



Linking entrepreneurship education and training with students and graduates entrepreneurial intention



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ABSTRACT

Recognising the relevance of entrepreneurship, most African universities have made significant input into delivering Entrepreneurial Education in Higher Educational Institutions. However, the rising number of graduate unemployment raises concerns with regard to quality of educational content, and programmes. This study sought to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship course content on entrepreneurial intention and the mediation of individual entrepreneurial characteristics and also to investigate if graduates' exposure to extra entrepreneurship training and university programme type does account for differences in individual entrepreneurial characteristics. A context specific framework which explains entrepreneurial intention as a function of course content, programmes type, and extra entrepreneurial training is tested based on data from 400 undergraduate students and 400 graduates from eight Ghanaian universities. Evidence from the model reveal that entrepreneurial course content did impact entrepreneur Intention, however, this impact is partially mediated by the attitudes, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms of Ghanaian students and graduates. Again, while it was found that extra entrepreneurial training did account for differences in individual entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial intention of graduates, the difference due to programme type was not significant. Theoretical, policy, and practical implications findings of this study are discussed.

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Introduction

Against the background that several studies have recognised that entrepreneurship education can promote entrepreneurship thereby providing an alternative career option for graduates, African governments have sought to change the trend of business set ups by developing initiatives within their entrepreneurship policy which are targeted at University graduates and skilled persons. This has the aim of addressing general unemployment issues and particularly graduate unemployment problems, which has become a 'herculean' task for recent governments and also ensure economic growth.

One such measure taken by the Government on Ghana is to introduce entrepreneurial education in higher educational institutions (HEIs). Higher educational institutions including public, and private universities, and colleges have developed and included entrepreneurship subjects and courses in their curricula consistent with the Government's mandate to enable students to gain skills not only for successful corporate work but also for self-employment. Motivated, talented and enterprising graduates are more likely to start and lead dynamic ventures and also help to transform the organisations they join and manage (Gyamfi, 2014). Dhiliwayo (2013) explains that, for a rapidly growing economy desperately in need of skilled labour, unemployment among graduates, ideally, is supposed to fall with the introduction of entrepreneur education in Higher educational institutions. It is expected that by undergoing formal entrepreneurial education or training, or having specialised courses integrated with entrepreneurship courses, individuals will acquire knowledge and skills necessary to take on the challenges of setting up one's own business (De Clercq & Arenius, 2012). However, after many years of introducing entrepreneur education in Ghanaian universities a quick look around shows a high incidence of unemployment among graduates from the tertiary institutions. The World Bank report mentions that a half of graduates leaving Ghanaian universities do not find jobs for two years after national service, and 20% cannot find jobs for three years (Robb, Valerio, & Parton, 2014). This situation is likewise experienced in other countries including in Kenya and Mozambique (Robb et al.,

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