar (2016) in support of the need for role models in entrepreneurship suggests Work Integrated Learning as a prerequisite solution for upcoming entrepreneurs in order to avoid or easily overcome certain challenges. Moreover, Stirling et al. (2016) states Work Integrated Learning as a platform through which students can role modelled by expert entrepreneurs in carrying out entrepreneurial activities. In this regard, the students enrich themselves through their increasing wealth of knowledge and experience, while being useful to the entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial firms.

Reasons for Entrepreneurial Failures in Developing Nations

A review of the work of Kaburi et al. (2012) is an indication that entrepreneurship is considered to have failed and continue to experience different forms of failure in developing nations due to different factors. Some of the highlighted factors include: adoption of programmes without customization, making decisions for students without their involvement, ignoring of beliefs and culture of locals, little or non-involvement of entrepreneurial organizations (lack of collaborative efforts from entrepreneurial firms), and unclear policies of government on entrepreneurship.

According to Kaburi et al. (2012), several entrepreneurial programmes are adopted without any form of customization. In other words, rather than adopt entrepreneurial programmes to suit and meet the demands of local communities where they are to be practiced, the adopters and practitioners of such programmes end-up leaving and using the programmes the way they were adopted, rather than redesign them to suit the local needs. Uleanya et al. (2018) in support of customization of adopted entrepreneurial programmes advocate for the need for localization of curricula. In other words, a review of the work of Uleanya et al. (2018) indicates

their concession to the view that entrepreneurial programmes can be adopted, however, there is need for them to be adjusted and localized to meet the needs of local communities.

According to Kaburi et al. (2012), making decisions for young people such as students in different issues especially as it concerns entrepreneurship without involving them can lead to failure of such programmes. This implies that young people like to be involved or carried along in decision making, especially where it concerns them. Thus, leaving them behind and deciding for them can make them opt out of such programmes regardless of their usefulness and benefits to them. Thus, Kaburi et al. (2012) opine that young people, in this case students should be involved in decision making concerning entrepreneurial programmes as it concerns them.

Also, ignorance to the local culture and beliefs of host communities where such entrepreneurial programmes are to be carried-out affects the success of such programmes (Kaburi et al., 2012). The culture of the people where the entrepreneurial programme is to be carried-out is expected to be taken into consideration. The acceptance or rejection of many entrepreneurial programmes is largely dependent on the culture of the people (Kaburi et al., 2012). For instance, people will kick against entrepreneurial programmes that are contrary to their culture and beliefs.

Non-involvement of entrepreneurial organizations which is synonymous to lack of collaborations with entrepreneurial firms affects the success of entrepreneurial programmes (Kaburi et al., 2012). In other words, institutions of learning are to explore visible ways by which entrepreneurial firms can be involved in the activities of the institution. This can be done through meaningful collaborations between the institutions of learning and the entrepreneurial firms. Kaburi et al. (2012) hold the view that collaborations between entrepreneurial firms and institutions of learning are liable to ensure the success of Work Integrated Learning, promote entrepreneurial activities in the communities as well as aid the desired economic growth and development. However, the desired collaboration and economic growth and development may be hindered where the policies of the government concerning entrepreneurship are not clear. This is because, several factors such as collaborations, sponsorship, education system, planning, designing as well as implementation are hinged on the policies of the government. This implies that where the policies of the government concerning entrepreneurial activities and programmes are unclear, planning, designing, sponsoring, amongst others become difficult and sometimes impossible.

Entrepreneurial Challenges in Developing Nations Vs Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

In resolving the issue of Work Integrated Learning being an approach to solving entrepreneurial challenges in developing nations such as South Africa, Kaburi et al. (2012) point that poor or no knowledge in business management, lack of role models, amongst others are major setback in entrepreneurial programmes. Meanwhile, Pienaar (2016) holds the view that the identified challenges of entrepreneurial programmes can be resolved through Work Integrated Learning programmes. Pienaar (2016) is of the opinion that proffering solutions to the identified challenges is one of the major reasons for Work Integrated Learning. However, Stirling et al. (2016) hold the view that the Work Integrated Learning programme targeted at resolving such identified entrepreneurial challenges are to be well planned, designed, structured and implemented. Meanwhile, Uleanya et al. (2018) consider the need for the Work Integrated Learning programme to be localized to suit the level of the locals while addressing their needs and demands.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Entrepreneurial Challenges

Entrepreneurial challenges range from personal, family, government to community issues (Kaburi et al., 2012). They further buttress that some of the identified challenges include capital, family issues, little or no experience, government policies, educational system, amongst others. However, with the inclusion of Work Integrated Learning some of the challenges are liable to be avoided or easily overcome (Kaburi et al., 2012; Stirling et al., 2016). This is because, Work Integrated Learning is considered to aid role modelling and serve as a platform where amateurs such as students are guided towards being trained and developed by professionals (Kaburi et al., 2012; Stirling et al., 2016). The professional entrepreneurs are viewed to have experienced and overcome several challenges, made various errors and poor decisions which have informed their current status as experts. Thus, they are liable to be in the best positions to guide unexperienced upcoming entrepreneurs. Going by the reviewed literatures, the major constraint in Work Integrated Learning and entrepreneurial challenges has to do with the planning, designing and implementation of the Work Integrated Learning programme and the system of education in operation (Kaburi et al., 2012; Stirling et al., 2016). Suffice to state that as good and beneficial as Work Integrated Learning may be to students, its success is largely dependent on its planning, design and implementation. Thus, a poorly implemented Work Integrated Learning is tantamount to failure and discouragement of students, whereas, the reverse is liable to be the case if the Work Integrated Learning is well designed and implemented. Meanwhile, the education system is contributory to the planning, designing and implementing of Work Integrated Learning.

DISCUSSION

The present study is a review which sought to explore the link between Work Integrated Learning and entrepreneur. In other words, the focus of the study was to investigate the possibility of using Work Integrated Learning to proffer solutions to challenges facing entrepreneurial practices in developing nations, with emphasis on rural areas of South Africa. Various relevant literatures were reviewed in order to have an understanding of the meaning of Work Integrated Learning, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial challenges in developing nations. Also, how Work Integrated Learning can be applied to resolving entrepreneurial challenges was explored using relevant literatures. The relevant reviewed literatures indicate that study entrepreneurship is important and aids diverse economic growth and development in the society. Various relevant literatures were reviewed in different headings such as: understanding the meaning of Work Integrated Learning, understanding entrepreneurship and its importance in the society, and entrepreneurial challenges in developing nations, reasons for entrepreneurial failure in developing nations, as well as using Work Integrated Learning to resolve entrepreneurial challenges.

The Table 1 below shows a summary of the relevant reviewed literatures in the different sub-headings.

Subjects/Sub-headings	Reviewed Relevant Literatures
Understanding the meaning of Work Integrated Learning	Jonsson et al. (2014); Lantos (2014); Stirling et al. (2016);
Understanding entrepreneurship and its Importance in the Society	Arthur et al. (2012); Usaci (2015); Sanyal (2014); Kakouris et al. (2016) and Naudé, 2016); McCann & Ortega-Argilés (2016); Galvão et al. (2018); Gamede & Uleanya (2018); Gamede & Uleanya (2019)
Entrepreneurial challenges in developing nations	Kaburi et al. (2012); Sanyal (2014); Gamede & Uleanya (2019)
Reasons for entrepreneurial failure in developing nations	Kaburi et al. (2012); Uleanya et al. (2018)
Using Work Integrated Learning to resolve entrepreneurial challenges	Kaburi et al. (2012); Pienaar (2016); Stirling et al. (2016);

CONCLUSION

The study explored the place of Work Integrated Learning in proffering solutions to challenges of entrepreneurship. Various relevant literatures were reviewed under different headings. The findings of the review indicate that while entrepreneurship is important and needful for development in the society, there are several challenges hampering its effective practice. Meanwhile, institutions of learning have various roles to play in ensuring that entrepreneurial programmes are enjoyed. One of such ways is the planning, designing, and implementing of Work Integrated Learning. In other words, Work Integrated Learning becomes a tool for proffering solution to challenges of entrepreneurial activities in the society, especially in rural areas of developing nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Work Integrated Learning should be promoted in various higher institutions of learning. This can be in form of collaborations between host institutions of learning and entrepreneurial firms. This will aid practical learning for the students.
- Students should be posted for practical classes during their academic programmes in the tertiary institution of learning. Their activities during the practical classes should be considered as a prerequisite for their graduating from such programmes.
- Adopted entrepreneurial activities should be localized to meet local needs and demands. This can be done by first identifying the local entrepreneurial needs and demands to be met, then explore foreign entrepreneurial programmes in developed nations, consider how the programmes are used to satisfy the needs of the people in the host country, thereafter, attempts can be made to make the same programme suitable for locals in the rural developing societies where they are needed.
- Students should be involved in decision making concerning entrepreneurial programmes. This will encourage them and boost their involvement in the success of such entrepreneurial programmes. They can be involved in the timetabling, designing, planning and implementation of the Work Integrated Learning programme. This can be done through student representation in meetings for Work Integrated Learning.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study is a review; empirical data are not available. Thus, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted using empirical data and specific research locations. This can be done using different approaches such as: quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods.

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