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Entrepreneurship education in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Globally, countries have come up with strategies to assist nascent entrepreneurs to gain and create employment. The role played by stakeholders in supporting opportunities for self-employment is an important effort for venture creation. This study, analyses the impact of entrepreneurship education curriculum with specific reference to business success and venture start-ups in the Midlands Province (Zimbabwe). The goal, however, is to determine the influence that entrepreneurship education plays in encouraging polytechnic graduates to start their own enterprises during their studies and after graduating. Data was collected through a qualitative exploratory study design, with 20 participants being purposively selected for the study. Four lecturers and six students participated in face-to-face in-depth interviews. The data saturation point was arrived at the tenth interviewee and the other ten members finally participated in the interactive focus group discussions. The study discovered that entrepreneurship education curriculum could not entirely modify students' mind-sets to embrace new business start-ups. Poor curriculum implementation, incompetent educators and inadequate resources, were cited as some of the reasons for failure to pursue new business ventures following graduation. Graduate students might be motivated to venture into actual business start-ups if adequate support is entirely offered. If the government of Zimbabwe offers holistic support to entrepreneurship education curriculum through a budget, it could contribute to the achievement of feasible self-employment after graduation.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship education, self-employment, polytechnic students, entrepreneurial intention, business start-ups, Zimbabwe

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has been the subject of debate globally (Kosmaganbetova et al, 2022; Sutanto et al, 2021; Popa 2021; Bulgaru et al. 2021; Chandler and Broberg, 2019). Given the perceived economic contributions and the impact it has in influencing skills acquisition for employment generation (Rahim & Mukhtar, 2021; Zhang, 2020; Nade & Malamsha, 2021), the entrepreneurial education debate continues to be calling for attention, especially in Zimbabwe under the 'new republic. Several scholars have underscored how entrepreneurship education could potentially empower the youths with relevant employment skills to address poverty and unemployment induced challenges (Vinogradova et al, 2023; Ostonokulov & Sattoriy, 2023; Adu et al, 2020). Poverty characterises most developing countries (Dzingirayi, 2021; U.N. Development Programme, 2020). The state of affairs has ignited much interest from scholars, governments and tertiary institutions to consider entrepreneurship education as a means to alleviate poverty by equipping people with requisite skills (Vinogradova et al, 2023).

Tertiary education institutions across the world have been recently concerned about the plight of graduates after college life (Rahim & Mukhtar, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2017). In this regard, however, it is envisaged that under the guidance of well-trained educators, tertiary students could contribute to the economic development of nations and reduce rates of unemployment and poverty globally (Wardana et al, 2020; Tirana Abania & Elbasan Albania, 2023). Currently, many tertiary institutions in the world are showing committed interventions to provide unique learning environments to learners in order to instil job skills which graduates can use to venture into self-employment and fight poverty (Badri & Hachicha, 2019; Jwara & Hoque, 2018; Kapse et al., 2018; Bakheet, 2018). Entrepreneurship education has always been a subject of debate for its perceived influence on skills acquisition which are critical for skills development (Sampene et al. 2022; Chandler & Broberg, 2019).

EE plays a critical role in economic growth and employment (Hassan et al., 2022; Isoraite & Guleviciute, 2021). The United States of America (USA) has over 3000 institutions running Entrepreneurship Education (EE) programmes (Morris & Linguori, 2016). Consequently, the emergence of entrepreneurial activities has resulted in the US creating more than 34 million new jobs which enhanced the achievement of its economic performance in the 90s (Kuratko, 2003). In line with this argument, both the developed and developing countries

have recognised the need to foster talents and passions of students so that entrepreneurial activity can spur businesses through the creation of small businesses as a solution to unemployment (Huang & Yang, 2022; Pepin, 2018; Kirkley, 2017). Kuratko (2005) asserts that out of the million jobs created, entrepreneurialism is responsible for 94% of these new jobs. There has been also a strong momentum in entrepreneurial activity in China over the past decade (Fan, Fan & Lu, 2022). The entrepreneurial development has been seen as the number of enterprises in China increased exponentially from 9,593,700 in 2011 to more than 30 million in 2021 with an average growth rate of more than 21% (Fan, Fan & Lu, 2022). China scored successes in solving unemployment problems in its rural and urban communities.

Building on the preceding emphasis, Ghana's unemployment rate averaged 4.2% in 29021 and was reported as raising (O'Neil, 2021). To reduce poverty, Ghana also implemented various entrepreneurial development initiatives focused on training programmes such as the National Youth Fund (NYT), Skills Training and Employment Placement (STEP) and Regional Technology Transfer Unit (Adu et al., 2020). These initiatives show the importance of government policy in buttressing unemployment through scaling up entrepreneurship programmes to achieve desired results.

In comparison, to the preceding discourse there is a low level of entrepreneurial uptake among the young people in South Africa and a general low early-stage entrepreneurship activity (TEA) has also been registered (Goergescu & Herman, 2020). In addition, Statistics from South Africa [(Stats SA] (2021) reported that unemployment is 34.9%. 50% of the youth are unemployed, downgraded to lives of poverty. Nonetheless, South Africa's early-stage TEA for 2017 was 11% and has experienced a considerable slow increase from 6.9% in 2016 to date (Busman & Kelly, 2019). These statistics underpin challenges of youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Unemployment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 42% (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

In the Zimbabwean context, unemployment rate as of 2022 stood at 19% given against a strictest definition of employment (ZIMSTATS, 2022). Furthermore, ZIMSTATS (2022) has stated that about 60% youths between the age group ranges 15-34 are unemployed and are also not enrolled in schools in this regard, the government programmes can become viable instruments to reduce poverty through national development policies. However, Zimbabwe's unemployment figures are a cause of concern. The Zimbabwe's unemployment rate was presumed to be one of the highest in the world (Future Africa Forum, 2023)

(70-95%) in 2008. Mawere (2014) estimated the rate to have remained above 70% by year 2022. Nonetheless, it appears to be problematic to plan major breakthroughs to mitigate soaring unemployment with unreliable statistics in Zimbabwe.

Unemployment and development of entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, 1990s was a decade marred by economic and socio-political challenges. The early 1990s witnessed the country experiencing unprecedented drought which caused the devastation and immense human suffering and spiking unemployment once more (Mafu, 1995). Another drought in the 1997/98 season also hit livestock and crops badly, leading to food shortages that triggered riots. The adverse impacts of food shortages also affected the education system and many dropouts were pronounced in the country (Woyo, 2013). The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) came up with modern strategies to improve entrepreneurship agriculture, and it started by training rural subsistence farmers for the certification of master farmer certificates in order to improve rural agriculture to curtail the impact of recurrent severe droughts. Although the move was right, it did not yield desirable results. To date, poverty and starvation dominate rural communities in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, the strategy was employed with the contention that agriculture entrepreneurs are likely to reduce poverty more than non-agriculture entrepreneurs (Nagler & Naudé, 2017).

Furthermore, economic growth was erratic ranging between 2-4% with high and growing levels of unemployment triggering the informal sector in the 1990s (Carlos, 2003). Upon the introduction of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), research on the effect of ESAP states that 240 000 workers were laid off by 1996 (Rogerson, 1977). While the objectives of ESAP were to ensure a stable economic growth and to reduce poverty, its administration compounded to massive retrenchments and over 50 000 people were said to have been retrenched in the private sector and the government retrenched 25% of its workers as it implemented the International Monetory Fund's (IMF) prescribed model of economic development (Manduna, 1995).

The impact of ESAP, escalated the dire economic conditions and some people in urban areas had no choice but were driven to live in non-regularised housing

and settlements. According to Madebwe, Togo and Pazvakavambwa (2005), Zimbabwe initiated state-sponsored demolitions of informal settlements, dubbed 'illegal' residential dwellings, and these 'illegal' structures were used for informal business activities both in urban and rural areas. The operation was coded 'Operation *Murambatsvina*' (Operation Restore Order). The premises of small, micro and medium size enterprises were demolished as per the government's order.

A special UN Envoy headed by Anna Tibijuka put the total figure of those who lost homes and businesses at 650 000 to 700 000 people, and a total of 2.4 million people were directly or indirectly affected by Operation *Murambatsvina* (Tibijuka, 2005; UN Habitat, 2005; Ncube & Phillip, 2006). These developments escalated poverty, rising unemployment, poor health and education to become a ticking time bomb in the political land scape of Zimbabwe.

The introduction of ESAP and *Murambatsvina* could be seen as the factors that severely eroded the living standards of people, and plunged them into deep poverty, and unemployment woes. It became the fertile ground that led to the formation of a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. The new opposition party challenged the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government, and the economy was adversely affected. Undoubtedly, there were massive urban uprisings mostly led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) (Munda, 2004). Precipitated by the changing political landscape, Zimbabwe experienced unplanned militant land occupations under the 'war veteran' operations (Sadombo, 2009).

Britain and much of the international community aligned to the west, responded by imposing economic sanctions on Zimbabwe, although these were qualified as having been 'smart' or 'targeted' sanctions. The political polarisation in Zimbabwe, triggered by a ravaging inflation, spiking unemployment and food shortages, witnessed the violent elections in 2008. In 2009, Zimbabwe ushered in a Government of National Unity (GNU) between ZANU PF and opposition parties. Reforms were albeit the way to go, in order to capacitate the non-functioning economy. The dollarised new Zimbabwe economy paved ways for the growth of businesses in the period of the GNU.

In the eve of the GNU the Zimbabwe government came up with an Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) which aimed at enhancing entrepreneurial skills and education for sustainable economic development (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). According to Mambo (2010) a

policy for entrepreneurship education known as National Skills Development Policy, was utilised in order to empower individuals with employable skills for sustainable development of the economy without any strings attached.

The Higher Education (HE) in Zimbabwe during the colonial regime was coded Education 3.0 supported by three pillars, namely; Teaching, Research and Community engagement. In Zimbabwe, like elsewhere, the three pillars were also found to be wanting in respect of delivery of relevant education service to the society. The GoZ's pursuit of Education 3.0 policy aimed to advocate for strategies applied to reinforce and promote the uptake of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in order to spearhead innovation and industrialisation in the country. In 2016 the GoZ introduced a STEM Scholarship Programme. Then, the programme was sponsored and run by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development to learners who were excelling in STEM-subjects at Advanced level in public schools (Ngwenya, Pelser & Sibanda, 2017).

The bone of contention is how entrepreneurship education is being taught in higher institutions of learning such that students eventually see no amount of career appetite in self-employment jobs (Raty et al., 2019; Satyalakshmi, 2017). Scholarship cited above seems to suggest that lecturers have a limited knowledge of content, methodology and experience to teach EE. Kissi et al. (2020) recommended lecturers in the Polytechnics to use the didactic methods of teaching of entrepreneurial skills. The authors proposed, among others, learner/student-centred education, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and learning environments that encourage development of intellectual aptitudes. This paper therefore aims to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education through assessing the methods and strategies that lecturers use in teaching this subject.

Conceptualising EE

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) regards taking advantage of commercial opportunities and insights, by means of acquiring knowledge and skills needed to exploit them" (Uzo-Okonkwo, 2013, p. 19). Otache (2019, p. 50) asserts that "what is insightful about EE is its ability to enhance identification of opportunities in business and its use of confidence and knowledge to penetrate markets." Following Wenninger (2019, p. 59) "entrepreneurship education

develops entrepreneurial skills among the students so as to make them more amenable to get employment opportunities." Therefore, entrepreneurship concept in education is multi-dimensional in nature (Naminse & Zhuang, 2018) as it entails commercial business opportunities, acquisition of knowledge and skills, employment creation (Zhuang, 2018) to contribution of productivity and growth of the economy, innovations, and the employment generation (Schumpeter, 1943).

The above definitions corroborate the view that entrepreneurship education (EE) can be used to improve students' entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes (Sampene et al., 2022). Thus, entrepreneurship education, is now being considered extremely relevant by educational policy makers because of its impact in job creation and economic growth. Admittedly, EE can be used to assist graduates to address problems of unemployment. EE is a means to poverty eradication, wealth creation, employment generation, growth of business start-ups and the growth of emerging economies (Linguori, et al., 2018; Mandengenda, 2016).

Conclusively, EE may refer to any pedagogical/andragogical programme or process of education that nurtures entrepreneurial attitudes, abilities, knowledge, skills and learners' competences to foster job creation by exploiting business opportunities for monetary gains. Given, the multidimensionality of EE this paper adopts the definition by Linguori et al (2018) as it encompasses all the salient features of entrepreneurship education.

Human capital theory

This study is underpinned by the human capital theory as propounded by Becker (1962) and Rosen (1976). The theory avers that individuals have a set of skills or abilities which can be promoted or enhanced through training and education. Policy makers can use the theory to make an investment in education to instil knowledge, improve skills and competence through education. Thus, every potential student can develop his/her talent through learning entrepreneurship skills. Envisaged in this theory is the fact that educational merit and hard work determine success through small business start-ups in this constituency (Kosmaganbetova et al., 2022). Thus, education and entrepreneurship training increase human level of cognitive stock due to the realisation of basic skills, technical and specialised knowledge for development (Leiva et al., 2021). Many authors (Erhardt & Haenn, 2018; Forbes, 2017; Blume-Kohout, 2016) posit that

in today's knowledge economy, it has become mandatory that entrepreneurs be made through training.

Overview of global entrepreneurship education

In the first three decades of the 21st century entrepreneurship education in Zimbabwe, and over the world, has been a topical subject of debate for its perceived influence on skills acquisition, which are critical for development (Kosmaganbetova et al., 2022; Sutanto et al., 2021; Chandler & Broberg, 2019). A high-class body of empirical literature primarily from developed countries such as the United States of America (USA) recognises entrepreneurship education as an agent of massive development which accelerates economic growth and generates employment, thereby empowering the underprivileged who may not have had job opportunities (Isoraite & Guleviciute, 2021; Blattman, Annan, Green, Lehman & Jamison, 2015). Kuratko (2005) asserts that out of the million jobs created, entrepreneurialism is responsible for 94% of these new jobs. Consequently, the emergence of entrepreneurial activities has seen the US creating more than 34 million jobs which enhanced the achievement of its economic performance in the 90s (Kuratko, 2003). On the same note China has managed to reduce poverty and unemployment through agricultural entrepreneurship in its rural communities (Naminse et al., 2019).

Accordingly, EE development has delivered an important milestone in China and more evidently, in developing countries through combating poverty and unemployment, notably in the sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries where EE initiatives have appeared to spur entrepreneurial activities. For instance, gross national income per capita in SSA has doubled from US486.4 in 2000 to US$1637 in 2015 (IMF, 2015). Many African countries have therefore adopted the assumption that access to decent jobs and economic opportunities is hindered by limited or lack of access to EE which they believe is essential to human capital formation and entrepreneurial success (Egerova et al., 2017). This recognition is highlighted by Van Aardt et al., (2018) that the South African government has seen entrepreneurship making a salient contribution to the social upliftment and economic development. The above contribution is further confirmed by Liedtke (2019) that SMMEs have made a 20% GDP contribution out of the 47% employed South African labour force. It follows that the authors' views contend the relevance of entrepreneurship in reducing unemployment in several economies in the world.

Empirical evidence of entrepreneurship education programmes

In line with the government's national goals, polytechnic colleges in Zimbabwe offer entrepreneurship education hoping that it enables the country to mitigate social inequality through direct employment. In this regard, the need for self-reliance has necessitated the introduction of Entrepreneurship Skills Development (ESD) in the curriculum of Zimbabwe's polytechnics (Oluseye, Olulanu, Adebayo, Adesola & Omonike, 2017). Formal education is believed to have the impetus to produce entrepreneurs who have greater impact on national wealth and promote sustainable entrepreneurship more than self-made entrepreneurs (Jin, 2022; Haung et al, 2021; Khan, 2019). Nonetheless, what counts more is the ability to create self-employment successfully in the career of your choice. The term ESD shall be used interchangeably with EE.

Moreover, Gaivao et al (2020) conducted a study with the objective of providing guidelines for opening new businesses. The authors' results notify of firm action required to address funding challenges and reduce bureaucracy so that the programmes become more effective in terms of opening new businesses after increasing entrepreneurial stimulation in tertiary institutions. For instance, evidence of student entrepreneurship is exemplified by the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who innovatively came up with the Facebook when he was an undergraduate student at Havard University. Furthermore, Bill Gates also founded Microsoft when he was a student too (Israr & Mazhar, 2018).

African countries, notably Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe have followed the European models in a bid to encourage uptake of entrepreneurship as a career or profession. To this effect entrepreneurship education is thus regarded as functional education and training which by extension can be used to eradicate poverty and unemployment as well as promoting security (Vinogradova et al., 2023; Ostonokulov & Sattoriy, 2023).

State of entrepreneurship education in Zimbabwe

While many researchers envisage the impact of EE curriculum on learners' attitudes and behaviour before, during and after a learning continuum, they have not been explicit on the best approach that could witness graduates using skills development in their communities (Vinogradova, et al., 2023; Liao, et al., 2022). Furthermore, writers emphasized that several governments such as the

GoZ should strive to have more entrepreneurs amenable to initiate business start-ups, innovate and create new technologies products and business opportunities to fight poverty (Svotwa, et al., 2022; Xiong et al., 2022). Notably, it is unfortunate because Zimbabwe's higher education curriculum did not adequately foster and promote entrepreneurship at grass root level. Indeed, the clarion call is for our youths, the educated and uneducated as well as the dropouts to be job creators rather than job seekers.

Muzira and Bondai (2020) note that the new Higher and Tertiary Education 5.0 heritage-based curriculum seeks to match the country's curriculum to its developmental needs. Professor Amon Murwira the minister of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe underscored that "As you can deduce, Education 3.0 was not meant to produce goods and services at all" (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, 2018).

The Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Professor Amon Murwira, unpacked Education 5.0 in the following statement:

> Our design of Education 5.0 is meant for and is expected to produce goods and services and thus is designed for the modernisation and industrialisation of this country. The Education 5.0 model is an all enhancing entrepreneurship through innovation and industrialisation starting with all tertiary institutes in Zimbabwe in order to turn Zimbabwe into a middle-income status by 2030. Vision 2030 is our new drive for regeneration of employment, through innovation and industrialisation in the new dispensation.

Unfortunately, weaknesses have often been mentioned in the teaching and learning that is manned by uninformed educators. Many perceived gaps have been attributed to curriculum mismatch and heavy reliance on theory by lecturers without the relevant practical component as highlighted in focus groups. On that score, extant literature underscores that TVET curriculum was not adjusted to suit products with relevant entrepreneurship skills to address spiking unemployment rate (Kim & Choi, 2018; Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Thus, if Zimbabwe's curriculum is not tailor-focused on learners' enterprising skills there is a likelihood of persistent problems of youth unemployment due to gaps in knowledge and skills.

Going further, lack of entrepreneurship skills among polytechnic students "limits the country's economic growth leading the youth to experience further economic and social marginalization" (Surbrahmanyam, 2013, p. 87).

Specifically, Nylund and Wallin (2018) expressed that lack of EE competencies among lecturers and students escalates problems in the teaching and learning of the subject. The poor teaching strategies or methods used by lecturers seem to fall far short to enhance effective learning. Hunady, Orviska and Pisar (2018) opine that the use of traditional pedagogy (lecture method) has a damaging effect in teaching and learning because it merely emphasizes on rote learning which prevents effective teaching of EE and hinders students from gaining necessary practical skills.

Furthermore, Welch (2017) recommends that trips, observations, interviews, and field trips are important outside-classroom activities that enhance hands-on learning experiences for learners. To that effect, lecturers need to channel their efforts towards motivating students to learn through hands-on experience, despite the noted gaps in the teaching and learning of EE. Furthermore, Breunig (2018, p. 2) quotes Dewey's assertion that "primitive techniques of conducting lectures demotivate students during their course of obtaining knowledge."

Lecturers are strongly advised that they should avoid using "teaching materials that contradict the curriculum and further hinders curriculum implementation" (Schiefelbein & McCinn, 2017, p. 13). In Malaysia, a study noted that the teaching techniques were not reliable as they focused on the theoretical part only, and there was a gross negligence in the teaching by lecturers who lacked competences to deliver the subject, despite the shortage of resources (Othman & Nusradin, 2016).

Other authors highlight that successful skills acquisition and preparation in creating new businesses depends on the training stages. Mawonedzo et al., (2020) conducted a study on implementing strategies for entrepreneurship in Zimbabwean polytechnics. They found that educators used poor teaching approaches. The results confirmed that the way lecturers have implemented andragogical strategies in the teaching of EE could not promote personal employment skills for students. Nonetheless, lecturers should align their teaching and content to promote the facets that develop entrepreneurs. Lack of adequate entrepreneurial facets spawn challenges to entrepreneurs in terms of raising funds, slow sales and a lack of mentorship. Only 15% of new ventures were found not to progress beyond the start-up phase in South Africa (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2019). This paper, therefore, provides new knowledge illuminating on the impact of EE on arming polytechnic students in Zimbabwe with employment skills.

Methodology

Qualitative research approach was used to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment of graduates. The study was guided by Interpretivism philosophy. The philosophy captures a total picture about participants' inner thoughts, feelings, opinions and experience about a phenomenon under study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2018). Interpretivism allows researchers to depend on views that come from subjects, to make it easier to understand reality as it is given by the research participants on EE's impact on employment of graduate students in polytechnics.

Sample and data collection instruments

Using similar questions for both lecturers and students the data was generated as follows. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4 lecturer participants and 6 student participants to gather data from Gweru polytechnic in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province. Moreover, two focus groups of students with five participants each were employed to ensure data triangulation. Interviews ensured participants to be receptive to new data dimensions and insights, leading to a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Twenty people were engaged in the study, of which ten took part in in-depth interviews, and the other ten took part in lively focus groups. An exploratory case study design was adopted because there were fewer participants in this study and the main goal was to solicit rich in-depth information (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Results of the study were discussed in themes that came out of the findings.

Results

Findings revealed that the main method of teaching students was the lecture method in this polytechnic. The following extracts were the responses from the interviewees.

> *Lecture method was the dominant mode of delivery. Besides, learning through this dominant method we found ourselves not comfortable in the lecture. We had to be squashed in an auditorium and pay much attention to the lecturer for one and half hours. Paying attention in a full packed hall did not seem to have aided my learning in entrepreneurship education at college* (Student Participant 5).

> *I cannot say good learning was taking place because we were so many in the lecture and sometimes you do not even hear when the lecturer is delivering. Sometimes you would wonder whether the lecture has started or not. Sometimes there would be noise disturbances at the back and I felt that the lecturer could not possibly have more time to control students during the lecture* (Student Participant 8).

> *Lecturer-cantered methods vary; case studies; business plan and lecturers conduct mass classes. The major challenges of mass-lectures is when teaching 300-400 students at once. This is due to shortage of staff; inadequate infrastructure, complex time tables which are too congested* (Lecturer Participant 2).

> *Though boring to always rush to a mass lecture, for me, to understand EE it makes a lot of sense to be given ample time to ask questions in the lecture. The lecturer would either ignore or advise to see him after the lecture. He would not even repeat when notes were dictated. The lecture method did not allow practical demonstrations because it was full packed with students* (Focus Group participant 17).

As shown in the above responses, it emerged that although the lecture method was dominant there were challenges in the way the lectures were delivered. Students had many learning challenges from this method. Due to big class-sizes, effective learning was hindered when students were being denied the opportunities to ask the lecturer to further elaborate on certain concepts during the lecture which they felt they did not understand.

It was not possible to make practical demonstrations because the hall was full to capacity. This shows that learning EE was problematic in this institution due to the method of delivery. The results resonate and confirm the findings of Mbeteh and Pellegrini (2018) who found that the theory laden methods (lecture methods) do not capacitate learners to effectively relate entrepreneurship education with their businesses and with demands of the environment. It is worth mentioning that human capital theory endorses Erhardt and Haenn (2018), and Forbes, (2017) opinion that in today's knowledge economies, it is now mandatory that more entrepreneurs be made through training

Another theme that emerged in this paper is inadequate resources. Through the interactive sessions with participants, lack of resources was mentioned as a hindrance in the teaching/learning of entrepreneurship education. When resources are not enough to facilitate vibrant lectures, it kills the learner's zeal to prefer EE as a career. The following verbatim were recorded.

> *You see the problem when you are still at college, most students especially in those mass lectures don't find learning effective, because when you are there for example, it's a mass lecture you are doing it in a great hall so many students are there. If you are late for that lecture, it means you will sit at the back and if it is full to capacity, you may stand at the door or sit outside* (Student Participant 9).

> *The subject is under-resourced for instance problem-based teaching methods should be supported by practicals, educational tours, local industry support through offering attachments, apprenticeship and curriculum inputs. These are not available thus it compromises quality teaching/learning of entrepreneurship education* (Lecturer Participant 3).

> *One big challenge that we face as learners is the shortage of text books on entrepreneurship education. We need to have text books for our levels, we are just but novices and we need to first develop some basic knowledge. It is like too much when the lecturer always relies on notes and there are no text books for further reference. The college internet is failing to cope with our research requirements. All this stifle our interest* (Student Participant 7).

While ideal teaching methods were suggested as above these were not employed and lecturers bemoaned rigid timetables that did not give room for teaching EE outside classrooms. This development was mentioned with regard to shortage of entrepreneurship education, teaching staff and lack of material resources. Furthermore, the above submission demonstrates the existence of learning challenges that stifle effective mastery of EE content and concentration of students due to shortage of classrooms. The classes are too big and is unmanageable for one lecturer thus resulting in many learning constraints. In fact, scholarly work notes that particularly large classes do not promote fruitful and effective learning because they produce poor and negative results for the learners as a class contextual factor (UNESCO, 2016). The research findings highlight weaknesses and gaps in how entrepreneurship education is currently being offered at this institution.

This implies that investment in education requires a full support in the form of relevant resources in specific areas in order to achieve desired learning objectives. The above sentiments reveal that this institution is failing to provide quality education in the entrepreneurship field. The poor knowledge assimilation could be due to poor infrastructure, less or nil industrial exposure, lack of conferences and workshops to stimulate such learning behaviour. Further comments were substantiated on shortage of resources as captioned by student participant 10 and focus group participant 20.

> *The institution is under resourced, there are inadequate learning rooms and it's a predicament to us. It means if the auditorium is being used to conduct a different lecture from EE then we lose a lecture for that day* (Student Participant 10).

> *There is dire shortage of lecturers because one lecturer is understood to manage 400 students in the auditorium. To make matters worse we do not have entrepreneurship education textbooks, I have just managed to pick one since the college opened* (Focus Group Participant 20).

This shows that the teaching of entrepreneurship education in polytechnics is riddled with many challenges and also that students were not well-armed with skill sets for employment generation. The aforementioned results confirm those of Othman and Nasrudin (2016) who observe that students' inspirations are betrayed by several factors such as unconducive teaching methods as well as shortage of resources in many ways which have then created several problems hindering the implementation of EE programmes. Lack of resources to effectively transmit the instruction stifle knowledge acquisition and the spirit of motivation towards self-enterprises. Students need to be expose d to practical learning of the subject through more exposure and hands-on application. The Government of Jordan is hailed for the frameworks and support it provides through incubation of start-ups for its new entrepreneurs (Karani & Mshenga, 2021).

The second theme that emerged from the data is about the lecturers who lack knowledge and competencies on entrepreneurship education. It was emphasised that under normal learning conditions students develop interest in entrepreneurship if they find it of importance and interest to their careers. Lecturers have also confessed the challenges they face in facilitating the learning of this subject in college. The following extracts were stated:

> The head of department substantiated; I have been teaching entrepreneurship education for quite some time, but honestly speaking we had never been oriented on how to teach it. My area is marketing but just because there is no entrepreneurship lecturers, we just have to teach our students so that they will be able to pass the examinations. Many lecturers profess ignorance, sometimes in front of students due to pedagogic dilemma (Head of Department Lecturer Respondent).

> Learning about entrepreneurship education is so painful because it is a compulsory subject for any student who enrols for national certificate. All the learning is theoretically dominated and the lectures may give us assignments that we feel it not interesting and the explanations are not even clear in many cases (Focus Group Participant 13).

The above suggest that there are barriers in teaching entrepreneurship. If lecturers are not qualified to teach it, they may teach only what they are capable of and exclude some content no matter its relevance for entrepreneurship development of learners. It was, therefore, difficult for learners to construct

knowledge actively and to link it to existing ideas because they only studied for the sake of passing an assignment. These findings find support in the works of Ahmad (2016) who concurs that "there is absence of relevant entrepreneurial skills, training and good teaching approaches among lecturers. This suggest that EE is not being taught in the way it should be and the chance of negative attitude to the subject are likely high among learners. The findings of this study suggest training of educators as one possibility for improving EE teaching effectiveness by embedding career management competencies in students.

Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, although the study enriches the extant literature on EE in Zimbabwe, EE curriculum has not fully succeeded in preparing polytechnic graduates for employment. It was established that lecturers have rooted their teaching on traditional teaching approaches which were divorced from practical orientation. Indeed, students bemoaned the teaching that was devoted to theoretical sermons by lecturers at the expense of practical application. This hindered effective learning of EE and ultimately contributed to students' failure to grasp entrepreneurial skills relevant to promote or launch their own venture start-ups. EE programme was poverty-resourced, it lacked entrepreneurship tool kits, text books, adequate learning rooms, curriculum review programmes and staff development programmes were some of the challenges highlighted by the participants.

The study recommends the provision of more practical application opportunities for entrepreneurship education both in content and textbooks. The practical component would aid in linking EE to real-life experiences of learners and enhance a sound entrepreneurship orientation. In addition to adequate resource support, the study also recommends that EE should be taught by relevant degree holders, who could boost requisite pedagogic knowledge that is critical for content and instruction. However, the Zimbabwe government should make a commitment to include a budget specifically for promoting EE in polytechnics. This is so because EE has a much bigger impact in employability skills of graduates.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

One of the article's limitations is the exclusion of other Zimbabwean stakeholders such as industrialists, policy makers and curriculum designers. Their inclusion in policy formulation and implementation could have informed the study findings more. Data for this paper was collected from only one polytechnic in the Midlands province. There is lack of comprehensiveness in these results and cannot be taken to reflect views and opinions of students and lecturers in the whole country. More studies including other provinces and polytechnics are therefore recommended. In order to make generalisations from these findings a quantitative methodology would be ideal to make sound conclusions based on large sample sizes. A future research study is imperative in order to design an appropriate andragogy for entrepreneurship education programmes in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. This could be used to investigate the entrepreneurial competency challenges among polytechnic graduates in Zimbabwe and proffer best ways to address them.

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