



Impact of Promoting Entrepreneurship on Self-Employment Readiness of Undergraduates in Northern Tanzania Universities

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study was to assess the Impact of Cultivating Entrepreneurship Culture on Preparation of Undergraduates for Self-employment in Northern Tanzania. The Study was conducted to answer a research question: How has the promotion of entrepreneurship culture influenced undergraduates' readiness for self-employment? Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior by Azjen (1991), this study employed a convergent parallel design under a mixed-method research approach. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques, under probability sampling, were used in selecting 310 undergraduates while purposive and snowball sampling techniques under non-probability sampling were used to select 27 university managers, 6 lecturers and 36 alumni, making a total sample size of 379 respondents. The instrument used in the study was validated by experts, and a pilot test was conducted outside the study area. Data was collected using questionnaire, interview guide, and document analysis guide. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were observed in the study. The results of the chi-square test confirmed a strong relationship between promoting entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment. Support mechanisms and practical teaching methods and experiential learning were seen as crucial in preparing undergraduates with skills necessary for self-employment. The study concluded that, there is a positive and significant relationship between promoting entrepreneurship culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment. The study recommended the government, universities, and all education and development stakeholders to provide adequate support to develop of entrepreneurial skills for undergraduates.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Undergraduates, Readiness, Planned Behavior, Unemployment, Self-employment*

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1. Introduction

Unemployment is the prevalent issue for all the developing countries, especially Tanzania, where thousands graduate from different universities are conferred with glamorous certificates upon graduation, but many of graduates end up unemployed. An increasing unemployment situation among graduates in Tanzania among other countries is troublesome. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened

graduates' unemployment (Mayhew & Anand, 2020). For instance, by 2020, unemployment rate in USA and China had increased from 3.8% in 2019 to 16% while in Tanzania, only 25% got formal employment, the rest are either self-employed or unemployed (International Labor Organization, 2020). Graduates with no previous job experience are the worst victims of the pandemic. This implies that substantial numbers of graduates in the world are currently unemployed. Unemployed graduates are

increasingly becoming 'vulnerable', that is why many are taken in and engage in vices such as cyber-crimes, robbery, and prostitution among other crimes, to make living therefore increasing worrying living in the societies. Unemployment has led to negative effects on economies, society, and individual well-being.

Evidence from scholars such as Badri and Hachicha (2019), Singh & Pravesh (2017), and Meyer and Surujlal (2018) shows that there is a growing gap between university education and skills required to meet the demands of job market. In response, many countries have turned to cultivation of entrepreneurship culture (EC) in the learning institutions. An EC has been considered as an effective approach in inculcating undergraduates with skills and positive attitude needed not only by employers, who are for innovative, adaptive, resilient, and ambitious employees, but also makes graduates ready for self-employment (International Labor Organization, 2020).

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAAHE] (2018), entrepreneurship culture (EC) refers to the application of enterprise behaviors, attributes, and competencies which further equip an individual to be creative and innovative. Moreover, Dahlstedt and Fejes (2017) add that EC creates entrepreneurial graduates who make the most of their education to develop into responsible, original problem-solvers and, consequently, employable and productive individuals in the society.

Embracing the tenets of an EC at global level, USA, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Malaysia, and India, have embraced it through cultivation Entrepreneurship education (EE) as early as 1950s (European Commission, 2013). These nations have ensured each university and college incorporates an EE into all curricula to give undergraduates an access to EE regardless of the discipline one is enrolled into. As a result of these efforts, there is an increased rate of self-employed graduates and low rates of unemployed graduates.

In Africa, countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe have also introduced mandatory entrepreneurship courses, and established business incubators and innovation hubs to increase chances of graduates get right knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for self-employment (Olorundare & Kayode, 2016). The results of this effort show gradual improvement in the employability graduates in these countries (Chitumba, 2018).

Tanzania (TZ) has also put efforts in developing an EC through its various policies and frameworks such as Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) policy of 1967, Education and Training Policy of 1968, and National Entrepreneurship Training Framework (NETF) of 2013. These efforts aimed to nurture EC among Tanzanians

(Kalimasi & Herman, 2016). As a result of the implementation of these policies, University of Dar es Salaam Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (UDIEC) has stood as a model in promoting EC in the country. UDIEC imparts trainees with required skills for self-employment. Thus, a need of promoting entrepreneurship culture among the graduates has been the current agenda.

Despite efforts by learning institutions to nurture students' employability skills, there is still a gap when it comes to undergraduates. There are varied criticisms from the society that a good number of Tanzania graduates do not deliver to the required demands in the labor market. The complainants consider the existing strategies in universities for instance, is not doing enough to nurture skills necessary for graduates' employability. Tanzanian University graduates are questionable both for employability and for self-employment. This dissatisfaction provokes a problem as to how university education should be conceived and approached in order to make the graduates responsive to the contemporary needs and appeals of society. Employers consider Tanzanian graduates incompetent and unprepared for both, employment and self-Employment (Amani, 2017; Kalimasi & Herman, 2016; Mbunda & Kapinga, 2021). Since the primary role of universities is to produce graduates who are prepared for the workforce, some scholars (Mgaiwa, 2021; Kota, 2021; & McGunagle & Zizka, 2020) have urged universities to promote students' entrepreneurial culture by cultivating entrepreneurial skills and traits for taking chances and utilizing their abilities to add their employability values.

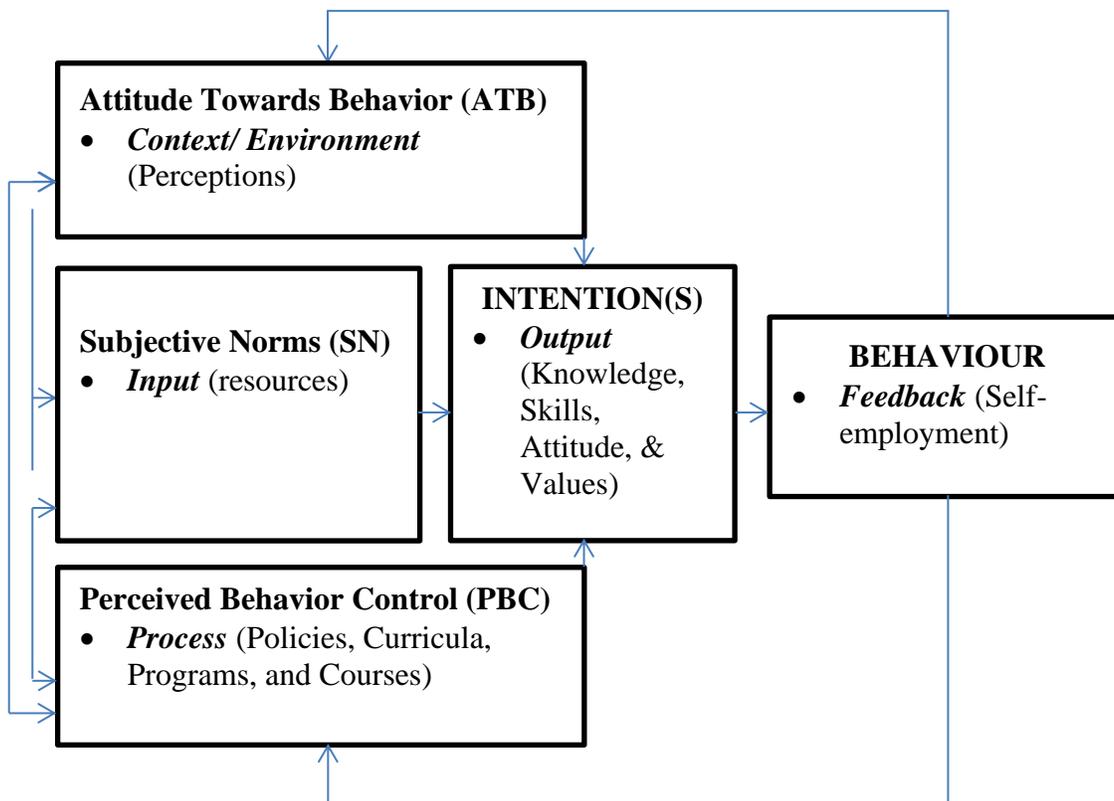
Promotion of entrepreneurship culture has been identified as one of the strategies which have brought the positive impact on graduates' readiness for self-employment. The current statistics indicates that the number of Tanzania graduates has slightly increased from 46,294 in 2017 to 48,621 in 2022 (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2023). This is an increase of 5% per year; however, this percentage is too low considering the fact that majority of Tanzanian graduates have remained unemployed and unable to employ themselves. None of the previous studies has studied about the impact of EC on readiness of the Tanzanian undergraduates for self-employment. The study was guided by four research questions: Has the cultivation of an entrepreneurial culture at your university affected your readiness of self-employment? Is there a relationship between cultivating entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment? What did you do after graduation in regard to employment? How relevant entrepreneurship course is in preparing undergraduates for self-employment? The current study therefore has bridged the knowledge gap by assessing the impact of promoting EC on undergraduates' self-employment tendency through testing the null hypothesis (*H₀*) which stated: There is no significant relationship

between promotion of entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment.

2. Literature Review

This study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991). The TPB as an underlying model has been used to examine the link between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control to account for readiness of undergraduates for self-employment. According to TPB, behavioral intention is the most significant predictor of human behavior and the intention to perform a behavior is a function of three factors: attitude toward the behavior (ATB), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC)

(Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1991), human goals and behaviors are the results of plan, and that, the intentions to engage in a certain act or behavior are the result of the convergence of ATB, SN, and PBC. Ajzen (1991) claims that one's attitude toward a behavior (ATB) reflects how one views the behavior or conduct, which may be graded on a scale ranging from favorable to unfavorable. Ajzen adds that an intention increases with a more positive evaluation. In connection to this that, this claim means that, undergraduates' perspective on their self-employment influences their decision to engage in or refrain from engaging in entrepreneurial activities while studying the university. Figure 1 shows the schematic relationships between the tenets of the TPB.



Source: Modified from Ajzen (1991, p. 182)

Figure 1.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Based on the variables of this study, guiding research questions and the theory used, the review of literature related to this study is presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

Ilyes (2021) conducted a study to analyze the importance of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial culture among students in selected Chinese and American Universities. The study focused on comparing the attention given to enhancing students' entrepreneurial knowledge

and skills between universities in China and the USA. The study found out that universities in China paid great attention to enhancing students' comprehensive entrepreneurial quality and promoting an entrepreneurial culture among students, while the focus on entrepreneurship education (EE) in the USA was not emphasized to the same extent thus why many Chinese graduates are able to employ themselves compared to those of USA. It highlights the importance of a holistic approach to entrepreneurship education. For instance, Chinese universities prioritize not only knowledge and skills but also the cultivation of a robust entrepreneurial culture among students. Equally, the study reveals a potential gap in the US system, suggesting a need for greater emphasis on fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and culture alongside traditional EE. Moreover, this study emphasizes the significance of a well-rounded approach to EE that goes beyond skills and knowledge, promoting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship for future success.

Baluku et al. (2021) conducted a study in Germany to explore the role of entrepreneurial mentoring, attitudes, and psychological capital in the development of self-employment intentions among university students. The study was conducted over a two-year period and involved final-year students (288 German and 498 East African). The follow-up survey (T2) of 103 participants was conducted within 6 months and 2 years after graduation. Results suggested that entrepreneurial mentoring, attitudes, and psychological capital are directly related to self-employment intentions. Attitudes mediated the relationship between mentoring and intentions. Furthermore, psychological capital moderated the effects of mentoring and attitudes on self-employment intentions. East African participants reported higher intentions (T1) and higher rate of entry into self-employment (at T2) compared to the German participants. Contrary to our assumption, however, psychological capital did not have substantial effects on self-employed entry. This study highlights the critical mediating role of attitudes, indicating that entrepreneurial mentoring indirectly influenced self-employment intentions through its impact on students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, shedding light on the importance of fostering mentorship and cultivating positive attitudes to promote entrepreneurial aspirations among university students in diverse cultural contexts.

Perera and Priyanath (2022) conducted a quantitative study in Sri Lanka to examine the impact of self-efficacy on self-employment intention among arts undergraduates of the Sabaragamuwa University. The study employed quantitative method. Data were collected from 159 respondents using a pre-tested structural questionnaire. The data were analyzed using multiple regression model with the support of the SPSS. The findings revealed a positive impact of self-efficacy on self-employment intention among students. The finding also pointed out that

self-efficacy is significantly associated with entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates. This study underscores the importance of fostering self-belief and confidence among undergraduates, as it positively correlates with their aspirations for self-employment. These findings further support an element of theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen which states that self-efficacy can influence the entrepreneurial intention among students. These findings emphasize the potential for educational institutions and policymakers to incorporate self-efficacy development programs that can empower students to pursue entrepreneurial paths and contribute to economic growth and innovation in the region.

Dubey et al. (2022) conducted a study in India to explore the entrepreneurial characteristics, attitudes, and self-employment intentions of engineering undergraduates. The study utilized stratified random sampling and collected data from 1,000 participants enrolled in public and private technical institutions. The results indicated significant dimensions of entrepreneurial attitude and characteristics among the participants. However, some factors, such as self-sufficiency, risk-taking propensity, planning and organizing ability, social networking, and self-employment intention, were found to be insignificant. This study sheds light on the entrepreneurial attributes and intentions of engineering undergraduates. Through data collected from a diverse sample of 1,000 participants, the research uncovered significant dimensions of entrepreneurial attitudes and characteristics among this group. Nevertheless, it also revealed that certain factors, including self-sufficiency, risk-taking propensity, planning and organizing skills, social networking, and self-employment intentions, did not exhibit significant correlations, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions and educational approaches to foster entrepreneurial development among engineering students.

Al-Qadasi et al. (2021) conducted a study in Yemen to assess the self-employment intentions of final-year undergraduate students at Sanaa University. The study utilized the theory of planned behavior and contextual factors to explore the impact on students' intentions to start their own businesses. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey with a random sample of 335 students, and analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and structural equation modeling. The study highlights valuable lessons about the factors influencing self-employment intentions among final-year undergraduate students at Sanaa University. By employing the theory of planned behavior and considering contextual factors, the research underscores the importance of individual attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping students' intentions to initiate their own enterprises. The use of a diverse methodological approach, including questionnaire surveys and structural

equation modeling, offers insights into the intricate interplay of these factors and provides a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset among young students in a challenging socio-economic context like Yemen. These findings can inform educational and policy interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth in similar settings.

Reyad et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study in Egypt and Bahrain to examine the development of entrepreneurial skills among accounting students and its impact on career pathways, including self-employment. The intention of the study was to explore what skills influence self-employment intentions. Data were collected from 583 Egyptian and Bahraini accounting students using a questionnaire. The study shows that in private universities, there is no difference in the development of entrepreneurial skills and subsequent self-employment practices between students in Egypt and Bahrain. When it comes to public universities, students in Bahrain develop better entrepreneurial skills and subsequent self-employment practices than students in Egypt. In addition, private universities are better than public universities in representing the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and self-employment practices. The findings imply the importance of fostering entrepreneurial skills among students. It highlights that equipping accounting students with entrepreneurship skills can positively influence their career trajectories, potentially leading to self-employment opportunities. This research stresses the need for educational institutions to incorporate entrepreneurship education into accounting curricula, enabling students to not only excel in traditional accounting roles but also to explore and pursue entrepreneurial ventures, thus contributing to economic development in these regions.

Yusuf and Ibrahim (2019) conducted a survey in Nigeria to investigate the influence of pedagogical approaches on the entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurship readiness of undergraduate students in Northwestern Nigeria. Two research objectives were stated. Two null hypotheses were stated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 200 final year business education students from Federal universities in North-western Nigeria. The instrument used in the study was validated by experts, and a pilot test was conducted outside the study area. Multivariate analysis was employed to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that the pedagogical approach adopted in teaching entrepreneurship education did not have a significant influence on the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies among students in Northwestern Nigeria. From the results of the study, it was concluded that, the pedagogical approaches used in teaching entrepreneurship education to undergraduate business students in

Northwestern Nigeria have not adequately impact the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies. A need for paradigm shift from teacher-centered approach of teaching entrepreneurship education to practical and student center approach was recommended. This will enable students to acquire adequate skills and knowledge needed for self-employment. Finding of this study implies the need for a re-evaluation of the current pedagogical methods employed in entrepreneurship education. Educators and policymakers should consider revising the curriculum and instructional strategies to better prepare students for entrepreneurship, potentially by incorporating more effective teaching techniques or emphasizing practical experiential learning to enhance students' entrepreneurship readiness and competencies.

Netshilinganedza et al. (2022) conducted a study to assess entrepreneurial awareness of final year undergraduate students as a factor of their attitude towards adopting entrepreneurship as a career choice in a rural area-based university in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to 310 final-year students from 8 various disciplines. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Cross-tabulation, correlation analysis and Mann Whitney tests were carried out using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial awareness had a marginal influence on students' attitudes towards a career in entrepreneurship, with no significant difference observed between male and female students. It was recommended that management and policy interventions that created enabling conditions for nurturing students to become entrepreneurs should be adopted. Among the recommended interventions was the integration of entrepreneurship education into curricula, irrespective of areas of specialization. This would equip the students with knowledge and develop positive attitude towards venturing into entrepreneurship. This study reveals that among final-year undergraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds, entrepreneurial awareness had only a limited impact on their attitudes towards pursuing careers in entrepreneurship, and this influence did not significantly vary between male and female students. The study features the need for management and policy interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among students, suggesting that creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurship education, as well as integrating it into the academic curriculum, is essential to better prepare future graduates for entrepreneurial endeavors, irrespective of their gender or field of study.

Cheruiyot (2021) conducted a study in Kenya to investigate the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among graduates of public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The study employed an

explanatory research design and targeted TVET graduates, trainers, and employers. The sample size was 293 respondents, selected using stratified and simple random sampling. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. The study found that attitudes toward entrepreneurial behavior, subjective norms, TVET programs, and entrepreneurial knowledge significantly influenced entrepreneurial intentions among TVET graduates. The study concluded that program orientation, subjective norms, entrepreneurial knowledge, and attitudes towards career alternatives are important factors developed during one's study and can influence entrepreneurial intentions. This study revealed valuable insights regarding the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. By employing a comprehensive research design involving TVET graduates, trainers, and employers, the study identified key factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among these graduates. Specifically, it highlighted the significant impact of attitudes toward entrepreneurial behavior, subjective norms, TVET programs, and entrepreneurial knowledge on shaping these intentions. The study's crucial takeaway underscores the importance of program orientation, subjective norms, entrepreneurial knowledge, and attitudes towards career alternatives, emphasizing their development during one's education as pivotal factors that can significantly influence an individual's entrepreneurial intentions.

Pastory and Mushi (2022) conducted a study in Tanzania to examine the Vocational Educational Training (VET) skills demanded by the informal sector for successful self-employment. The study collected qualitative and quantitative data from 120 VET stakeholders. The findings revealed a demand for practical-oriented skills by the informal sector, suggesting the need for a transformation of the Tanzania VET curriculum to make it relevant to the current business environment. The study concluded that the curriculum should include appropriate competencies and skills that empower graduates to think critically and provide solutions to prevailing problems. The study highlights the crucial lessons for vocational education and training (VET) programs. It emphasizes the importance of aligning VET curricula with the evolving needs of the informal sector, which requires practical-oriented skills for successful self-employment. These findings underscore the necessity for a curriculum transformation in Tanzania's VET system to ensure its relevance in the contemporary business landscape. The study also stresses the significance of incorporating competencies that foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among graduates, ultimately equipping them to address the challenges and demands of the informal sector effectively.

To sum up, the reviewed studies were conducted outside Northern Tanzania and therefore this study addressed this gap by assessing the impact of Promoting Entrepreneurship

on Readiness of Self-Employment of Undergraduates in Northern Tanzania Universities. None of these studies included participants from different experiences, disciplines, universities. By including multiple stakeholders from Universities in Northern Tanzania and employing mixed methods, the current study provides a more comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing undergraduates' readiness for self-employment, overcoming the limitations of the previous studies. In addition, this comprehensive approach allows for a more robust examination of the influence of promotional activities on undergraduates' readiness for self-employment.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a convergent parallel design under a mixed-method research approach where the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data, analyzed them separately to confirm, cross-validate and verify findings. This design was chosen because it brings a better understanding of the findings due to involvement of various target participants, the triangulation of research methods and instruments for data collection and comparing sets of results with one another (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In addition, this corroboration process enhances the validity of the inferences and makes results of this study more credible.

Data was collected from 27 university managers (including 2 Vice chancellors, 3 Deputy Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, 3 Deputy Vice Chancellors for administration, 7 Deans of Faculties, and 14 Heads of Departments), 6 lecturers teaching entrepreneurship courses, 310 final-year undergraduates, and 36 alumni graduated in the academic year 2021/2022, making a total of 379. The instrument used in the study was validated by experts, and a pilot test was conducted outside the study area. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was established at 0.86, allowing the researcher to continue with data collection and analysis.

Prior to data collection, permissions were sought from and given by all authorities including COSTECH and University administrators. Consents from all participants were sought. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically using following procedures by Braun & Clarke (2006). In this regard, the qualitative data was transcribed and organized for analysis by grouping them into different respective categories after which they were condensed by editing, paraphrasing and summarizing to give meaningful information to the research. Using the content analysis technique, data was placed into theme categories and then tallied in terms of the number of times a theme occurred after which they had been recorded in respective themes

and summarized. With the data coded and summaries, the researcher examined various summaries and synthesize the findings, presented them in narratives and statements forms. The data was examined and interpreted using MAXQDA Analytics Pro 12 version 12.3.0 application. To provide readers a better understanding of the informants' feelings regarding the subject of the study, some quotes from informants were also provided.

4. Results and Discussion

The study assessed the impact of cultivating entrepreneurship culture on undergraduates' readiness for

self-employment. Specifically, the study sought to establish relationship between entrepreneurship education and readiness of undergraduates for self-employment. The study was guided by four research questions as follows.

Research Question 1: Has the cultivation of an entrepreneurial culture at your university affected your readiness of self-employment?

This question required final-year undergraduates to respond Yes or No on whether they were prepared for self-employment or not. The responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Undergraduates' Readiness for Self –employment

Readiness preparedness for self-employment	f	%
Yes	233	72
No	86	28
Total	310	100

The data in Table 1 show that majority (72%) of undergraduates responded Yes, indicating their readiness for self-employment, while few (26%), responded NO, expressing that they were not ready for self-employment. This data suggests that, as efforts for creating entrepreneurship culture increase, the number of undergraduates expressing readiness for self-employment also tends to increase. This finding aligns with the study by Faloye and Olatunj (2018) study in Nigeria who revealed that entrepreneurship education positively influenced fresh graduates' business start-up intentions.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between cultivating entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment?

To answer this question, the researcher tested the Null Hypothesis to find out relationship of the answers emanated from research question 1 and determine if the relationship was significant or just attributed by sampling error. These descriptive data were subjected to inferential

statistics whereby a chi-square test for independence was run at 95% confidence level. Inferential statistics in this case then aimed at testing the null hypothesis and the results of statistical testing are presented in Table 2.

Null hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between cultivating entrepreneurial culture and graduates' readiness for self-employment.

Assumptions

- i. The two variables are measured at an ordinal or nominal level
- ii. The two variables consist of two or more categorical, independent groups

Stating decision rule

The researcher computed the mean score of undergraduates' results of cross tabulation for self-employment readiness and the level of cultivating entrepreneurship culture as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Hypothesis Testing

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.106	4	0.00
Likelihood Ratio	23.048	4	0.00
N of Valid Cases	310		

According to the rule, If P-Value is less than or equal to the significance level of 0.05 then reject the Null hypothesis.

The opposite is true. Table 2 show the Pearson chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 21.106 with 4 degrees of

freedom. The data show that, the computed p-value is 0.00, this is far less than the level of significance (0.05) hence, and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultivating entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment. These findings suggest that there is a strong association between the promotion of entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates' readiness for self-employment. These findings align to the ones reported in China by Wang et al. (2023) and Liana (2023) who found out that entrepreneurship education had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Together,

these findings and the results of the hypothesis testing highlight the importance of fostering an entrepreneurship culture within universities to enhance undergraduates' preparedness for self-employment.

Research Question 3: What did you do after graduation in regard to employment?

Alumni were interviewed in order to determine factors behind their choice of job after graduation. Their responses are summarized quantitatively in Table 3.

Table 3: Cross tabulation of Alumni Responses on Self-employment and Looking for Job Options

Employment Options	University A		University B		University C	
	f	%	F	%	F	%
I employed myself	6	50	5	41.7	2	26.7
I looked for a job	6	50	7	58.3	10	83.3
Total	12	100	12	100	12	100

Data in Table 3 show that, in University A, half (50%) of the alumni reported being self-employed, while another half (50%) number of the alumni looked for job positions. In University B, a significant percent (41.7%) of the alumni said they self-employed, while large percent (58.3%) of the alumni looked for job positions. On the other hand, in University C, few (17%) alumni were self-employed, while a significant majority (83%) looked for job positions. These findings suggest the presence of entrepreneurship courses in University A and University B and might have contributed to a positive influence on the alumni's decision to pursue self-employment. In contrast, the higher percentage of alumni from University C who looked for job positions may be attributed to the absence of an entrepreneurship courses hence limited understanding of self-employment. This finding is consistent with study Wang et al. (2023) in China. The study found out that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, Faloye and Olatunj (2018) study in Nigeria and Liana (2022) found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions. By providing students with opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills, fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set, and connecting them with real-world entrepreneurial experiences, universities can effectively prepare their graduates for self-employment and increase their likelihood of entrepreneurial success.

Research Question 4: How relevant entrepreneurship course is in preparing undergraduates for self-employment?

The researcher interviewed university managers, lecturers, and alumni to inquire about the relevance of entrepreneurship course in preparing undergraduates for self-employment. Mixed responses were observed based on their perceptions and experiences regarding the relevance of the entrepreneurship course and are presented as follows:

The importance of entrepreneurship education for enhancing different entrepreneurial skills to the undergraduates was mentioned by the university managers during the interviews as Dean 4 from university B is quoted to have said that:

We have an entrepreneurship course which is taught across our university curricula, and through this course, students get soft skills, innovations skills, experience and do practices by making various products such as soaps, avocado oil, honey and other products and ultimately learn how to brand and market and sell their products within the university community and outside and ultimately make money. This is a result of the entrepreneurial culture we have nurtured in them (Interviewed on 27th May 2023).

The statement by the Dean indicates that universities offer an entrepreneurship education by integrating entrepreneurship courses or units into various academic programs. In this course, students are taught a combination of soft and practical skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability,

innovations, hands-on Experience, branding and Marketing among others.

Some alumni said that the course was relevant as it provided them with various aspects that nurtured their skills and prepared them for employability. For instance, alumni 1 from university A said, *“The entrepreneurship course I took was relevant to me since it has several aspects that nurtured my skills that has enabled me employ myself”* (Interviewed on 13th June 2023). The statement by the alumni implies that, the course provided them with knowledge and experiences that supported their growth as an entrepreneur.

In supporting the previous interviewee, Alumni 3 from University B also said, *“Entrepreneurship is a good course because I have learned several skills including problem-solving, creativity, innovation, adaptability, communication, and project management which are good for my employability”* (Interviewed on 26th June 2023). The statement means that the alumni are satisfied with entrepreneurship course which has provided them with valuable skills for getting hired and succeeded in self-employment.

Another alumni from university B added that, *“Through the entrepreneurship course, I have learned how to work in a team and in turn, we get equal share of money out of the activities that we do together here while studying in our university”* (Interviewed on 25th June 2023). The statement implies that, undergraduates have gained the ability to collaborate effectively within a team. In return for their collective efforts, they receive an equal portion of the profits or money generated from these activities.

Data from the participants are evident that the entrepreneurship course has a positive impact on skill development. These data are consistent with the research by Pastory and Mushi (2022), Baluku et al. (2021) and Perera and Priyanath (2022), which emphasize the relationship between skills acquisition and self-employment intentions. Thus, the findings suggest that the entrepreneurship course effectively equips students with the skills needed for self-employment.

On the other hand, there were some alumni who felt that the course lacked practical aspects, making it less relevant. Alumni 2 from university A said, *“The entrepreneurship course I got was not that much relevant since practical aspects of the course were not there, thus why I have not gained many skills out of the course”* (Interviewed on 26th June 2023). This statement shows alumni’s dissatisfaction. The course is likely focused more on theoretical or conceptual aspects of entrepreneurship rather than hands-on, real-world applications. The student feels that the practical elements, which are crucial for understanding

how to start and run a business, were not given enough emphasis in the course. As a result, they feel that the course did not provide them with the practical knowledge and skills they were looking for to become a successful entrepreneur.

However, the issue of mindset has still been an issue as raised by Lecturer 2 from university B during who said:

Some of our undergraduates are not ready to work for themselves due to negative attitudes. Some undergraduates consider self-employment is for those who have no bachelor’s degree. In this case, we must increase efforts of cultivating entrepreneurial culture in undergraduates if we want to help them change their perspectives and be able to spot and exploit opportunities around them (Interviewed on 8th June 2023).

To address these challenges, the lecturer advocates for increasing efforts to foster an entrepreneurial culture among undergraduate students. This would involve creating an environment and providing resources that encourage students to think positively, creatively, and take calculated risks to run own businesses. In essence, the lecturer is highlighting the importance of equipping undergraduates with the right mindset and skills to pursue self-employment.

Comparing the views given by interviewees, the data indicate that the entrepreneurship course plays a significant role in inspiring undergraduates to think creatively and explore non-traditional career paths. These findings align with the studies by Netshilinganedza et al. (2022) in South Africa and Dubey et al. (2022) in India, which emphasize the significance of changing students’ mindset and attitudes towards entrepreneurship to foster effective entrepreneurial behavior and intention for self-employment. Therefore, the insights from the data highlight the importance of nurturing an entrepreneurial culture and transforming students’ perspectives to enable them to identify and seize opportunities in the entrepreneurial landscape.

In summary, data from this study shows that as the level of creating entrepreneurship culture increased, the number of students expressing readiness for self-employment also increased. The results of the chi-square test confirmed a significant relationship between the promotion of entrepreneurial culture and undergraduates’ readiness for self-employment. This finding aligns with previous studies that highlight the positive impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, the entrepreneurship course contributed to alumni self-employment through acquisition of skills, inspiration and mindset, and preparation for self-employment. The

findings of the study also reveal that some undergraduates recognize the course's relevance in nurturing their skills and preparing them for self-employment, while also acknowledging the inspiration and mindset fostered by the course. Additionally, the course was found to enhance students' readiness for self-employment by providing practical exposure and relevant skills, resetting minds toward for self-employment.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study has found out that, there is a positive relationship between cultivating entrepreneurship culture (EC) and students' readiness for self-employment. As the level of entrepreneurial culture increases, the number of undergraduates and alumni expressing readiness for self-employment also increases. It can be concluded that, entrepreneurship education provides students with skills, inspiration, mindset, and practical exposure relevant for self-employment. It is important to note that, collaborations between various stakeholders, both internal and external, in preparing students for self-employment is crucial in building and EC among undergraduates. The need to review and enhance curricula to align with the demands of the job market and provide students with skills relevant for self-employment is overemphasized.

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5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends various actions to be taken by the government, universities, and undergraduates:

1. The government to collaborate with universities and industries in the areas connected to policies, funding, technical and expertise support, assessments and supervision for integrating national entrepreneurship training frameworks into their respective curricula to reflect the changing landscape of entrepreneurship and industry demands.
2. Universities should revise and update existing curricula to ensure they align with the evolving demands of the job market. This can be done by infusing practical, multidisciplinary and real-world experiences into courses to better prepare students for self-employment.
3. Undergraduates should also take initiatives by participating in entrepreneurship-related activities, workshops, networking events, and seek mentorship from successful entrepreneurs and industry professionals to gain insights and guidance.

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