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Influence of Entrepreneurship Education and Training on Entrepreneurial Intentions among Undergraduate Students in Kenya

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Abstract
Scholars have found that the precursor of entrepreneurial behavior among potential entrepreneurs is entrepreneurial intention, hence the attention of this study. The government of Kenya has, for a long time, struggled with the bulging number of unemployed graduates, and the solution to this can be explored in entrepreneurship development intentions and realization among the youth, the majority of whom are undergraduates. Many studies on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates have focused mainly on developed countries and less on developing nations like Kenya. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to bridge the gap by investigating the effect of entrepreneurship education and training on entrepreneurial intentions. The study was anchored on the human capital theory. The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. This design was appropriate for capturing data at a single point in time from a large population. The study had a population of 40,000 students from the selected university students out of which 1% (400) were picked as the study sample size. Of these, 336 students responded to the questionnaire. The study found that entrepreneurship education and training positively impact entrepreneurial intentions. The study recommends that universities should enhance the quality and relevance of entrepreneurship education by incorporating more practical components, such as business simulations, internships, and real-world projects.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education and Training, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Undergraduate Students*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation worldwide. It serves as a foundation for productivity and competitiveness, enabling economies to adapt to technological and social change (Acs & Audretsch, 2003). In both developed and developing nations, entrepreneurial ventures contribute to industrial diversification, technological progress, and the creation of new markets. Countries with vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems tend to experience sustained growth and inclusive development (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999). In developing economies such as Kenya, entrepreneurship has become a key policy priority, viewed as an avenue for addressing youth unemployment and promoting economic self-reliance.

Entrepreneurial behavior is not spontaneous; it is largely intentional and grounded in deliberate decision-making processes. This perspective is rooted in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen,

1991), which posits that entrepreneurial intentions are the most immediate antecedent of entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurial intentions capture an individual's commitment and willingness to start a business or engage in entrepreneurial activities (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). Thus, understanding and fostering entrepreneurial intention among university students is essential to predicting and supporting future entrepreneurial ventures. Through this lens, entrepreneurship education becomes a strategic intervention that shapes students' attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and normative beliefs toward entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Education and Training (EET) has been globally recognized as a powerful tool for nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets, skills, and behaviors. It integrates theoretical and practical approaches such as business simulations, mentorship, and enterprise projects that equip learners with the competence to identify opportunities and manage ventures (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Martin, McNally & Kay, 2013). Studies consistently show that students exposed to entrepreneurship courses exhibit higher entrepreneurial awareness, stronger intentions, and increased confidence in starting their own businesses (Yoon, Kim & Liang, 2011; Misoska et al., 2016). Beyond business knowledge, EET develops innovation, creativity, risk-taking ability, and resilience—attributes essential for effective entrepreneurship.

In the Kenyan context, the rising levels of youth unemployment underscore the urgency of effective entrepreneurship education. According to the 2019 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) census, 38.9% of young people aged 18–34 years were unemployed, translating to over 5.34 million individuals, with a significant proportion being university graduates. Each year, approximately 800,000 youths enter the labor market, yet fewer than 35% secure formal employment opportunities. Consequently, entrepreneurship has been promoted through government initiatives such as the Kenya Youth Empowerment Program (KYEP), Ajira Digital Program, and university-level entrepreneurship courses aimed at fostering self-employment and innovation.

However, despite increased exposure to entrepreneurship training, the rate of business start-ups among graduates remains relatively low. Many students express interest in entrepreneurship but fail to transition from intention to actual venture creation. This gap suggests that while EET may enhance knowledge and awareness, its influence on developing strong entrepreneurial intentions and subsequent behavior is still limited. It is against this background that this study sought to assess the influence of Entrepreneurship Education and Training on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Kenya, with the aim of generating insights that can guide curriculum development, policy formulation, and institutional strategies to promote graduate entrepreneurship.

Statement of the problem

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a viable solution to persistent graduate unemployment in Kenya. In response, universities and the government have introduced entrepreneurship education and training programs aimed at cultivating entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates. Despite these initiatives, the rate of business start-ups among university graduates remains low, raising questions about the actual influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention. Empirical evidence underscores this concern. A study by Mugambi and Miriti (2021) at Chuka University found that although a majority of students expressed interest in entrepreneurship, only a small proportion pursued ventures after graduation. Similarly, research across Moi, Mount Kenya, and Catholic Universities revealed that while traits such as innovativeness and self-efficacy correlated

strongly with entrepreneurial intention, the role of structured entrepreneurship training in strengthening these attributes was not fully realized.

This gap suggests that exposure to entrepreneurship education alone may not be sufficient unless it effectively builds confidence, competence, and opportunity recognition among learners. Moreover, few studies have systematically examined how different aspects of entrepreneurship education, such as curriculum design, experiential learning, mentorship, and institutional support, collectively shape students' entrepreneurial intentions in the Kenyan context. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education and training on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Kenya. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence to guide policy formulation, enhance university curricula, and strengthen youth entrepreneurship programs aimed at reducing unemployment and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on human capital theory. This theory posits that investment in education and training enhances individual productivity and economic outcomes. The proponents of Human Capital Theory is Becker (1964) who looked at the key constructs of the theory as knowledge, skills experience (Becker, 1964). The Human Capital theory is founded on the premise that entrepreneurship capacity is a critical component of an entrepreneur's human capital, which is reflected in their managerial capability and know-how furthering entrepreneurial intention. More skills, knowledge and experience, ensures that efforts put towards entrepreneurial activities are properly directed and thus lead to an increase in entrepreneurial intention and its actualization (Rengiah, 2016). According to Mulyungi (2016), this theory considers knowledge as one that increases entrepreneurs' cognitive to higher productivity. Indeed, earlier studies have found out that entrepreneurial intention increases with higher levels of education, skills and experience. Advocates of this idea claim that there exists a positive correlation between the level of human capital development and managerial competences on one hand and entrepreneurial intentions on the other hand. According to Bartlett and Rangelova (1997), managerial skills are considered to be the primary determinant of firm growth. Additionally, Welter and Smallbone (2011) argue that entrepreneurs can better anticipate and respond to changes in their external environments when they have larger levels of the right human capital. Ignorance of critical enterprise growth knowledge and skills such as entrepreneurial finance sourcing, use, record management and other related areas hinders entrepreneurial intentions. This theory, therefore, underpins the importance of entrepreneurship education and training variable in increasing entrepreneurial intentions among the undergraduate students in Kenya. The theory views Entrepreneurship Education and Training as an investment in human capital which in return increases entrepreneurial competence and intention (Becker 1964; Hassan et al. 2020; Ferreira et al., 2016).

Empirical Literature Review

Entrepreneurship education is a field of study and training focused on developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for individuals to identify opportunities, create and manage business, and drive innovations. Ideally it is expected to equip learners with tools to be confident and proactive in various contexts and not just in starting businesses. Entrepreneurship education, consequently should significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intentions by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and confidence. A study in Sub-Saharan Africa found that entrepreneurship knowledge acquisition and opportunity recognition positively affect both entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention (Puni, 2021). In Uganda, Korir (2021) reported that

entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy were significant predictors of students' self-employment intentions, based on a survey of 458 undergraduates. In a study carried out among the Indonesia University undergraduate only 6.12% of graduates expressed interest in entrepreneurship despite going through entrepreneurship education, highlighting a global challenge in translating education into action. Njoroge (2019) conducted a study at the University of Nairobi and found that entrepreneurship education significantly enhanced students' confidence, creativity, and business planning skills, which in turn increased their entrepreneurial intentions. Practical teaching methods were more effective than theoretical ones in shaping entrepreneurial behavior. Kimathi, Njeru, & Korir (2020) examined Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Kenya and found that trainer attributes especially full-time lecturers had a significant positive effect on students' entrepreneurial intention. However, the study noted that practicing entrepreneurs were underutilized as mentors. Maina (2010) explored determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among Kenyan college graduates and found that college environment and exposure to entrepreneurship experiences influenced intention through self-efficacy and perceived desirability. Entrepreneurship education and training in universities is expected to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes about entrepreneurial culture and business environment by not only influencing their mindset but also exposing them to opportunities prevailing in the industry. Luthje and Frank, (2003) argue that entrepreneurial education and training is the foundation of entrepreneurial intention with the same argument being championed by Samuel et al., (2013) education is an important contributor for entrepreneurial intentions. They argue that entrepreneurship education and training enhance creativity, innovativeness, risk-taking and ability to interpret successful entrepreneurial models and identification of business opportunities in a dynamic business environment. More so Friedrich and Visser (2005) study pointed out that entrepreneurship education and training increases students' interest in becoming entrepreneurs at some stage after graduation no wonder Agbim (2013) study confirmed that graduates who had entrepreneurship education and training had intentions to start their own businesses after graduating. Entrepreneurial education develops and stimulates entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new ventures (Postigo and Tomborini 2002).

According to a study by Wu and Wu, (2008) entrepreneurial intention is the driving force behind the creation of new ventures Douglas & Fitzsimmon (2008) study on the other hand identified entrepreneurial intention as the action of an individual's attitudes toward the outcomes of that actions and individual's self-efficacy. Other entrepreneurship scholars have indicated a strong relationship between the entrepreneurial intention and the abilities to recognize and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003). Entrepreneurial intentions are said to be central to understanding and adhering to entrepreneurial process as well as being an immediate determinant of entrepreneurial behavior (Van Gelderen et al. 2008; Pihie, 2009) leading to the conclusion that entrepreneurial activity is predictable through accurate study of entrepreneurial intentions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. This design was appropriate for capturing data at a single point in time from a large population, allowing for statistical analysis of relationships between the independent variables and entrepreneurial intention.

Target Population

The target population comprised 40,000 undergraduate students enrolled in selected programs across selected public and private universities in Kenya. The students were chosen because they are at a critical decision-making stage regarding career paths, including entrepreneurship.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A multistage sampling technique was employed. Stage 1 was a purposive selection of five universities (both public and private) across different regions of Kenya. Stage 2 was stratified sampling based on faculties/schools. Stage 3 involved simple random sampling of students within each stratum. A sample size of 1% was used, targeting approximately 400 respondents to ensure generalizability and statistical power.

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review by entrepreneurship scholars.

Pilot testing was conducted with 30 students from a non-sampled university.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs achieving $\alpha \geq 0.70$.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were used. Inferential statistics involved simple regression analysis to test the influence of the independent variable on entrepreneurial intention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to the target population, of which 336 were fully completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 84 percent. This high response rate indicates that the findings are based on a representative sample of the study population and can provide reliable insights into the drivers of entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Kenya.

Entrepreneurship Education and Training

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Education and Training

	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have received adequate training in entrepreneurship	3	3.9	18.2	50.6	24.4	3.90	.92
Entrepreneurship courses are relevant to opportunity identification and seizure	2.4	0.3	7.4	57.1	32.7	4.18	.77
My university organizes entrepreneurship events/workshops.	3.9	13.1	31.3	36.3	15.5	3.46	1.03
I have access to entrepreneurial mentorship.	3.6	12.5	25.3	40.8	17.9	3.57	1.03
Aggregate score						3.78	.94

The findings suggest that undergraduate students in Kenya generally view entrepreneurship education positively, although their experiences are not uniform. The strongest area of agreement was on the relevance of entrepreneurship courses, with a mean of 4.18. This shows that students widely believe the courses equip them with the ability to identify and seize opportunities, a critical foundation for nurturing entrepreneurial intentions. The relatively low variation in responses (SD = 0.77) further implies that this perception is consistently shared across the majority of respondents. This aligns with Puni (2021), who found that entrepreneurship

knowledge acquisition and opportunity recognition positively influence self-efficacy and intention in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Njoroge (2019) reported that entrepreneurship education at the University of Nairobi enhanced students' confidence, creativity, and business planning skills, which in turn shaped entrepreneurial intentions. These findings suggest that the structured coursework component of entrepreneurship education is fulfilling its role in building knowledge and fostering entrepreneurial mindsets.

Students also expressed confidence in the adequacy of the training they had received, reflected in a mean score of 3.90. This indicates that many feel their coursework prepares them well for entrepreneurial activities. However, the slightly higher spread of responses (SD = 0.92) suggests that while some students are fully satisfied, others feel the training could be improved or delivered more effectively. This echoes Korir (2021), who observed that entrepreneurship education significantly predicted self-employment intentions in Uganda but noted differences depending on how education was delivered.

When it comes to practical exposure, the results paint a more mixed picture. The availability of entrepreneurship events and workshops received a mean of 3.46, the lowest in this category, pointing to only moderate agreement. The high variability in responses (SD = 1.03) highlights that while some students benefit from such events, many others either do not have access to them or do not find them impactful. A similar trend appears with entrepreneurial mentorship, which scored a mean of 3.57. Here again, the high standard deviation (SD = 1.03) reveals considerable differences in student experiences, with mentorship being accessible and useful to some, but limited or absent for others. These findings echo Maina (2010) and Kimathi et al. (2020), who stressed the importance of exposure to entrepreneurial experiences and mentorship in strengthening self-efficacy and intention. They also resonate with global concerns, such as the Indonesian case, where entrepreneurship education alone did not translate into entrepreneurial action. As argued by Luthje and Frank (2003), Samuel et al. (2013), and Agbim (2013), entrepreneurship education must go beyond theory by fostering creativity, risk-taking, and real-world exposure to effectively shape intentions.

The aggregate mean of 3.78 suggests that entrepreneurship education does have a positive influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Yet, the relatively high overall standard deviation (0.94) indicates that these benefits are unevenly distributed. This finding affirms arguments by Luthje and Frank (2003) and Samuel et al. (2013), who contend that entrepreneurship education forms the foundation of entrepreneurial intention by fostering creativity, innovation, and risk-taking. While formal courses appear to provide a strong and consistent foundation, the practical aspects of entrepreneurship education, such as workshops and mentorship remain inconsistent. This imbalance suggests that students may leave university with varying levels of preparedness for entrepreneurship, depending on how well their institutions integrate both theoretical and experiential learning.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 2: Entrepreneurial Intention

	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Deviation
I intend to start my own business after graduation.	1.8	0.9	8	46.1	43.2	4.28	.80
I am seriously considering entrepreneurship as a career option.	2.4	1.5	19.9	41.1	35.1	4.05	.91
I frequently think about business ideas.	2.1	0.9	8.9	47.9	40.2	4.23	.81

I am determined to create a business in the near future	1.8	0	7.1	45.5	45.5	4.33	.76
Aggregate score						4.22	.82

The results show that most students demonstrated strong intentions to engage in entrepreneurship as a career pathway. The highest level of agreement was recorded on the statement that respondents are determined to create a business in the near future with a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating strong resolve and focus on entrepreneurial pursuits. Closely following was the intention to start a business after graduation with a mean of 4.28 and standard deviation of 0.80, which reflects readiness to transition directly from academic training into entrepreneurial activity. The frequent generation of business ideas also scored highly with a mean of 4.23 and standard deviation of 0.81, pointing to an active entrepreneurial mindset and innovative orientation among students. The lowest rated but still positively skewed response related to seriously considering entrepreneurship as a career option, which had a mean of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.91. This finding suggests that while many students strongly embrace entrepreneurship, a section of them may still weigh their options due to factors such as limited resources, risk perceptions, or external labor market opportunities.

The findings indicate that respondents generally exhibit strong entrepreneurial intentions, as reflected by the high aggregate mean score of 4.22. A large proportion of students intend to start businesses after graduation, frequently think about business ideas, and show determination to create ventures in the near future. This suggests that entrepreneurial intention is already well-established among the respondents and can be seen as a predictor of actual entrepreneurial behavior. These results align with the argument by Wu and Wu (2008) that entrepreneurial intention is the main driving force behind the creation of new ventures. Similarly, Douglas and Fitzsimmon (2008) emphasized that entrepreneurial intention is shaped by self-efficacy and personal attitudes, both of which were reflected in the high levels of self-belief and confidence observed among students in this study. The positive results also resonate with Peterman and Kennedy (2003), who noted that entrepreneurial intentions are strongly linked to the ability to recognize and exploit opportunities. The fact that many respondents frequently think about business ideas and see themselves starting businesses demonstrates opportunity-seeking behavior, which is a critical entrepreneurial trait.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.475[a]	.226	.223	.62038

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Education

The regression results show that entrepreneurship education has a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students. The model summary indicates that entrepreneurship education explains 22.6% (R^2 = .226) of the variation in entrepreneurial intention, with an adjusted R^2 of .223.

Table 4: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.464	1	37.464	97.342	.000[b]
	Residual	128.545	334	.385		
	Total	166.009	335			

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Education

The ANOVA results further confirm the model's significance ($F(1,334) = 97.342$, $p < .001$), indicating that entrepreneurship education is a reliable predictor of entrepreneurial intention.

Table 5: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.500	.178		14.057	.000
	Entrepreneurship Education	.456	.046	.475	9.866	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention

The coefficients table shows that entrepreneurship education has a positive and statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .475$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .456$) implies that for every one-unit increase in entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention increases by 0.456 units, holding other factors constant. This finding supports the argument that exposure to entrepreneurship education enhances students' propensity to engage in entrepreneurial activities, aligning with prior studies such as Njoroge (2019) and Puni (2021), which found that entrepreneurship training and knowledge acquisition positively influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that entrepreneurship education and training have a positive effect on undergraduate students' entrepreneurial intentions in Kenya. Exposure to structured courses, practical training, and entrepreneurial events enhances students' knowledge, skills, and mindset, enabling them to identify opportunities and plan business ventures effectively.

Recommendations

Universities should enhance the quality and relevance of entrepreneurship education by incorporating more practical components such as business simulations, internships, and real-world projects. Continuous updating of course content to reflect current market trends and providing opportunities for students to engage in entrepreneurial events and competitions can further strengthen students' skills and confidence, ensuring that education translates into actionable entrepreneurial intentions.

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