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Rethinking the Quality and Relevance of University Education in Kenya from Entrepreneurial Perspective

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Abstract
Many stakeholders have expressed concern about the many graduates from Kenyan universities who after qualifying, not only fail to get jobs but also fail to venture into alternative forms of engagement to earn their livelihood, a scenario that raises question as to the quality and relevance of University education they got. The concerns being raised calls for rethinking of the quality and relevance of university education in Kenya. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the propensity of university education in Kenya to inculcate entrepreneurial culture in graduates. The theory of planned behavior formed the theoretical foundation of the study. The study adopted a triangular design approach where views relating to entrepreneurial culture were sought from final year students from one public and one private university. The study targeted 3146 final year students drawn from University of Kabianga, (2272) and Kabarak University (874). From this, a sample of 614 students proportionately distributed among the two universities was drawn. Entrepreneurial environment was found to be more or less the same in both private and public universities recording moderate score. However, public university scored slightly higher. In conclusion, there is no significant difference in the levels of preference for entrepreneurship when comparison is made between public and private universities in Kenya. Arising from the current finding, the study recommends provision of better entrepreneurial support system. It will be preemptive to conclude that University education in Kenyan universities nature entrepreneurial culture
Keywords: Entrepreneurial culture, Quality, relevance, University education
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Introduction

An economy characterized by high level of unemployment like Kenya, requires education system that equips learners with marketplace and entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to identify, pursue, and produce economic opportunities successfully (Yuthas and Epstein, 2013). While Education may meet international standards in every aspect, it may not help the recipients to surmount the challenges such as unemployment, poverty etc. or ability to exploit the opportunities in the environment in which they live (ibid).

Education at macro-level, is known to create superior human capital, an important factor in social and economic development of any country and at micro-level, among others, it enhances individual potential in terms of entrepreneurship, self-understanding, employability and the way we look at the world (Oztruk 2001). It is also known to impact on several spheres of human life notably income distribution, healthcare, security, national cohesion, political process and unemployment (Organization for Economic Cooperation and development [OECD], 2014).

University education play catalytic role in the process of social and economic transformation (Nyangau, 2014). This puts the onus on universities to prepare students to acquire knowledge, attitudes and entrepreneurial skills to enable them function effectively and be relevant in a dynamic, rapidly changing entrepreneurial and global environment (Akuegwu and Nwi-ue, 2016).

Higher education and specifically university education must be of the right quality and appropriate to the needs of the consumers of that education so as to impact on economic and social fabric of the individual and society at large (Nyangau, 2014; Nganga, 2014; Amimo, 2012). Education in developing countries is still experiencing major challenges among them, relevance (Yuthas and Epstein, 2013) and the notion of its quality and standards should be measured in relation to the context and environment in which it is located (O'Sullivan, 2006). Since 1963, the government has made several efforts to align education system to fit the needs of Kenyan context (Ominde commission (1964); Sessional Paper No. 10, 1965; Gachathi Report, 1976; Mackay commission 1981; Kamunge Report, 1988; Koech commission 1999; & Sessional Paper No. 1 (2005).

The Mackay commission (1981) was the only one that focused on restructuring of education system and possibility of starting another university. The commission recommended the start of Moi University and restructuring and replacement of the 7-4-2-3 system of education with the 8-4-4 model which was designed to be practical oriented and meant to equip school leavers with pre-vocational skills and technological education. A further innovation of the 8-4-4 system was its emphasis on the capacity of learners to acquire entrepreneurial skills among others.

The enactment of the universities Act, No. 42 of 2012 brought the management of universities under a single

Act which hitherto were managed under different Acts and provided for the formation of Commission for University Education to replace Commission for higher education (CHE). The Commission was established as a body corporate charged with the responsibility of addressing the need to regulate, coordinate and assure quality in university education as a result of growth and expansion of the university sub sector in Kenya.

Notwithstanding all the aforementioned efforts to realign education, University education in Kenya just like in Nigeria is fast losing the glamour that describes it as an excellent avenue for acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge, values and attitude for solving the fundamental problems of life (Akuegwu and Nwi-ue, 2016).0

Statement of the problem

The youths in Kenya, being the majority, bear the greatest burden of unemployment (Republic of Kenya, 2011) and with marked increase in university enrolment rate, it is highly likely that a significant percentage of unemployed youth are university graduates (Oanda & Sifuna, 2016). Many of them remain jobless many years after graduation and not venturing into self-employment as an alternative, a worrisome scenario for the government and society at large. The concerns of the government and the society raise pertinent question as to the quality and relevance of university education in Kenya which may not only be producing graduates who do not have the motivation but also the capacity to venture into own businesses. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the propensity of university education in Kenya to inculcate entrepreneurial culture among Kenyan university graduates. The results may help to inform design of academic programs and pedagogical approaches suitable to enhance graduate entrepreneurial culture.

Objective and hypothesis of the study

The study sought to determine the Propensity of university education in Kenya to inculcate entrepreneurial culture in graduates. The following hypothesis was tested:

$H_0$1: University education in Kenya has no significant Propensity to inculcate entrepreneurial culture in graduates.

Literature Review

In economies where the level of unemployment is very high, entrepreneurship may be the only antidote to this challenge (Akuegwu and Nwi-ue, 2016). Therefore, there is need to inculcate in youths, especially university graduates, the motivation and skills to venture into self-employment (*ibid*).

According to OECD (2009) the need to inculcate students with key (or core) skills; development of personal and social skills and Skills relating to business start-up or financial literacy necessary for successful entrepreneurship can be built into their academic or practical business opportunities within campus to enable them to acquire the aforementioned skills. This is because, in order for them to become job creators rather than job seekers, they should learn, from an early age, to be knowledgeable consumers, develop the right attitude towards work, and develop the skills needed to identify viable business opportunities and eventually start their own business undertakings (Ahmad, 2013).

Mohamad, Hussin and Buang (2014) suggest that Universities whose academic programs incorporate enterprise programs enable students acquire entrepreneurial skills such as financial skills, management skills, start-up business skills, operational skills, marketing skills, and communication and management information skills and on their part Varela, (1997) and Veciana (1998) agree that it is also necessary for entrepreneurial education to inculcate in students: entrepreneurial culture, reorient student's mentality towards entrepreneurship, develop and stimulate in learners the entrepreneurial skills for self-employment or make them valuable intrapreneurs in organizations in the event that they opt for paid employment among others . Similarly, Amimo (2012) argues that the preparation and training of graduates should not only be restricted to making them suited to the postindustrial workplace as employees with employable skills, but in engendering in them entrepreneurial and business acumen as (self)-employers, who would be the engine of growth of the Kenyan economy.

Although research has shown that the desire to become own boss intensifies as one ages (Oriarewo, Agbim and Aondoseer, 2013), the reality of high unemployment makes it imperative for young graduates to make a radical shift in their thinking and attitude towards self-employment as an alternative to employment in big companies and entrepreneurship education can play a significant role in this.

As part of entrepreneurship programs, having students engage in business activities within campus enables them gain hands on experience in managing small enterprises hence provide experience and practical training to them, foster entrepreneurial talents and train them to be independent and courageous in carrying out any efforts (Mohamad *et al*, 2014). According to Babalola (2011) internship/attachment, encouraging students to work independently, access to start-up capital, availability of technology and/or raw materials, knowledge of profit margin, allowing them to take personal responsibility, exposing them to success stories of entrepreneurs, motivational talks from successful industrialist/ business men and exposing them to relevant skills or technical knowledge and know how are examples of university-led initiatives which develop entrepreneurial potential or interest in students who would otherwise not be interested. For any University to be relevant, it must produce

graduates who would employ people rather than search for employment (Awuor, 2013)

Research Methodology

The setting for this research study was one private and one public university in Kenya. This study adopted a triangular design approach where the Propensity of university education in Kenya to inculcate entrepreneurial culture was examined from the perspectives of students from a public and a private university. A total of 3146 respondents (2272 final year students from University of Kabianga, Public and 874 final year student from Kabarak University, Private) took part in the study. A sample of 614 students comprising of 340 and 274 for University of Kabianga and Kabarak University respectively was randomly selected to take part in the study.

Data was collected using A 68-item instrument named Quality of University Education (UnEdQUAL) questionnaire which is a modification of NSSE (2013) questionnaire that incorporated Gibbs (2010) fourteen (14) dimensions of quality education, some aspects of Firdaus' (2006) HEdPERF-SERVPERF questionnaire; Akuegwu and Nwi-ue (2016) Students' Entrepreneurship Culture Development Questionnaire (SECDQ); Cronin and Taylor's (1992) SERVPERF questionnaire; Autio, *et al* (2001) questionnaire; Fox, Manus and Winder's (2001) short ended study Process Questionnaire; Kara *et al* (2016) educational service quality and students' satisfaction questionnaire and Kaur & Bhalla's (2015) questionnaire.

The instrument was validated by discussing with experts in the field of education and entrepreneurship (Firdaus, 2005). A parallel test on similar population of final year students from Moi University (Public) and Mount Kenya university (Private)was used to establish reliability of the modified instrument using a total of 30 questionnaire. Each of the ten scales in the questionnaire had Cronbach alpha coefficient greater than 0.7, with the exception of student- staff ratio scale which yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.478 attributed to the fact that it had only three scale items.

The overall questionnaire reliability was 0.8, $P< 0.001$ assessed using Karl Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlations indicating strong correlation between the two sets of data, an affirmation that both came from a similar population. The administration of the questionnaires to the selected students was done with the help of Contact persons (registrars and lecturers) of their respective universities (Firdaus, 2005). This was done after due approval was obtained from University Vice chancellors of the respective universities.

Results and Discussion

From an expected total response rate of 614 students in the final years from both University of Kabianga and Kabarak University, a total of 524 questionnaires were received back representing 85.3% response rates. From individual universities, 86.8% and 83.6% response rates were achieved for University of Kabianga and Kabarak Universities respectively. One of the key rationale that informed the review of university curriculum in Kenya was the recognition that existing curricula concentrated on preparing students for the "take-a-job" option instead of "make-a-job" option. We sought to assess the extent to which this has been achieved by examining the intention of the final year graduates to venture into entrepreneurship.

Descriptive Statistics

From the results in table 1, students' preference for entrepreneurship at the end of their final year at the university received overall moderate rating with mean of 3.13 with standard deviation of 1.125 and 3.03 with standard deviation of 0.966 from students in public and private universities respectively. Comparatively, there was no significant difference in the levels of student's preference for entrepreneurship in both public and private universities. Bearing in mind that developing an entrepreneurial culture/orientation is dependent on the relationship between the goals of the entrepreneurship program, the audiences to which the program is delivered, the content of the entrepreneurship courses, the method of delivery and the assessment used (Niyonkuru (2005) & Alberti et al. (2004), it will be preemptive to conclude that the entrepreneurial culture/orientation in Kenyan universities is established.

Table 1: Graduates' Entrepreneurial culture

Response	Skew	Public		Private	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Preference to become an entrepreneur	-.827	3.07	1.125	2.99	.966
Urge to a Start own Business	-.861	3.18	.990	3.07	.972
Mean		**3.13**	**.993**	**3.03**	**.912**

Predictors of entrepreneurial culture

Based on the initial adopted questionnaire, there were mixed results on the nine predictors of graduates' entrepreneurial culture as shown in table 2

Table 2: Predictors of entrepreneurial culture

	Public		Private	
Component	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Student- staff ratio	3.21	1.029	3.57	0.943
entrepreneurial environment	2.84	1.002	3.06	0.876
Curriculum Challenge	3.82	0.826	3.87	0.748
Depth of Approach to studying	3.54	.725	3.46	.654
Student's Engagement	2.96	0.511	2.73	.604
Formative Assessment and feedback	2.81	0.749	2.95	0.787
Student's Support Services	2.49	.673	2.50	.633
Quality Enhancement Processes	3.50	0.851	3.31	0.798

Students-staff ratio has been used as a key indicator of quality in higher education across the globe. The overall mean of all items measuring student-staff ratio was moderate with a mean of 3.21 & 3.57 for public and private universities respectively. Shortage of lecture rooms and personnel continues to undermine the levels of interaction between students and lecturers and consequently the quality of teaching in public universities, a position that is assumed to be better addressed in private universities (Gudo, Alel, & Oanda, 2011; Cheboi, 2006). Oversize classes, serious congestion due to limited learning facilities, reliance on part time lecturers who are only available for lecturers, excess workload for permanent lecturers leaving limited time for student consultations and guidance continues to be a cause of worry.

The time set aside by students for different activities that contribute to entire learning process were distributed as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Hours spent by students on various learning activities

	Hours	
Response (Activity)	**Public**	**Private**
	Mean	**Mean**
Time spent in Lectures	9.8	12
Time Studying independently	14.2	12.5
Time Preparing for class	11	10
Time on Co-curricular activities	7	7.5

Students in public universities were found to spend fewer hours weekly in both lectures (9.8) and co-curricular activities (7) as compared to students in private universities who spent 12 and 7.5 hours respectively. On independent study students in public universities spend more hours (14.2) hours weekly compared to 12.5 hours of their counterparts in private universities. Students at tertiary levels are expected to do more learning on their own than at lower learning levels. Public universities lead in this area.

Presence of entrepreneurial environment in universities, received mean rating of 2.84 with standard deviation of 1.002 and 3.06 with standard deviation of 0.876 for public and private universities respectively**.** Comparatively, students in private universities were more exposed to an entrepreneurial supportive environment than their counterparts in public universities but Overally, across universities the rating is average. Though a functioning entrepreneurship development center has the potential of enhancing students' inclination towards entrepreneurship **(**Akwuegu and Nwi-ue, 2016), according to the participants, it is still poorly developed in their universities.

The extent of curriculum challenge was found to be similar in both public and private universities with mean rating of 3.82 and 3.87 respectively. Plausible explanation for this is the standardized curriculum design processes prescribed by the commission for university education that has undermined the ability of each university to exploit their competencies in developing unique curriculum. For instance, most business courses offered across public and private universities are a close mirror of each other despite university curriculum development in Kenya adopting a flexible approach to curriculum design (Mautusi 2013, Mwebi 2015).

Depth of approach to study take two forms: surface approach where students Choose course based on job situation, Detest further schooling, perceive education as the way to better paying jobs, confine studies to what is given in Class and restrict study to the course outline and deep approach where students derive personal satisfaction from studying, find academic topics exciting like novels, relate what is learnt to real life situations, do enough work on a topic before being satisfied etc. Surface approach to study characterized study in public and private universities with equal mean rating of 3.04 while those in public showed slightly deep approach with mean score of 4.04 as compared to 3.87 for private universities.

Students engaged themselves in individual centered activities such as Combining ideas from different courses, connecting learning to societal problems, including diverse perspectives in course discussions, understanding others' point of view, giving course presentation, working with a faculty member and discussing course topics with faculty member outside class. All these enhance growth in their personal qualities such as leadership, work experience and knowledge. Students engagement in public and private universities received a mean rating of 2.96 with standard deviation of 0.511 and 2.73 with standard deviation of 0.617 respectively suggesting a moderate

level of engagement. However, from the means, students in public are relatively engaged than students in private universities.

Formative Assessment and feedback as an integral part of the learning process was measured from two perspectives: lecturers' where they asked questions at the end of the lesson, provided feedback on work in progress, timely feedback on assignments and detailed written feedback and students where they Identified information for reading assignments, Reviewed notes and Summarized what was learnt in class. From the responses, Formative assessment and provision of feedback in both private and public universities received mean rating of 2.9 with standard deviation of 0.749 and 2.86 with standard deviation of 0.492 respectively suggesting below moderate level of formative assessment and feedback. Self-assessment by students received rating of 3.25 with standard deviation of 0.752 and 3.18 with standard deviation of 0.793 for public and private universities respectively. Assessment by lecturers returned a mean score of 2.81 with standard deviation of 1.011 and 2.94 with standard deviation of 0.957 in public and private universities respectively. Based on mean scores, student' self-assessment is better in public than private universities while lecturer assessment is better in private than public universities.

Students Support services such as Support for needy students, adequate career counseling services etc., received below average mean rating of 2.49 with standard deviation of 0.673 and 2.50 with standard deviation of 0.633 for public and private universities respectively. Though the quality of support services was better in private universities, the difference was insignificant.

From table 2 Quality enhancement processes such as students' lecturer evaluation, CUE regular inspection, ISO certification, external moderation of exams, and a functioning quality assurance department received overall mean rating of 3.5 with standard deviation of 0.851 and 3.31 with standard deviation of 0.798 for Public and private universities respectively. Based on mean scores, quality enhancement processes were better in public as compared to private. Notwithstanding these findings, quality of education in public universities is generally believed to be relatively low as compared to private universities suggesting that public universities may be focusing on quality systems and not the end product or service itself (Magutu (2010)

Exploratory Factor Analysis

In determining the underlying latent elements on which the students assed the capacity of university education to inculcate entrepreneurial culture Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax (orthogonal) rotation was employed. As a prerequisite to factor analysis, two tests were done: Sample adequacy using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure - a score of 0.793 was obtained which is greater than the minimum acceptable index of 0.6 (Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity – computed chi square value of 16335.74($P < .05$) was obtained. Both confirmed suitability of factor analysis in determining the underlying constructs.

From the initial sixty-seven questions measuring the capacity of university education to inculcate in graduates entrepreneurial culture, nine factors were extracted explaining 57.7% of the total variance for the entire set of variables with minimum communalities of 43%. Fifteen items did not load on any of the extracted components and were subsequently removed from further analysis.

Three items measuring student staff ratio loaded on component one (1) explaining 3.53% of the total variations and was interpreted as a lecturer-students interaction. Among the five items set out to measure the hours that students spent in learning and co curriculum activities, all except one loaded on component two (2) explaining 3.64% of the total explained variances and was interpreted as study hours while Encouraging students to pursue business ideas, provision of information on venture capital sources and integration of entrepreneurship courses in all academic programs loaded on component (3) Explaining 4.449% of the total variances and was interpreted as entrepreneurship environment. Seven items loaded on component four (4) explaining 8.39% of the total variances and was interpreted as challenging curriculum,

Nine Items measuring depth of approach to study loaded on component (5) and was labeled depth of approach to study explaining 6.554% of the total variances. Out of the eleven items measuring students' engagement, seven loaded on component (6) explaining 10.08% of the total variance and was renamed student engagement.

All the seven items measuring students' formative assessment and feedback loaded on a single component explaining 7.344% of the variances and was named formative assessment and feedback. Of all items measuring support services, six loading on a single component labeled student support services explaining 6.893% of the total variances. Quality enhancement processes had six items. Only one item: student evaluation of their lecturers at the end of every semester did not load on any item, leaving the remaining five item as significant measures explaining 6.821% of the total variations.

Results of Binary Logistic regression Analysis

Treating Graduate's decision to venture into entrepreneurship or joining formal employment as two mutually exclusive decisions, a binary logistic regression estimation model was found suitable. The suitability of the binary regression models was tested using Hosmer and Lemeshow Test. The resulting test value of 7.658 ($p > 0.05$) was an indication of a good fit with the fitted model explained between 22.9% (Cox and Snell R-square) and 34.7%

(Nagelkerke R-square) of variance in final year student's choice of whether to pursue entrepreneurship or seek formal employment, with the final model classifying correctly 79.5% of cases.

Table 4: Binary Logistic Model Fit Test Results

Model Fit Tests			Hosmer and Lemeshow Test			Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients		
-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square	Chi-square	df	Sig.	Chi-square	df	Sig.
410.056	0.229	.347	7.658	8	0.468	130.53	10	0.000

From the fitted Binary logistic regression model, it was evident that the existence of an entrepreneurial environment was the single most significant attribute that shapes the desire among university final year students in venturing into business. Students in institutions where a strong entrepreneurial environment exists are 19.6 times more likely to venture into business or self-employment than students in university where entrepreneurial environment is not strongly entrenched

Table 5; Binary Logistic Regression Model Coefficients Estimates

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Quality enhancement processes	-.001	.034	.002	1	.969	.999
Challenging Curriculum	.026	.038	.453	1	.501	1.026
Support Services	.166	.037	19.825	1	.000	1.180
Students Engagement	.101	.027	14.203	1	.000	1.106
Depth of Approach to study	.048	.062	.594	1	.441	1.049
Entrepreneurship environment	.196	.051	14.674	1	.000	1.217
Student -staff Ratio	-.072	.046	2.523	1	.112	.930
Formative, Assessment & Feedback	.105	.037	8.180	1	.004	1.111
Total Study Hours	.002	.028	.003	1	.957	1.002
Constant	-7.666	1.15	47.190	1	.000	.000

Support services was found to be the second most significant predictor with 16.6 odds of a student venturing into business when there exist strong student support systems. Where students are given timely and in-depth feedback on their progress, there is 10.5 odds of the students developing an entrepreneurial orientation compared to students who were receiving limited or no feedback. Where students' engagement is favorable, graduates are 10.1 times more likely to venture into entrepreneurship, a position that calls for development of student representation and integration of their participation in the running of universities in Kenya. Student staff Ratio, total Study Hours, Challenging Curriculum, Depth of Approach to study and Quality Enhancement processes were factors found not to be significant in predicting student's entrepreneurial culture as their p-values are greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis Testing

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients was used to test the null hypothesis, holding that university education in Kenya has no significant propensity to inculcate entrepreneurial culture on its graduates. As seen in Table 4 the omnibus Chi square test value was highly significant (*chi-square = 130.53, df = 10, p <.000)* an indication that the nine dimensions of quality were significantly influencing the entrepreneurial culture of students in both private and public universities. With the test p values of less than 0.05, the study's levels of significance, the null hypothesis that University education in Kenya has no significant Propensity to inculcate entrepreneurial culture in graduates was therefore rejected and a conclusion that university education in Kenya was empowering its graduates with an entrepreneurial culture and sends them out as job creators and not job seekers.

The findings can be an indication of the coming into fruition of government policy intentions on producing graduates who are job creators rather than job seekers. However, finding presented in the British Council (2016) indicates that most secondary students aspired to self-employment rather than formal sector wage employment even before starting their university education, placing a caution on reaching a full conclusion on the ability of the university education to inculcate entrepreneurial culture on its graduates.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Out of the nine quality dimensions measuring the quality and relevance of the university education, only four dimensions were found to significantly influence graduate's entrepreneurial orientation. They are entrepreneurial environment, student support services, formative assessment and feedback and student engagement

Evidence from the current study on the entrepreneurial orientation show that Kenyan graduates are still inclined towards formal employment. Despite integration of entrepreneurship courses in academic programs, Kenyan graduates are still indifferent to the two options of formal employment or entrepreneurship. The results of this

study corroborate that of Akwuegu & Nwi-ue (2016) who found that in Nigeria, the capacity of Universities to develop entrepreneurship culture among students was significantly low.

Policy Recommendations

The entrenched mindset where students pursue university education as a means to securing a white-collar job, calls for changes not only in the curriculum, but also the establishment of a strong entrepreneurial environment and support systems within the universities where students can nature their entrepreneurial ideas. Universities need to make entrepreneurship more practical oriented by setting up incubational centers, linking students with providers of venture capital, market linkages, and industry mentorships for student ideas. This will go a long way in building an entrepreneurial mindset among graduates from Kenya universities.

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