

Factors Influencing Undergraduate Students' choice of Entrepreneurship Courses at Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies.

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Abstract : The uptake of entrepreneurship courses by undergraduate students is a function of several factors including the perceived value of the course, the individual characteristics of the students and institutional factors relating to the delivery of the course. This research was conducted on 50 undergraduate students taking Bachelor of Commerce in Purchasing and Supply Chain Management, Bachelor of Commerce in Travel and Tourism and Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) at Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies. Data was analysed using SPSS 16.0 (one way ANOVA and Regression analysis). The results revealed that entrepreneurship course outcomes such as gaining employability skills, being self employed, having significant economic contribution and solving society problems are not statistically significant factors that influence student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. The study also found that entrepreneurship related personal characteristics such as autonomy, competitive aggressiveness and risk taking, positively correlates with students' choice of entrepreneurship courses whilst proactiveness and innovativeness negatively correlates with student's choice of entrepreneurship courses. Further, teaching approaches like industrial attachment, lectures, use of guest lecturers and industry visit negatively correlates with students' choice of entrepreneurship courses but the use of business simulations in teaching positively correlates to student's choice of entrepreneurship course

Key Words: Entrepreneurship education, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Entrepreneurial intentions.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Entrepreneurship education seeks to impact the skills and capabilities for people to start and run new business ventures. In higher education, entrepreneurship education seeks to model the mindsets of the undergraduate students towards new venture creation other than job seeking. Universities and colleges have realised the importance of entrepreneurship education in developing versatile employability skills for their graduates. To date, many universities and colleges offer elective entrepreneurship courses in their various disciplines as a way of broadening the careers prospects of their graduates [1]. Entrepreneurial knowledge provides an individual with increased cognitive abilities leading to more productive and efficient potential activity [2]. Despite the importance of entrepreneurship education, some undergraduate students remain reluctant to choose entrepreneurship as one of the optional courses within the bachelor's degree programmes they are studying.

1.1 Background

The provision of entrepreneurship education started in the United States of America around 1947, followed by Canada which began to offer entrepreneurship education in the colleges and universities around 1970s [3]. In 1997 the German government launched an entrepreneurship initiative at universities aimed at inculcating the entrepreneurial spirit in university students. With the realisation of the role of entrepreneurship education in economic development, universities and colleges worldwide have begun to integrate entrepreneurship programmes and courses in most of their faculties [4]. This study was conducted at Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies (GUC) to establish factors influencing undergraduate students' perception towards entrepreneurship courses. GUC is a Private tertiary education institution registered and accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) and the Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) in Botswana. GUC offers programmes from certificate up to Masters' degree level. GUC has embedded entrepreneurship modules into most of its undergraduate programmes with the view of stimulating entrepreneurial capabilities of students. However, entrepreneurship courses have not been popularly opted for by the students. This study sought to assess the factors influencing undergraduate students' perception towards entrepreneurship courses offered at GUC. The study sought to following answer the following research questions.

1.2 Research Questions

- What factors influence student's interest in entrepreneurship courses?

- Is there any significant relationship between students' entrepreneurial orientation and choice of entrepreneurship courses?
- Is there any significant relationship between the teaching and learning approaches and student interest in entrepreneurship courses?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

- H^{A1}: There are some factors which influence student's choice of entrepreneurship courses in GUC?
- H^{A2}: There is significant relationship between students' entrepreneurial orientation and choice of entrepreneurship courses?
- H^{A3}: There is significant relationship between the teaching and learning approach and student choice of entrepreneurship courses?

1.4 Purpose of Research

Effective provision of entrepreneurship education in universities has been considered by the Ministry of Tertiary Education Research Science and Technology of Botswana as one of the strategies to reduce the problems graduate unemployment and lack of employability skills [5]. The aim of entrepreneurship education is to model the mindset of graduates towards new venture creation [6]. The study highlighted the factors influencing student's choice of entrepreneurship courses which can aid university planning and decision making. The results also provide the bases upon which institutions can effectively integrate entrepreneurship courses in their programmes to improve graduate employability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The motivation to study entrepreneurship at tertiary education level is a function of one's desire to start up a new business ventures after completing studies. This is commonly known as entrepreneurial intentions [7]. Students' entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by several factors including their level of readiness to face the job market. For example, it was observed that, higher education students are aware of the limited employment opportunities and career prospects in Botswana, hence they chose entrepreneurship courses in order to gain skills to create their own employment after graduation [6]. Therefore, unemployment and limited career opportunities in the job market push undergraduate students to study entrepreneurship so that they create own jobs in future.

A study by Osakede, Lawanson and Sobowale in (2017) at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) found that family business background significantly influence a student's entrepreneurial intentions. Further, parents, friends and relatives were also depicted as influencers of students' entrepreneurial intentions. Students' entrepreneurial intentions may also be influenced by their desire to contribute significantly to society through solving pertinent problems that society is experiencing. Student's desire to be independent and to face challenges of life may drive their entrepreneurial desires [2]. Further, students who want have meaningful contribution to the economy after attaining their qualifications may choose to study entrepreneurship courses.

Individual's entrepreneurial orientation is defined by the existence of personal characteristics like autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness [8]. Autonomy refers to an individual's self direction in pursuit of opportunities for growth; innovativeness is measured by the level of creativity and experimentation with new ideas to come up with new products or new processes of delivering service. It involves taking responsibility for one's own life. Autonomy also refers to one's readiness to take the blame for own failures and to take the praise for successes. An autonomous person does not want to live on the effort of others but to apply own judgement and create opportunities by oneself. Accordingly, research has established that, desire for autonomy is the major push factor for one to be an entrepreneur. If the undergraduate students of GUC have a desire to be independent in their careers, they are likely to choose entrepreneurship as one of the optional courses of their degrees. Proactiveness determines one's ability to anticipate futures goals and needs in order to align the current actions and behaviours. Competitive aggressiveness is the degree with which one is keen to break barriers that may stand on his /her way towards the set goals [9]. Competitive aggressiveness also explains one's ability to rise up from a challenging situation and remain focused on the set goals. Another aspect of entrepreneurial orientation is one's self esteem. Self esteem refers to an individual's personal evaluation of him /herself. How positive or negative does one rate him/herself among others [10]. Another unique characteristic that define entrepreneurs is being different from the rest. Entrepreneurs see the world different from others; they see opportunities where others see challenges. They get inspired to solve problems that they see in society.

Entrepreneurship is practical course that should be taught using a blend of approaches in order to develop the needed skills. Entrepreneurship students must engage in complementary practical activities such as inter-disciplinary

exchange training, family mentoring, self-regulation, industrial attachment, networking, and internship and business simulations [11]. The centralised in-class lecturer based teaching and learning format common in many programmes falling within the business and commerce faculty is not appropriate for entrepreneurship programme.

In an institution of higher education, the faculty plays an important role in modelling the perception and attitudes of students towards certain courses. The effective demonstration of the practical application of entrepreneurship theory in the business environment by the lecturers /trainers positively influences student's interest in taking entrepreneurship courses. What students are taught and the way they are taught, have implications on how best they learn and their liking of the course [12].

3. METHODS :

The study sought to establish the factors influencing perception of students towards the entrepreneurship programme offered at GUC. Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaire in order to yield statistical data which facilitates other steps such as data collection, analysis and reporting. A total of 62 students were considered from the Bachelor of Commerce Supply Chain Management, Bachelor of Commerce Travel and Tourism Management and Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). These programmes have entrepreneurship module incorporated as an elective or optional modules, 52 students were randomly selected to participate in the study. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the sample of students from the three programmes .A total of 52 questionnaires were distributed and 50 were collected and analysed giving a 96 % response rate. Data was analysed using SPSS 16.0. The relationships between variables were tested through a one way ANOVA as well as the Pearson's correlation analysis to establish relationship between variables. Data was analysed according to the three research questions:

4. ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION:

4.1. What factors influence student's interest in entrepreneurship courses?

Five key influencing factors identified were: To gain employability skills, Empowerment for significant economic contribution as an entrepreneur, to be self employed, to solve current problems in society and greater potential for personal growth. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the significance of the factors in influencing student choice of entrepreneurship programme. Table 4.4 shows the results.

Table 4.4:

<i>To gain employability skills</i>	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.476	2	.238	1.487	.236
Within Groups	7.524	47	.160		
Total	8.000	49			
<i>Empowerment for Significant Economic Contribution</i>	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.614	2	.307	1.952	.153
Within Groups	7.386	47	.157		
Total	8.000	49			
<i>To Be Self Employed</i>	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.095	1	.095	.578	.451
Within Groups	7.905	48	.165		
Total	8.000	49			
<i>To solve current problems in society</i>	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.330	2	.165	1.010	.372
Within Groups	7.670	47	.163		
Total	8.000	49			

<i>To gain employability skills</i>	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.476	2	.238	1.487	.236
Within Groups	7.524	47	.160		
<i>Greater potential for personal growth</i>	sum of squares	df	mean square	f	sig.
Between Groups	.320	2	.160	.979	.383
Within Groups	7.680	47	.163		
Total	8.000	49			

On the five variable tested, the results indicated that they are not statistically significant in influencing students choice of entrepreneurship courses. Gaining employability skills had $df=2$, $F=1.487$ and a p - value of 0.236. Empowerment for significant economic contribution had $df=2$, $F=1.952$ and a p value of 0.153. The third variable was ‘to be self employed’ which showed a $df = 1$, $F=0.578$ and p -value of 0.451. Solving current society problems had $df = 2$, $F= 1.010$ and p -value of 0.372. The last variable was ‘greater potential for personal growth which had a $df=2$, $F=0.979$ and a p -value of 0.383. All the five variables were not statistically significant as a factors influencing student’s choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course.

4.2. Is there any significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and student choice of entrepreneurship courses?.

Student’s entrepreneurial orientation was tested by existence of personal characteristics like innovativeness, risk taking, pro- activeness and competitive aggressiveness. The study sought to establish whether there is significant relationship between student’s entrepreneurial orientations and their choice of entrepreneurship courses. The statistical relationship as tested through Pearson’s correlation analysis. The results were as depicted in table 4.5

Table. 4.5

		Entrepreneurship As Option
Pearson Correlation	Entrepreneurship As Option Course	1.000
	innovativeness	-.038
	Risk Taking	.129
	Proactiveness	-.121
Sig. (1-tailed)	Entrepreneurship As Option Course	.
	innovativeness	.396
	Risk Taking	.186
	Proactiveness	.201
Pearson Correlation	Entrepreneurship as Option course	1.000
	Competitive Aggressiveness	.204
	Autonomy	.048
Sig. (1-tailed)	Entrepreneurship As Option	.
	Competitive Aggressiveness	.078
	Autonomy	.372

The results show that innovativeness is negatively (-.038) correlated to student’s choice of entrepreneurship as an optional module. Risk taking is slightly positively (0.129) correlated to student’s choice of entrepreneurship as an optional module. Further, Proactiveness has shown a negative (-0.129) correlation with student’s choice of entrepreneurship courses. Competitive aggressiveness is positively correlated to student choice of entrepreneurship course with a positive correlation coefficient of (0,204). Finally, autonomy has also shown a positive correlation to student’s choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course (0,048). Therefore, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy have positive correlation with student’s choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. However,

innovativeness and pro activeness have shown a negative correlation with students' choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course.

4.3. Is there significant relationship between teaching and learning approach and student interest in entrepreneurship training programme?

The relationship between the learning and teaching approaches used in the delivery of entrepreneurship courses and the student's choice of entrepreneurship course was tested through a statistical regression analysis (Pearson's correlation). The five teaching and learning methods considered in the study were lecturers, guest lecturers, business simulations, visiting newly established business ventures and industrial attachment. Table 4.6 shows the results statistical analysis.

Table 3.6

		Entrepreneurship As Option
Pearson Correlation	Entrepreneurship As Option	1.000
	Lectures	-.356
	Guest Lecturers	-.274
	Business Simulations	.081
Pearson Correlation	Entrepreneurship As Option	1.000
	Visiting Newly Established Ventures	-.211
	Industrial Attachment	-.084

The results suggest a strong negative correlation (-0.356) between the use of lectures as a teaching method and the student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. The use of guest lecturers has also shown a negative correlation of (-0.274) with student's choice of entrepreneurship as a course. The use of business simulations in teaching entrepreneurship has shown a positive correlation of (0.081) with students' choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. Visiting of newly established business ventures has also shown a negative correlation coefficient of (-0.211) with the student's choice of entrepreneurship as a course. Use of industrial attachment as a teaching and learning approach has shown a negative correlation coefficient of (- 0.084) with student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. Four teaching and learning approaches (lectures, guest lectures, visiting newly established ventures and industrial attachment) have shown negative correlation with student's choice of entrepreneurship as a course. The use of business simulations is the only teaching method which depicted a positive correlation with student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course.

5. FINDINGS:

Ha1: Several factors influence student's interest in entrepreneurship training programme?

The five factors which were tested in this study were: to gain employability skills, to be self employed, to solve current society problems, for significant economic contribution and potential for personal growth. The study found out that there is no significant statistical relationship between the above factors and the students' choice of entrepreneurship as a course. However, being self employed, obtaining greater economic gains and potential growth are outcomes of entrepreneurship that motivate students to study it as a course in universities [13]. Further, factors like desire to be independent and potential for significant economic contribution shape entrepreneurial intentions of youth [14]. The above factors have no statistical significance in influencing students' choice of entrepreneurship as a course. It can be suggested that, there might be other factors beside the five considered above. We can therefore uphold the hypothesis that- HA1: *Several factors influence student's interest in entrepreneurship training programme?*

Ha² : There is significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and student participation in entrepreneurship training programme.

The five individual characteristics that define one's entrepreneurship orientation considered in this study were; innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy [15] Competitive aggressiveness, risk taking and autonomy were positively correlated to student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course, whilst innovativeness and pro-activeness were negatively correlated to student's choice of entrepreneurship course. Desire for autonomy is the major push factor for one to be an entrepreneur (16). Since three out of five entrepreneurial orientation characteristics have proven to be positively correlated to student's choice of entrepreneurship courses. It can therefore

be concluded that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and student choice of entrepreneurship courses. We uphold the hypothesis H^{A2} : *There is significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and student participation in entrepreneurship training programme?*.

Ha3: There is significant relationship between the teaching and learning approach and student choice of entrepreneurship courses.

Five teaching methods (lectures, guest lectures, business simulations, visiting new ventures, and industrial attachment) were tested through Pearson correlation analysis. The study found that only the use of business simulations is positively correlated to the student's choice of entrepreneurship as an optional course. Further the statistical frequencies indicate that lectures are mostly used students feel that mostly lectures. If entrepreneurship is to be learned as a career, it is best done using some kind of apprenticeship [17]. Entrepreneurship education must be practical and simulating the real business creation activities. Based on the results of the study we reject the hypothesis $-H^{A3}$: *There is significant relationship between the teaching and learning approach and student choice of entrepreneurship courses?*.

6. RESULTS :

The study sought to establish the factors which influence undergraduate students' choice of entrepreneurship courses. The results revealed that factors such as gaining employability skills, significant economic contribution, being self employed and potential growth have no statistical significance in influencing students' choice of entrepreneurship as optional courses. Individual characteristics of students like autonomy, competitive aggressiveness and risk taking positively correlates to student's choice of entrepreneurship course. Therefore, such characteristics can be used as predictors of student's choice of entrepreneurship course. On the other hand, innovativeness and pro-activeness were negatively correlated to student's choice of entrepreneurship course. Further, the results revealed that entrepreneurship is a practical course that requires unique teaching approaches. Traditional teaching methods like case studies and lectures are not favourable to entrepreneurship students but teaching through business simulations positively correlates with student's choice of entrepreneurship courses.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS :

Effective teaching of entrepreneurship in universities improves graduate employability skills and reduces the problem of graduate unemployment. The study, therefore, recommends that entrepreneurship courses be incorporated as core modules within programmes in various faculties in universities. When courses are offered as optional, it leaves room for students not to choose them despite their importance. Further, institutions like GUC have to adopt effective teaching approaches for practical courses like entrepreneurship. Universities should establish career guidance units to provide information regarding various courses to students. Effective career guidance can help students to establish the benefits of each course they choose during their studies. Regulatory authorities should encourage the incorporation of entrepreneurship courses before approval of programmes.

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