DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF GRADUATES: AN EVIDENCE OF MBEYA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, TANZANIA

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Abstract

It's argued that, university graduates have enormous potential for entrepreneurial and economic development. However, little information is available on how competence based education training (CBET) systems has a likelihood to alleviate the problem of graduates being job seekers. Therefore, this study assessed the perceived entrepreneurial skills empowerment for self employment of students. This study was conducted at Mbeya University of Science and Technology and experimental research design was employed. Stratified proportionate simple random and purposive sampling was used. Closed ended questionnaires were used to collect data in which 352 students were interviewed. Descriptive and quantitative estimation were methods for data analysis by using SPSS and STATA. Findings showed that students' level of study, mothers' occupation, knowledge to solicit funds, frequency of attending short courses had significant influence on students' perceived self employment. Based on these results, it is concluded that level of study and knowledge to solicit funds had strong influence on self employment of students after their graduation. Therefore, it is recommended that the University should ensure that students have access to financial sources so as to become self employed and job creators.

Key words: Self-employment, entrepreneurship skills, innovation, competence based education training and Mbeya University of Science and Technology

1.0 Introduction

Today's Competence and Knowledge Based Education Training (C&K-BET) systems are seeing as the emergence of new paradigms for innovation and the advancement of knowledge in relation to economic activities. The cultural change in Universities is more important to understand students' innovation attitude and entrepreneurial needs so that there is a match between higher education programs offered and the individual student objectives towards self employment (Manuere *et al.*, 2013). Manuere *et al.* (2013) indicated that entrepreneurship education is crucial and graduates showed interest in starting up their businesses soon after graduation. Also, Ogundele *et al*. (2012) found that entrepreneurship training and education are significantly related to the youth empowerment and social welfare services of graduates. However, labor market in Tanzania has been registering an increasing of labor force from schools amounting to more than 700 000 a year while the demand for labor force has been decreasing each year (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 1997).

The reasons behind the inverse relationship between labor supply and demand include the decline in the national income, retrenchment and cessation of new employment, rapid increase of youths graduating from different training institutions that are tuned to seek for wage employment and a shift from labor intensive to capital intensive production techniques in some of industries (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997). In order to solve these challenges, the National employment policy (2008) aims at stimulating national productivity, to attain full, gainful and freely chosen productive employment, in order to reduce unemployment, underemployment rates and enhance labor productivity, yet, its achievement is meager. It's argued that, University graduates have enormous potential for innovation, entrepreneurial and economic development contrary to the notion that they are tuned to be wage employment seekers. Thus, it is important for universities to reduce unemployment rate by mobilizing graduates through innovation, entrepreneurial careers and imparting entrepreneurial skills, and providing support for business start-ups. However, there is no evidence on the students' perception towards innovation and entrepreneurial skills at Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) which offers programs under C-BET system. Therefore, this study investigated the perception of students' innovation and entrepreneurial skills they are endowed within their specializations at MUST.

2.0 Statement of the problem

While the country's economy is increasing at 6.5% (URT, 2013) the rate of unemployment has been reported to increase, yet, the government has managed to employ only 3% of the total labor force (National Employment Policy, 2008). According to the URT (2012) the total number of labor force population was estimated to be 22 252 320 persons, of whom 19 783 648 were estimated to be employed. Statistical information showed that only 17% of the total labor force was employed in a formal sector and the rest were in informal, self- employment (National Employment Policy, 2008). Thus, it is obvious that, most Tanzanians engage in a range of activities to earn a livelihood, as a result of under-employment. Fatoki (2010) found that employment, autonomy, creativity, economic and capital were motivators of entrepreneurial intention. Conversely, Fatoki (2010) identified factors such as skills, financial support, risk, economy and crime as obstacles to entrepreneurial intention of South African graduates.

Similar factors and more emphasis on the formal sector alone, non- attractive agricultural sector, and lack of business advisory services contributes to the prevailing problem in Tanzania. However, employment in a private sector was projected to increase in the future due to favorable government policies in creating good investment climate in revamping economy. Despite of such policies; lack of capital, technology, and management skills among University graduates and non-graduates were reported as a constraint (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997). Even though, the country is endowed with abundant resources, many people still seek wage employment because they are unable to employ themselves. The possible reasons used to justify these include long and cumbersome procedures for loans, lack of investible and working capital, little experience in technical know-how and in managing projects commercially and lack of inborn norms for self-employment and inability to use endowed personal faculties to use the available wealth in competitive markets (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997). There is a need for Universities to impart skills and knowledge on how to plan, implement and manage self employed jobs (National employment policy, 2008). Therefore, this study assessed the perception of students' innovation and entrepreneurial skills at MUST so to initiate training courses on innovation and entrepreneurship consequently promoting self employment and job creation of graduates.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study location

This study was conducted at Mbeya University of Science and Technology. This was chosen because it is the only university in Tanzania that offers science, technology and business management programs on C-BET for national technical awards (NTA) level 4 to 8. Also, it is the only university in which the course of entrepreneurship is compulsory for those levels with the aim of stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit of graduates and the subjects of interest were available and adequate to fulfill the research objective. To achieve the study objective, stratified proportionate number of students from NTA level 6 and 8 (third year diploma and bachelor) students respectively, were interviewed.

3.2 Research design

The present study employed an experimental research design in which each respondent from different specialization had an equal chance of participation (Newman, 2007). The present study used a sampling frame of NTA level 6 and 8 students from specializations offered: Architecture, Business, Civil engineering, Computer engineering, Electrical engineering, Mechanical engineering, and Laboratory Science. Therefore, stratified proportionate, systematic random and purposive sampling plans were used because there was a possibility that the outcome of interest could vary among sub groups and to avoid over or under representation. Also, systematic random sampling was used where the class size of particular strata was large, therefore, the sampling interval was computed to get the required number of students while girls in each strata were purposively included to avoid them being under represented (Fisher, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Newman, 2007; Krysik and Finn, 2007) in which sample of 352 students was collected.

3.3 Data collection instruments

Cross sectional data were collected using closed ended questionnaire in which observation was done ones and this was the simplest and least costly approach (Newman, 2007). Questions had categories with responses which were asked in the same manner for both NTA 6 and 8 students (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Cross sectional data sought to describe the entrepreneurial skills possessed by students towards self-employment up on their graduation (Saunders *et al*., 2009).

3.4 Data analysis

Both descriptive statistics and quantitative estimation were the methods for data analysis. These methods aimed at giving detailed picture of frequencies and percentages of entrepreneurial skills of those students in their particular specializations and established causal relationships between variables (Newman, 2007). SPSS/STATA packages were employed to analyze data in which descriptive and explanatory information was obtained. Adjusted R- square, t-statistic and variance inflation factors (VIF) was used to determine the goodness of fit of the model, measures standard errors the estimate is, and to detect the extent of multi-collinearity problem, respectively (Studenmund, 2001; Mukras, 1993).

3.5 Factors influencing university students being self employed after graduation

The relationship between students perception on entrepreneurial skills empowered with socio-economic characteristics towards self employment after their graduation was ascertained. The present study used linear regression model, specified as perceived entrepreneurial skills empowered for self employment (***PESESE***) as a function of: level of study, sex, age, marital status, education level of students attained before, specialization, fathers' occupation, mothers' occupation, nature of activities, knowledge acquired, knowledge to solicit funds, further training, attending regular training, innovation of improved products, innovation in solving problems, and innovation process. Mathematically, this was summarized as follows:

$$PESESE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + ... + \beta_{16} X_{16} + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

β_0 = constant term; $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, ..., \beta_{16}$ are coefficients of variables that were estimated;

X_1 = Level of study (NTA 6 or 8), X_2 = Sex of student, X_3 = Age

X_4 = Marital status (1 = Single, 2 = Married, 3 = Divorced, and 4 = Widow),

X_5 = Education level attained before joing university (1 = Form four, 2 = Form six, 3 = Diploma /FTC, 4 = others),

X_6 = Specialization (Archtecture, Business, Computer, etc.)

X_7 = Fathers' occupation (1 = self employed or otherwise),

X_8 = Mothers' occupation (1 = self employed or otherwise),

X_9 = Nature of activities the student expect to engage in ,

X_{10} = Knowledge acquired during his/her studies at the University,

X_{11} = Knowledge to solicit funds,

X_{12} = Attending further training after graduation,

X_{13} = Attending regular training in his/her specialization and being able to pay,

X_{14} = Innovation of improved products,

X_{15} = Innovation for solving arising problems,

X_{16} = Engaging in innovation process

The model was tested for multi-collinearity problems and adjusted R-Square to estimate the model fit. Also, correlation and t-statistics was employed to estimate the degree of relationship and its extent of association between the dependent variable and predictor variables.

4.0 Results and discussions

4.1 Characteristics of students interviewed

4.1.1 Distribution of levels of study of students interviewed by sex

Study results (Table1) showed that 183 and 90 of students interviewed were male while 59 and 20 were female students studying NTA level 6 and 8, respectively. This indicates that NTA level 6 students were the majority than NTA 8, this could have attributed to NTA 8 strata being small in number in comparison to NTA 8 across the university. Similarly, male students were many than female regardless of purposive sampling employed for female students in each strata. This could have been caused by less female students who are joining science subjects at the university.

Table 1: Distribution of levels of study by sex

	Sex of respondents		
Level of study	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**

NTA 6	183	59	242
NTA 8	90	20	110
Total	**273**	**79**	**352**

4.1.2 Age and marital status distribution of students interviewed

Findings (Table 2) showed that 56.6% followed36.8% of students interviewed were in the age category of 18-24 and 23-31 years old, respectively. This indicates that majority of respondents in these age categories were under the active economic age and they are more likely to be self employed and hence more job creation. The findings also show that 89.8% of interviewed students were single while 9.9% were married. These proportions of respondents suggest that majority of students interviewed had no family commitment and could be able to be self employed if they will effectively use their entrepreneurial skills acquired.

Table 2: Age and marital status distribution of students interviewed

Age categories	**Frequency**	**Percent**
18-24	202	57.6
25-31	129	36.8
32-38	14	3.9
39-45	4	1.2
46-52	2	0.5
Total	**351**	**100.0**
Marital status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	316	89.8
Married	35	9.9
Separated	1	0.3
Total	**352**	**100.0**

4.1.3 Entry qualification and levels of study of students

Survey results (Table 3) showed that 40.7% and 21.7% of students interviewed joined university studies with form four and access course qualifications, respectively while the minority (17.4%) had form six qualifications. This could have been attributed by the reason that students with form four qualifications joined the university studies directly after they have passed their form four examinations contrary to students who attended short course so as to meet entry qualifications. Also, 68.7% and 31.3% of students interviewed were in NTA 6 and 8, respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of entry qualification and level of study of student interviewed

Entry qualifications	Frequency	Percent
Access Course	76	21.7
Direct form four	143	40.7
Form six	61	17.4
Diploma/FTC	71	20.2
Total	**351**	**100.0**
Level of study	**Frequency**	**Percent**
NTA 6	242	68.7
NTA 8	110	31.3.
Total	**352**	**100.0**

4.1.4 Specialization of students interviewed

Study results (Table 4) showed that 19.1% and 18.6% of students interviewed were studying Business Administration and mechanical engineering courses while and 6% of students were studying Architecture. This suggests that students in these courses had a willingness to participate because of the likelihood of being self employed after their graduation. Probably, their specialization of the courses motivated them to participate contrary to other courses.

Table 4: Specialization distribution of students interviewed

Specializations	Frequency	Percent
Architecture	21	6.0
Business Administration	67	19.1
Civil Engineering	56	16.0
Computer Engineering	46	13.1
Electrical Engineering	51	14.4
Laboratory Technology	46	13.1
Mechanical Engineering	64	18.3
Total	**351**	**100.0**

4.1.5 Distribution of fathers' and mothers' occupation of students interviewed

Findings (Table 5) showed that 66.2 % and 79.5% of students interviewed reported that their fathers' and mothers' are self employed respectively. Results indicate that female parents were reported to be more self-employed than their counter parts male parents. This suggests that

female parents are risk takers a behavior which has enabled the successfully sustain their family. While male parents seem to be risk averse as indicated by the proportion of of those who are self employed. Some studies reveal that children reared by self employed mothers have great likelihood of also being self employed at their adult hood (Rachida, *et al.*, 2006).

Table 5: Distribution of fathers' and mothers' occupation of students interviewed

Fathers' occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Self -employed	233	66.2
Employed	119	33.8
Total	**352**	**100.0**
Mothers' occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Self- employed	280	79.5
Employed	72	20.5
Total	352	100.0

4.1.6 Occupation of students interviewed before joining university

Findings (Table 6) showed that 32.4 % and 17% of students interviewed were neither self employed and employed accordingly before they joined university studies while 45.8% were neither employed nor self employed. Study results indicate that majority of students who joined university studies were direct from school. Probably, it is more likely for the university to shape majority of students who are yet employed by instilling the spirit of self employment attitude before they graduate and enhance job creation.

Table 6: Occupation of students interviewed before joining university

Attributes	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Self- employed	114	32.4
Employed	60	17.0
Never	17	4.8
None	161	45.8
Total	352	100.0

4.1.7 Have you ever thought of being self employed?

Survey findings (Table 7) showed that 47.7% of interviewed students had an idea of becoming self employed while 44.9% had no idea of self employment after graduation. This indicates that students with no idea of being self employment get the idea of being employed after graduation

as a result they become job seekers. Results suggest that both respondents with and without idea of being self employed after their graduation is a strength for the university if exploited efficiently by empowering them to become self employed. Furthermore, 46.6% and 39.7% of students interviewed reported that they wish to engage in business and technician activities after their graduation respectively. Results suggest that, those who will be engaged in business activities are likely to be self employed while others will be job seekers after graduation, accordingly.

Table 7: Have you ever thought of being self employed?

Response	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	154	43.7
No	40	11.4
Never	158	44.9
Total	**352**	100.0
Type of activity you wish to do	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Business	171	48.6
Technician	140	39.7
Formal activity	7	2.0
Teaching	9	2.6
None	25	7.1
Total	**352**	**100.0**

4.1.8 Can the knowledge acquired enable you to be self-employed and solicit funds

Findings (Table 8) showed that 90.6 % of students interviewed reported that their knowledge acquired during study period at the university will enable them to become self employed. Results indicate that almost all interviewed students will be self-employed after their graduation, *ceteris paribus*. This suggests that knowledge provided by the university is sufficient to enable every university graduate to be self employed in their specializations. This is supported by 91.5% of students interviewed who reported that they will be able to solicit funds for their own business.

Table 8: Ability to solicit funds and as startup capital for a business

Knowledge acquired enables you be self employed	Frequency	Percent
Yes	319	90.6
No	33	9.4
Total	352	100.0
Able to solicit funds as a startup capital	Frequency	Percent

Yes	322	91.5
No	30	8.5
Total	352	100.0

4.1.9 Students' need for further training to become self employed and willingness to pay

Findings (Table 9) showed that 93.2% and 72.2% of students interviewed reported that they need further training and they had a willingness to pay respectively. Although majority of student admitted that the education they acquire in classes is adequate for them to be self employed, they still show a need of further training it will enable them face the new challenges confidently in starting up and running business. Training expose students to practical learning, thus it is an effective way of empowering students in becoming entrepreneurs. Thus studies justifies that practical learning has positive impact on changing the perception of the students in entrepreneurship (Pi-shen and Lip-Chai, 2006). Therefore, quantitative estimation is required to predict particular socio economic variables that are likely to influence the perceived entrepreneurial skill empowered for self employment.

Table 9: Students' need for further training to become self employed and willingness to pay

Need for further training	Frequency	Percent
Yes	328	93.2
No	24	6.8
Total	352	100.0
Willingness to pay for the training?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	254	72.2
No	98	27.8
Total	352	100.0

4.2 Quantitative estimation of determinants of entrepreneurial intentions of graduates

Estimation of socio economic factors that affects students being self employed after their graduation at Mbeya University of Science and Technology was ascertained. These factors were tested for multi-collinearity and the results showed that there was no multi-collinearity problems since the variable inflationary factor (VIF) values fall in the range of 1.06 - 1.44. Also, the mode summary indicates that 44.16% (adjusted R^2) of factors that affects students being self-employed is explained by socio-economic factors. Meaning that, there are other variables that can explain how students can become self employed after their graduation in the specializations. However,

Gujarati (2004) argue that if R^2 is lower than 0.10 then the instruments are most likely to be inappropriate, though, low R^2 does not mean that the model is weak but the logical and theoretical relevance do matter.

Findings (Table 10) showed that study level of respondents had a positive significant effects ($p<0.01$) on perceived self employment after graduation. Results meant that as the level of study of the respondent increases there is a proportionate increase in the likelihood of students being self-employed. These suggest that as the level of study changes by one unit, the likelihood of self-employment increases by 32.91%. This fact could be attributed by the knowledge and skills acquired by the respondent during study period at each particular level of study. Present findings agree with observations that educational level (Gelard and Saleh, 2011; Kent *et al*., 2011) and technical excellence (Lee *et al*., 2011) had significant effect on the inclination towards entrepreneurship. Also, results indicated that mothers' occupation of respondent had a significant positive effects at ($p<0.05$) level on self employment. This indicates that there is a proportionate effect between student mothers' occupation and perceived self employment. This suggests that as mothers' self employment increases by one unit, it leads to an increase in students' self employment by 44.51%. Study findings comply with findings obtained by Wang *et al*. (2011); Kent *et al*. (2011) and Tong *et al*. (2011) who found that mothers' occupation and family background had influence on individuals' intention of being self employed.

Similarly, findings (Table 10) showed that knowledge of students to solicit funds had strong and statistically significant at ($p<0.01$) level and positively correlated with self employment. Meaning that as knowledge to solicit funds is increased by 1%, respondents will tend to be self employed by 41.26%. This fact could have been attributed by the opportunity of students enjoyed in exploiting financial resources to support their own businesses. Present study results are similar to findings obtained by Ahmed *et al*. (2010) who found that family exposure to business, level of exposure, and prior experience in business has an influence on individual students to become entrepreneur. Furthermore, frequency of students' attending short term trainings and being able to pay fees for a particular course had positive significant effects ($p<0.05$) on being self employed after graduation. This indicates that as 1% increase in attending short term courses, it will increase the likelihood of being self employed by 47.6%. Therefore,

frequency of attending short term courses by students after graduation has an influence of students' being self employed. This could be attributed by the reason that attending short term courses enables the student to gain more knowledge, skills and establish social net on his/her particular profession that enhances sustainability of being self employed. Present study findings complies with Wang *et al*. (2012); Ahmed *et al*. (2010) and Gelard and Saleh (2011) who found that students' level of exposure to entrepreneurship, formal and informal networks established had significant support on students' intention to be self employed.

Moreover, results (Table 10) showed that students being engaged in innovation of improved products was statistically significant at ($p<0.1$) level and had inverse relationship with self employment. Results indicate that as 1% increases in innovation of improved products, it leads to a decline in self employment by 37.83%. This suggests that innovation of improved products had a negative effect on self-employment since improved products might have reduced self employment through obsolescence of those products that existed before. Conversely, innovation through solving problems arising was statistically significant at ($p<0.05$) level and had positive effect on self employment after graduation. Findings indicate that as students engage in innovation through problem solving it enhances self employment. Result suggests that as 1% increase in innovation through problem solving leads to 31.05% increase in self employment. Study findings agrees with Council of Graduate Schools (2010) that graduate education not only produces students with advanced knowledge and skills, but it produces critical thinkers and innovators who can solve societal problems.

Table10: Estimation model factors that can affect students' self-employment

Variables	Coef.	Std. Error	t-value	P>|t|
Level of study	0.3291	0.1157	2.84	0.007***
Sex	-0.0917	0.1175	-0.78	0.440
Age	-0.0707	0.1082	-0.65	0.517
Marital status	-0.0419	0.1252	-0.33	0.740
Education level	-0.06630	0.1176	-0.56	0.576
Specialization	-0.0599	0.1439	-0.42	0.680
Father's occupation	0.0516	0.1340	0.39	0.702
Mother's occupation	0.4451	0.1857	2.40	0.021**
Nature of activities	-0.1096	0.1664	-0.66	0.514
Knowledge acquired	-0.2037	0.1272	-1.60	0.117
Knowledge to solicit funds	0.4126	0.1296	3.18	0.003***

Further training	0.0674	0.1023	0.66	0.514
Attending short term training	0.4760	0.2130	2.23	0.031**
Innovation of improved products	-0.3783	0.2238	-1.69	0.099*
Innovation in solving problems	0.3105	0.1547	2.01	0.051**
Innovation process	0.2062	0.1528	1.35	0.185
Constant	0.0032	0.3942	0.01	0.994

, ** * indicate significant levels at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively*

5.0 Conclusion and recommendation

The study found that students' study level, mothers' occupation, knowledge to solicit funds, frequency of attending short term training, and innovation through solving problems has influence on students' perceived self employment. Based on these results, it is concluded that study level and knowledge to solicit funds had strong influence on self employment of students after their graduation. Therefore, it is recommended that the University should ensure that students have access to financial sources so as to become self employed and job creators.

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