

## **An Assessment of the Objectives of the Entrepreneurship Programme in Ghanaian Polytechnics: The Case of Cape Coast Polytechnic as a Tvet Institution**

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### **Abstract**

*Youth unemployment in many developing countries is on the rise. Many of these nations recognise the promotion of entrepreneurship as the solution for this youth unemployment, especially for graduates from tertiary institutions. The study was conducted to assess the Entrepreneurship course and its effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of students of Cape Coast Polytechnic. The stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 265 students while purposive sampling techniques was used to select four lecturers. The data were analysed using frequency, percentage, Means, and standard deviations. The study found out that majority of the students affirmed that the objective(s) of the entrepreneurship course in the polytechnic was essentially to expose them to concepts in entrepreneurship and also to create awareness about entrepreneurship and its values. In addition, the study reveals that the entrepreneurship course has a positive effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of students who underwent the programme. The recommendation is, therefore, made that the entrepreneurship course be sustained since it has the inherent capabilities to reduce youth unemployment and all its attendant social evils.*

**Key Terms:** entrepreneurship, objectives, TVET, tertiary institutions

### **Background to the Study**

Entrepreneurship has emerged over the last two decades as perhaps “the most potent economic force the world has ever witnessed” (Kuratko, 2005 p.577). Entrepreneurs throughout the world are engaged in activities which are changing economies all around the world (Gouws, 2002). According to Barringer and Ireland (2008) the entrepreneur has a positive effect on the economy and society. Barringer and Ireland (2008) see the impact of the entrepreneur in terms of their effect on the economy, on society and on large firms. With regard to their economic impact, there are a number of reasons that account for this. The reasons include innovation, job creation and globalization. Many innovations help individuals and businesses to work more effectively and efficiently, which in effect boost performance and business returns.

In developing countries, one of the very powerful arguments put forward for the promotion of entrepreneurship is the belief that entrepreneurship development is the solution for youth unemployment (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012), especially for graduates from tertiary institutions. In these developing countries, youth unemployment constitutes a formidable challenge for national governments to deal with and poses a lot of social problems (Braithwaite & King, 2006). Aryeetey (2011), as cited by Owusu-Ansah and Poku (2012) is of the opinion that as many as fifty percent (50%) of graduates who leave Ghanaian universities and polytechnics will not find jobs for two years after their national service, and twenty percent (20%) of them will not find jobs for three years.

Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009), assert that the statistics from Nigeria is worse where as many as 80% of graduates find it difficult to get employment annually. There are a number of reasons responsible for the high unemployment statistics of graduates of tertiary institutions. Fallows and Steven (2000) indicated that over the past decade the educational sector in many developing countries (the Ghanaian education sector included) has experienced a phenomenal growth in the number of private tertiary institutions.

Afenyadu, et al (2001) believe, on the evidence of their research findings, that there is an apparent mismatch between the capabilities being developed in the graduates of our tertiary institutions and the actual manpower needs of developing countries. The argument here is that tertiary institutions in developing countries are producing unemployed graduates, not necessarily as a consequence of non-availability of jobs, but essentially because the available jobs do not match their acquired skills (Afenyadu et al., 2001).

Ogege (2011) has argued that the lack of entrepreneurship education in the curricula of tertiary institutions should also be seen as a major contributory factor to the high unemployment among graduates. Ogege (2011) believes that entrepreneurship education makes it possible for the youth (whether they are graduates or not) to acquire the requisite skills to be self-employed without undue reliance on an over-burdened government to create jobs for them. As a result of the perceived importance of entrepreneurship in the economies of societies, especially its ability to reduce unemployment, interest in entrepreneurship education is on the increase.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Quite recently a number of tertiary institutions across Ghana have started offering entrepreneurship education programmes with the aim of creating awareness and to encourage students to consider self-employment as an option in their career developments (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). Similar developments have taken place in Nigeria as well (Alarape, 2008). However, given the fact that large numbers of graduates still come out of these universities and polytechnics where entrepreneurship education programmes exist in search for employment, many people are beginning to doubt the effectiveness and impact of these programmes (Nwafor & Nwachukwu, 2012). Egunsola, Dzala and Daniel (2012) opine that there has been little research to assess the impact of such programmes. This sentiment is also shared by Kailer (2005) when he says that in spite of the boom in entrepreneurship education there is an evaluation deficit. Cape Coast Polytechnic is one of such institutions in Ghana where entrepreneurship education is taught as a course. This research work seeks to undertake an assessment of entrepreneurship education programme and its impact on entrepreneurial intentions of students of Cape Coast Polytechnic.

### ***Objective of the Study***

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of students of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the objective(s) of the entrepreneurship education programme

### ***Methodology***

In this study, the quantitative approach was adopted. The choice of this approach over the qualitative approach was influenced by the use of questionnaire which allowed for the collection of large amounts of data from a sizeable population. The data collected were basically quantitative using structured questionnaires. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The primary data was the one elicited from the respondents directly while the secondary sources of data were those obtained from the Human Resource Section and the Admissions and Records Office of the polytechnic. In this study, the target population consisted of all final year Higher National Diploma (HND) Students of Cape Coast Polytechnic for the 2013/2014 academic year. These are students who had gone through the polytechnic's entrepreneurship programme, and are in their final year. Available figures from the Admissions and Records Office of the Polytechnic put the target population at 850. This consisted of 614 males and 236 females across all departments.

The research instruments used in the data collection were two sets of questionnaire and an interview schedule. One set of the questionnaire consisting of 30 questions responded to by the study group which comprised final year HND students of the 2013/2014 year group who have gone through the entrepreneurship programme. The other questionnaire was for the students who have not taken the entrepreneurship programme. This consisted of 20 questions. The interview guide was meant to seek the opinion of the lecturers who taught the programme. The interview guide consisted of seven questions. The choice of questionnaire as the research instrument was influenced by the opinion of Kerlinger (1973). According to Kerlinger (1973), questionnaires are widely used for collecting data in educational research because of their effectiveness in obtaining factual information about practices, conditions and for enquiries into opinions and attitudes of subjects. The two sets of questionnaire were based on the Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire (EIQ).

This is a scale for measuring entrepreneurship intention which was designed and tested by Linan and Chen (2006, 2009). This scale was adopted by Malebana (2014) in assessing students' entrepreneurial intentions in South Africa.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Namely; Questions relating to students attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs, Questions relating to the perception of society or close family members towards their becoming entrepreneurs, which is termed Subjective Norms. Questions relating to the ability of students' abilities to become entrepreneurs based on their acquired skills and knowledge, which is termed Perceived Behavioural Control, and Questions relating to their Intention.

In his research work in South Africa, Malebana (2004) had a Cronbach alpha value of 0.75 for Entrepreneurial Intention; 0.76 Cronbach alpha value for Attitude towards Becoming Entrepreneur; 0.76 Cronbach alpha value for Perceived Behavioural Control and Cronbach alpha value of 0.78 for Subjective Norms. This shows that the Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire is both valid and reliable as a scale in this context. The researcher modified some portions of Malebana's questionnaire to suit his context and also as a way of making it easy for the students to understand and answer the questionnaire.

### **Data analysis**

The data that were collected were first grouped for editing. After the editing, they were coded using numerical values (coded manual) for the variable view of the Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 18.0. Test Analytics for Surveys (TAFS), a tool of SPSS PASW, was used for coding the data and analysing verbatim responses to close-ended items in the questionnaire and produce tables and charts directly to enable data interpretation. After this, the data were inputted into the data view to complete the keying process. When these were done, the data were cleaned and transformed into tables and extracted for presentation and discussion. The tables were used for illustrations in order to clarify meaning and enhance understanding. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. Specifically, statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study sought to assess the effect of entrepreneurship programme on the entrepreneurial intentions of students of Cape Coast Polytechnic. At the end of data collection, 261 final year HND students of 2013/2014 academic year who have gone through the entrepreneurship programme, 150 students who have not been exposed to the entrepreneurship programme, and four lecturers who teach the entrepreneurship programme participated in the study.

This part of the study first presents the background characteristics of the respondents. The sex distribution of the students for both students who had entrepreneurship education and those who did not have is presented in Table 1. As contained in Table 1, majority (73.3%) of the students who have not studied entrepreneurship were males while 26.7 percent were females. Similarly, majority (57.9%) of the students who had studied entrepreneurship were males while 42.1 percent were females. The combined percentage shows that majority (63.5%) of the students who participated in the study were males. This shows that majority of the students in the Cape Coast Polytechnic are males.

**Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents**

Sex	Have not studied entrepreneurship		Have studied entrepreneurship		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	110	73.3	151	57.9	261	63.5
Female	40	26.7	110	42.1	150	36.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2014.

The study further elicited data on the age distribution of the students. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Age distribution of students**

Age group of students (Years)	Have not studied entrepreneurship		Have studied entrepreneurship	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
16 – 20 years	25	16.7	18	6.9
21 – 25 years	98	65.3	148	56.7
26 – 30 years	11	7.3	73	28.0
31 years and above	16	10.7	22	8.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2014.

Table 2 shows that 65.3 percent of the respondents who have not studied entrepreneurship were between 21 and 25 years representing majority of them. Also, 10.7 percent were above 30 years. Again, 56.7 percent of the respondents within the target research group (students who have studied entrepreneurship), were also between 21 and 25 years representing majority of them. Also, less than nine percent were above 30 years. The results imply that the respondents were dominated by young adults. This may be due to the fact that the study population was only students.

### **Objectives of the entrepreneurship course**

The first objective of the study was to identify the objectives of the entrepreneurship course. The rationale was to know whether the students had an idea about the objectives of the course. In other words whether the participants knew the purpose of the entrepreneurship course they had. The results for this objective are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5. Table 3 presents the perceived objectives of entrepreneurship education course. Respondents were to tick as many as possible.

**Table 3: Respondents perceived objectives of the entrepreneurship course**

Objectives of the entrepreneurship course	Agree		Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
To provide opportunity for students to identify entrepreneurial qualities and skills	168	64.4	93	35.6
To expose students to concepts in entrepreneurship skills	174	66.7	87	33.3
To create awareness about entrepreneurship and its values	182	69.7	79	30.3

**Source:** Field work, 2014

(N = 261)

From Table 3, 168 of the students who have studied entrepreneurship which represent 64.4 percent indicated, that the objective of the course was to provide opportunity for students to identify entrepreneurial qualities and skills'. Also, 174 of the students representing 66.7 percent indicated that the aim of the course was to expose students to concepts in entrepreneurship skills and 182 students representing 69.7 percent were of the view that the course was meant 'to create awareness about entrepreneurship and its values'. From the answers given, there appears to be a consensus among the students who studied entrepreneurship that the objective of the programme was to provide general awareness about entrepreneurship and its concepts.

The views of the student are in line with the comments of the four lecturers interviewed. The all agreed that the purpose of the entrepreneurship course was to provide opportunity for students to identify entrepreneurial qualities and skills, expose students to concepts in entrepreneurship skills, and create awareness about entrepreneurship and its values. One of the lecturers further stated that "***the aim of the programme is to develop and build the confidants of students with regard to business creation and development so that they can create and start their own business after completion of their programme***". The views of the students and the lecturers are consistent with the submission of Gibb (1999) who aver that one of the aims of entrepreneurship education is to help participants to learn to understand entrepreneurship. Again this is in agreement with Linan and Chen's (2006) observation that the basic objective of entrepreneurship education is awareness creation. Hytti and O'Gorman (2004) also agree by saying that one of the aims of entrepreneurship education is education about entrepreneurship which makes the audience have a general understanding of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon. Students who have been exposed to the entrepreneurship course were further asked to indicate how they got to know about the entrepreneurship course objectives. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: How students got to know about the course objectives**

Sources	Sex of students				Total	
	Male		Female		Freq.	%
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
The lecturer	130	86.1	94	85.5	224	85.8
A friend	17	11.3	13	11.8	30	11.5
Radio announcement	4	2.6	3	2.7	7	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2014

From Table 4, 224 respondents representing 85.8 percent indicated that they got to know the objectives of entrepreneurship course from their lecturers. This result represents the majority of respondents. Again 30 respondents representing 11.5 percent indicated that they learnt about the course objectives from friends. Only 2.7 percent of the students indicated that they got to know the objectives of the entrepreneurship course through radio announcement.

Bridge, et al. (2010) opine that because entrepreneurship education has a wide range of focus, there is the need to communicate the objective(s) of a programme to its audience. Henry, et al (2005) also believes that the absence of such communication can result in differences of perception between organisers and participants of entrepreneurship programmes. Therefore, it is appropriate for the institution and the society as a whole to create multiple and different sources for students to get to know the course objectives of the entrepreneurship course. The target group was asked to indicate the topics they covered during the entrepreneurship education course. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Topics covered during the entrepreneurship course**

Topics covered during the entrepreneurship course	Yes		No	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Small Scale Enterprises	231	88.5	30	11.5
Business Plans	222	85.1	39	14.9
Forms of Business Ownership	215	82.4	46	17.6
Sources of Funding	206	78.9	55	21.1
Risk Management	204	78.2	57	21.8
Feasibility Studies	200	76.6	61	23.4
Marketing Skills	200	76.6	61	23.4
Decision Making and Problem Solving	193	73.9	68	26.1
Recognition of Business Opportunities	185	70.9	76	29.1

**Source:** Field work, 2014

(N = 261)

The target group was asked to indicate the topics they covered during the entrepreneurship education course. From Table 5, 231 which represent 88.5 percent of the students went for small scale enterprises. Again, majority of the students indicated that the topics they covered during the entrepreneurship course are business plans (85.1%), forms of business ownership (82.4%), sources of funding (78.9%), risk management (78.2%), feasibility studies (76.6%), marketing skills (76.6%) decision making and problem solving (73.9%), and recognition of business opportunities (70.9%). All the topics indicated by most of the students are general business and general entrepreneurship topics. This mirrors Vesper's (2004) advice that entrepreneurship course content(s) should be developed to take account of, among other things: venture-general knowledge which applies to most start-ups, but not so much to going concerns, and business-general knowledge which applies to most firms, including new ventures.

### **Summary**

The study was conducted to assess the Entrepreneurship course and its effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of students of Cape Coast Polytechnic. The population for the study was final year HND students for the 2013/2014 academic year. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to select the 265 students while purposive sampling techniques was used to select the four lecturers. However, 261 and four lecturers participated in the study. Two set of questionnaires and structured interview were used for data collection.

The questionnaire consisted of 30 items to collect responses from the final year students, 20 questions to collect responses from the control group and seven interview questions to collect response from the lecturers who taught the programme. The data were analysed using frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviations. The following are the main findings of the study, that;

Majority of the students affirmed that the objective(s) of the entrepreneurship course in the polytechnic was essentially to expose them to concepts in entrepreneurship and also to create awareness about entrepreneurship and its values. The findings further show that the students were informed about the objectives of the entrepreneurship programme they undertook. Significantly, the research also reveals that the predominant way of the programme's delivery was through lectures and reading hand outs.

The findings also show that assessment of students in most cases is done by way of examinations, assignments and continuous assessments. In addition, the study reveals that the entrepreneurship course has a positive effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of students who underwent the programme. With regard to the interview with lecturers who teach the programme, they indicate that they are in agreement with the students, that the primary aim of the entrepreneurship programme as envisaged by the polytechnic is to make students aware of entrepreneurship as a possible career alternative. The lecturers were unanimous in their opinion that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of their students.

### ***Conclusions***

From the study, the following conclusions can be drawn that the Entrepreneurship course is taught using traditional teaching methods which does not give much emphasis on active student participation. This means that entrepreneurship course as currently exists does not involve the students in any experiential learning and that it is teacher-centred. It can also be concluded that the entrepreneurship education course has positively effect in creating positive entrepreneurial intention among the students who took the programme. And finally, it may be concluded from the findings of the study that, if all the needed attention and assistance is given to the entrepreneurship education nationwide, it could help reduce youth unemployment significantly.

### ***Recommendations***

In view of the findings derived from the study, the following recommendations are made it is recommended that the entrepreneurship course be sustained since it has the inherent capabilities to reduce youth unemployment and all its attendant social evils. It is further recommended that for the programme to have a far reaching effect, the approaches to teaching entrepreneurship should change. Teaching should move away from the passive traditional teaching methods where students are lectured to a situation where students are given real, and practical business scenarios to deal with and provide remedies.

Finally it is recommended that since the success of any entrepreneurship course, to a large measure, depends on regular interaction between those who organise such programmes and participants, there is the need for regular feed-back from students or participants concerning their views about programme content(s), teaching methods, assessment procedures and any issues which will improve the quality of the programme.

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