

Encouraging the Uptake of Entrepreneurship by Graduates of Higher Education Institutions in South Africa

Authors : Chux Gervase Iwu, Simon Nsengimane

Abstract : Entrepreneurship stimulates socio-economic development in many countries, if not all. It creates jobs and decreases unemployment and inequality. There are other benefits that are accruable from entrepreneurship, namely the empowerment of women and the promotion of better livelihoods. Innovation has become a weapon for business competition, growth, and sustainability. Paradoxically, it is a threat to businesses because products can be duplicated; new products may decrease the market share of existing ones or delete them from the market. This creates a constant competitive environment that calls for updates, innovation, and the invention of new products and services. Thus, the importance of higher education in instilling a good entrepreneurial mindset in students has become even more critical. It can be argued that the business environment is under enormous pressure from several factors, including the fourth industrial revolution, which calls for the adoption and use of information and communication technology, which is the catalyst for many innovations and organisational changes. Therefore, it is crucial that higher education students are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to respond effectively to the needs of the business environment and create a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem. In South Africa, entrepreneurship education or some form of it has been a privilege for economic and management fields of study, leaving behind other fields. Entrepreneurship should not be limited to business faculties but rather extended to other fields of study. This is perhaps the reason for low levels of entrepreneurship uptake among South African graduates if they are compared with the graduates in other countries. There may be other reasons for the low entrepreneurship uptake. Some of these have been documented in extant literature to include (1) not enough time was spent teaching entrepreneurship in the business faculties, (2) the skills components in the curricula are insufficient, and (3) the overall attitudes/mindsets necessary to establish and run sustainable enterprises seem absent. Therefore, four important areas are recognised as crucial for the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education: policy, private sector engagement, curriculum development, and teacher development. The purpose of this research is to better comprehend the views, aspirations, and expectations of students and faculty members to design an entrepreneurial teaching model for higher education institutions. A qualitative method will be used to conduct a purposive interview with undergraduate and graduate students in select higher institutions. Members of faculty will also be included in the sample as well as, where possible, two or more government personnel responsible for higher education policy development. At present, interpretative analysis is proposed for the analysis of the interviews with the support of Atlas Ti. It is hoped that an entrepreneurship education model in the South African context is realised through this study.

Keywords : entrepreneurship education, higher education institution, graduate unemployment, curriculum development

Conference Title : ICEID 2023 : International Conference on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Development

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : October 16-17, 2023