
**ENTERPRENUERSHIP CURRICUCLUM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DISTANCE
LEARNING PIVOTAL TO SUCCESS OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

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Abstract

This study sought to establish why distance learning universities like the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) were not taking entrepreneurship as a pivotal course for all programmes given the high risk of university graduates becoming jobless after completing their university studies. Formal employment has been 'severely' affected in Zimbabwe since the macro economic reforms just before the turn of the new millennium (1990s). Since these reforms, a number of companies were liquidated or have downsized their operations, largely due to economic challenges facing the country. There have been numerous cases of retrenchments thereby increasing unemployment. This has led to a number of worrying behaviour among the unemployed graduates who roam the streets, engage in drug and substance abuse, criminal activities and social decadence. The study was qualitative and targeted ZOU faculties particularly academics and students. Unstructured interviews were used to generate data. Data analysis was done using the content analysis method. Major findings were that; despite awareness of entrepreneurship through Ministries of Primary and Secondary education, Small and Medium Enterprises and Youth, Indigenization and Economic development, civic society and the corporate world, universities such as ZOU had not done much to promote entrepreneurship which was not even covered by majority of its programmes. There was still a strong culture among Zimbabweans especially university graduates, to look for formal employment in established companies. ZOU has not been doing enough to review its programmes in terms of the curricular to move in tandem with the ever-changing demands of the world of work. A culture paradigm shift is needed by having entrepreneurship as a mandatory course for distance learners so that those who are not formally employed, will be able to align their studies with the National development strategy.

Key words: Curriculum Development, Distance Learning, Entrepreneurship, National development strategy, Unemployment

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Munyanyiwa and Mutsau (2015), the prominence of entrepreneurship education dates back to the late 1950s though the history of entrepreneurship as a practice dates back to the 1930s (Keateet *al.*, 2020). As a programme of learning, entrepreneurship education was pioneered in American universities with the aim of producing graduates who were able not only to identify business opportunities but also to turn those opportunities into businesses (Bilic, Prka and Vidovic, 2011). In order to build a strong entrepreneurship foundation in graduates,

Merida and Rocha (2021), argue that when developing or reviewing the entrepreneurship curriculum, courses such as the development of new organisations, new markets, and new products must form the basis of an entrepreneurship curriculum whilst business management courses must emphasise the knowledge and skills required for business practice. For such a curriculum to be effectively developed or reviewed, Munyanyiwa and Mutsau (2015) argue that four perspectives need to be taken into consideration namely: a) the programme can be developed or reviewed from the perspective of the educators (lecturers) where curriculum is defined based on the expertise of the educators, b) it can also be developed based on the needs of students, c) the entrepreneurship curriculum can be analysed from the point of view of those who designed it, and d) evaluators and reviewers of the curriculum can influence the curriculum by making judgements on the curriculum content based on the pre-set criteria of programme quality and effectiveness. *Curriculum development* is a planned, purposeful, progressive, and systematic process in order to create positive improvements in the educational system (Alvior, 2015; Bilbao *et al.*, 2008). Every time there are changes or developments happening around the world, the school (university) curricular are affected. There is a need to update them in order to address the society's needs (Emans, 2014). There must be a chain of developmental process to develop a society. First, the school curriculum particularly in higher education must be developed to preserve the country's national identity and to ensure its economy's growth and stability (Akutson, 2017). Thus, the president of a country must have a clear vision for his people and for the country as well and that the country's economy can improve the people's way of life through curriculum development (Chapel, 2005). And in order to develop it, curriculum experts or specialists should work hand in hand with the lawmakers (senators and members of parliament), the local government officials, such as governors, mayors; the business communities and industries; and other stakeholders to set implementing rules and policies for educational reforms (Nani, 2019).

The Curriculum framework provides for an education system that gives learners an appreciation of unique identity and at the same time establishing a strong scientific and technological bias within the curriculum as part of government's skills development strategy (Jaiswal and Arun, 2021). The Curriculum framework will closely relate the school to the productive sectors of the economy and by so doing, develop skilled human capital base that ensures sustainable development for the nation. The framework will promote unity in diversity of cultures by developing the 16 officially recognised languages as identified in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Education should mould learners who cherish and practise the Zimbabwean philosophical orientation of Unhu/Ubuntu/ Vumunhu (Mutanga, 2022). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education developed this Curriculum Framework for Infant (including Early Childhood Development), Junior and Secondary school levels. The decision to develop the Curriculum framework was made in the context of the government's focus on preparing Zimbabwean learners for the needs of the 21st century, growing concerns amongst policy makers and key stakeholders regarding the relevance of the education system and the changes in global education standards (Nani, 2016).

Historically, the Zimbabwe education system, like others around the world, emphasised the development of strong content knowledge at the expense of critical skills and competencies (Risiro, 2021). There is, however, increasing recognition that content knowledge mastery is not adequate as an exit attribute. The emphasis is now on developing higher-order thinking skills and competencies. On 28 November 2014 the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education initiated a nationwide consultative curriculum review process that involved stakeholders

including learners, parents, teachers, leaders in industry and commerce, farmers, church organisations, civic society, institutions of higher learning and government ministries and departments (Renikoet *al.*, 2019). Furthermore, there was extensive media coverage which included advertorials, newscasts, features and interviews in all platforms. The result of the consultative curriculum review process was a Narrative Report 2014-2015. The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022), which offers a vision of the education system and the kind of school graduates that Zimbabwe needs, was principally informed by the findings and recommendations of the Narrative Report 2014 - 2015 (Wuta, 2022). The findings embrace, among other things, some of the recommendations from the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) Report published in 1999, also known as the Nziramasanga commission (Madondo, Musekaand Phiri, 2014). Other principal pillars relate to the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013), the Education Act as amended in 2006, and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET)(2013). The Framework was also informed by the country's heritage, history, national ideals and aspirations.

There has been a global growth in the field of entrepreneurship education (EE) in higher education with increasing focus on the design, development, and delivery of EE programs (Baporikar, 2022). The broad premise here is that university-based EE programs have the potential for facilitating a range of entrepreneurial outcomes including subjective ones, such as entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge, feasibility, and entrepreneurial intentions, and objective ones like entrepreneurial start-up behavior and business performance. Despite numerous calls to advance the field, a number of research gaps persist (Hall, Danekeand Lenox, 2010). Firstly, while there is a huge preponderance of research on one outcome, namely entrepreneurial intentions, there is a lack of research examining the relationship between EE and other novel entrepreneurial outcomes such as the entrepreneurial mindset (EM). Indeed, following a major systematic review, Nabi and Holden (2008), concluded that a 'key knowledge gap centres on impact measures focusing on the development of the entrepreneurial mind-set'. Generally, EM refers to cognitive structures deeper than entrepreneurial intent and different from surface-level learning of knowledge. The foundation of EM lies in cognitive adaptability defined as the ability to be flexible and self-regulating in one's cognitions given dynamic and uncertain task environments. Adaptive cognitions are vital in the process of entrepreneurial action to achieve desirable outcomes. Cui *et al.* (2010). have recently recognized EM as a new impact indicator of EE in China. Therefore, EM is important because it would provide a more nuanced insight into how EE impacts under-examined outcomes.

There is therefore need to emphasise development of technical skills and providing management skills to those leaving university or tertiary institutions with various trades. Given the many political, social and economic problems Zimbabwe is grappling with, accordingly entrepreneurship education should be seen as a way out of the problem of joblessness (Madondo, 2020). Entrepreneurship education provides youths with organisational skills, time management skills, leadership and interpersonal skills which are highly transferable skills. Consistent with the collective aspirations and determination of the people of Zimbabwe to achieve an Empowered and Prosperous Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030, the Second Republic launched Vision 2030 to chart a new transformative and inclusive development agenda (Mazikana, 2023). It is the pursuit of this vision which will deliver broad based transformation, new wealth creation and expanding horizons of economic opportunities for all Zimbabweans, with no one left behind. Pursuant to this, Government developed the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) to guide the reform process during the period 2018 to 2020

(Chitongo, Chikunya and Marango, 2020). Although we faced some challenges along the way, significant progress was made in the implementation of the TSP across its various pillars. Contemporary Entrepreneurship in the Zimbabwean context cannot be studied or discussed outside the economic operational framework, the National development strategy, 2021-2030 (Bvirindi, 2021).

II STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There seems to be a serious negative attitude towards entrepreneurship by students and even institutions of higher learning such as the ZOU. These institutions are lacking the vigour to promote entrepreneurship which should contribute towards the solving the country's ballooning unemployment rate and enhance sustainable enterprises to innovate, adopt appropriate environmentally friendly technologies, develop human resources, and enhance productivity to remain competitive (Uzhenyu, 2015). Existing curricular is aligned towards employment in largely established companies by university graduates, yet these companies are restructuring, retrenching or facing serious viability problems and a number have already been liquidated. In distance learning institutions like the Zimbabwe Open University, most degree programmes are tailor made to service the formal sector especially large companies as the only meaningful source of sustainable employment, yet there are a lot of successful African entrepreneurs such as Strive Masiyiwa (the most successful Zimbabwe entrepreneur) and Dangote of Nigeria just to mention a few. Therefore, Zimbabwean graduates including those unemployed who went through distance education should get inspiration from such successful fellow Africans. This shows that entrepreneurship can improve the lives of Africans as demonstrated by just these two sampled successful entrepreneurs.

III RESEARCH QUESTIONS (SUB-PROBLEMS)

1. What is the attitude of distance learning institutions towards entrepreneurship?
2. Which are the challenges affecting the teaching of entrepreneurship by distance learning institutions?
3. How can distance learning institutions promote entrepreneurship to address unemployment challenges facing Zimbabwe?

IV LITERATURE REVIEW

(I) The Theoretical framework

The **ADDIE model** (analysis, design, and development, implementation, and evaluation phases) was developed by Branson in 1975. This is a systematic instructional design process (Alvior, 2015) which can be used by ZOU faculties in developing curriculum in their departments including entrepreneurship as a course which can have general or common principles and then specific aspects tailor made to suit each programme. A synopsis of its 5 phases as presented by Alvior (2015) is given below

- **Analysis**

Prior to course development, a thorough analysis of the state of the graduates' requirements, school or board requests, and competitive positioning is completed. Feedback on current courses from student academic performance, user feedback, usability reviews, and national standards should be incorporated into the analysis (Alvior, 2015; Branson, 1975).

- **Design**

Within the design phase, the curriculum team attends to the set of standards around which the course is written, instructional strategies, content, visual and technical design of the course. Attention is focused on the course's purpose and audience (ODL students), as well as the organization's instructional approach and instructional resources. Consideration is also given to the role of technology, the level of student engagement and student learning styles (Alvior, 2015; Branson, 1975).

- **Development**

Beginning with a course map which focuses on standards alignment and the identification of the enduring knowledge present in the course, the development lifecycle incorporates unit by unit course development and revision, content analysis and review, editorial review and revision, and a detailed quality assurance appraisal. Procedures for ensuring internal consistency, bias-free content and assessments, instructional effectiveness, and the appropriate use of intellectual property are implemented throughout this development phase. When courses are completed before implementation, they are presented to students, academics (tutors and senate) and other key stakeholders such as employers and even the responsible authority (Alvior, 2015; Branson, 1975). In the case of ZOU, it is the Ministry of higher and tertiary education, science and technology development, preferably its quality assurance unit, the Zimbabwe council for higher education (ZIMCHE).

- **Implementation**

Each academic year should bring the implementation of newly developed programmes and courses. Before full release, demonstration or pilot courses are created, valued by tutors and suggestions should be implemented. Learning and effective implementation is supported by updated and ongoing training for all (Alvior, 2015; Branson, 1975).

- **Evaluation**

The intent of the evaluation phase is to determine the level of student success, and the impact of the course design on student performance and industry impact. Evaluation occurs throughout the delivery of the course and includes student performance, internal lesson and assessment analysis, and feedback from students, tutors, employers etc. Essential user feedback can be gained through surveys e.g. for ZOU taking seriously course evaluation forms (Alvior, 2015; Branson, 1975).

(II)The National development strategy 1 (2021-2025)

Zimbabwe government came up with a framework intended to achieve an Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030, whose vision shall be to deliver broad based transformation, new wealth creation and expanding horizons of economic opportunities for all Zimbabweans (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020). The NDS1 is the first 5-year Medium Term Plan aimed at realising the country's Vision 2030, while simultaneously addressing the global aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063. The NDS1 is premised on four critical guiding principles.

- The first is a recognition that bold and transformative measures are required to underpin the drive towards the attainment of our Vision 2030. Slow and incremental change will not deliver the transformation that the people of Zimbabwe deserve (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020).
- Secondly, it is clear that, while we continue to make headway with our international re-engagement efforts, which in time will yield positive results, we must intensify our efforts to generate growth through intentional mobilisation of domestic growth vectors. To this end, the NDS1 must attend to the development and capacitation of key national institutions, which will create the enabling environment critical for transformative economic growth. Further, let me re-emphasise that Zimbabwe is open for business to all investors, foreign and domestic, including Zimbabweans in the Diaspora (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020).
- Thirdly, the NDS1 must deliberately leverage Zimbabwe's competitive advantages particularly with regards to the configuration of our natural resource endowment, our excellent ecological endowment and our skills base (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020).
- Finally, for transformative and inclusive growth to bring benefits to all Zimbabweans in a fair, transparent and just manner, we must deepen our commitment to the tenets of good corporate governance as enunciated in our Vision 2030 document (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020).

The formulation of the NDS1 marks a departure in planning approaches with the full adoption of the Integrated Result Based Management (IRBM) system, complemented by Public Sector Reforms (PSR) through the whole of government approach (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020). This approach links National Development Plans with National Budgets, as well as Personnel Performance. This means that National Budgets will only support programmes, projects and interventions which contribute to the achievement of National Outcomes and realisation of National Priorities as defined in the NDS1. Further, the National Budget framework will adopt a medium-term budgeting approach in line with the 3-year rolling budget standard, which will be consistent with the National Development Strategy outcomes and targets. The overarching goal of the NDS1 is to ensure high, accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth as well as socio-economic transformation and development as we move towards an upper middle-income society by 2030. As such, the NDS1 will build on the successes, while addressing challenges met during the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP). Special emphasis will be on the unfinished and ongoing efforts in the area of macroeconomic stability.

Furthermore, the NDS1 will endeavor to steer the economy onto a growth path to realise an average of 5 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate per annum over the Strategy Period. In pursuing economic growth, we remain alive to the challenges that Zimbabwe continues to face on the external front. To this end, significant emphasis will be placed on mobilising internal sources of growth even as we continue to engage and re-engage the international community and reach out to Zimbabweans in the diaspora. In order to give impetus to this Strategy, the NDS1 will intentionally commit resources towards building and capacitating key national institutions that play a critical role in providing the enabling environment for private sector investment to thrive. As we implement the NDS1, Government will move with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) theme of “leaving no-one and no place behind.” In this regard, technical and financial support from both the Private Sector and Development Partners is welcome. To ensure smooth and effective implementation of the NDS1, an all-inclusive coordination and implementation architecture, supported by comprehensive communication strategy for the NDS1 will be developed (United Nations in Zimbabwe, 2020).

(III) The 7 key issues in the designing of the curriculum content.

According to Bilbao *et al.* (2008) it is critical to ensure that the following are observed

1 Self-sufficiency

To help learners attain maximum self-sufficiency at the most economical manner is the main guiding principle for subject matter or content selection. Economy of learning refers to less teaching effort and less use of educational resources; but students gain more results. They are able to cope up with the learning outcomes effectively. This means that students should be given chance to experiment, observe, and do field study. This allows them to learn independently (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

2 Significance

The subject matter or content is significant if it is selected and organized for the development of learning activities, skills, processes, and attitude. It also develops the three domains of learning namely the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills, and considers the cultural aspects of the learners. Particularly, if students come from different cultural backgrounds and races, the subject matter must be culture-sensitive (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

3 Validity

Validity refers to the authenticity of the subject matter or content selected. Topics should not be obsolete. For example, it is not proper to include typewriting as a skill to be learned by ZOU students but should be about the computer or Information Technology (IT). There is a need to check regularly the subject matter or contents of the curriculum, and replace it if necessary. Modern curriculum experts are after current trends, relevance and authenticity of the curriculum; otherwise the university or country will be left behind (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

4 Interest

This criterion is true to learner-centred curriculum. Students learn best if the subject matter is meaningful to them. It becomes meaningful if they are interested in it. But if the curriculum is subject-centred, tutors have no choice but to finish the syllabi and teach only what is in the learning material e.g. a module in the case of ZOU. This may somehow explain why many fail certain courses (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

5 Utility

Another criterion is the usefulness of the content or subject matter. Students think that a subject matter or some subjects are not important to them. They may view that as meaningless or useless. As a result, they don't study seriously. Students often ask these common questions: Will I need the subject in my job? Will it give meaning to my life? Will it develop my potentials? Will it solve my problem? Will it be part of the test? Will I have a passing mark if I learn it? Students only value the subject matter or content if it is useful to them (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

6 Learnability

The subject matter or content must be within the schema of the learners. It should be within their experiences. Teachers should apply theories on psychology of learning in order to know how subjects are presented, sequenced, and organized to maximize the learning capacity of the students (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

7 Feasibility

It means that the subject matter can be fully implemented. It should consider the real situation of the university (school), the government, industry and commerce and the society, in general. Students must learn within the allowable time and the use of resources available. Further, feasibility means that there should be teachers who are experts in that area. For example, it is not proper to offer English for Business Communication if there is no tutor to handle it. Also, there is a need to consider the nature of the learners. The organization and design of the subject matter or content must be appropriate to the nature of students (Bilbao *et al.*, 2008).

(IV) The 8 characteristics of successful entrepreneurship

Khan (2014) supported by Ynkamat (2014) give the characteristics that should guide one to be a successful entrepreneur as follows;

- 1 Self-Awareness
- 2 Self-Belief
- 3 Adaptability
- 4 Calmness and composure
- 5 Unwavering passion
- 6 Open mindedness
- 7 A forward looking approach
- 8 A content flow of ideas

These above skills need to be the desired outcomes of a student who will have done entrepreneurship as a course at a college or university like ZOU which should help one to start a business for job creation and survival.

V METHODOLOGY

Research philosophy: The study adopted the interpretivism philosophy.

Research design: A case study of an open distance university, ZOU.

Research paradigm: The study used the qualitative paradigm.

Population; Was made up of lecturers (academics), industry (employer), students, informal sector players. The target population comprised ZOU senate, other academics and students.

Sampling technique: The non-random quota sampling technique was used to identify the sample as there was need for the researcher to use his discretion in order to accommodate the different stakeholders mentioned above in order to have a balanced view. The ultimate sample size was based on the data saturation technique (Cresswell, 2003).

Data collection method: The study used the unstructured interview in order to get individual responses freely (Kennedy, 2009).

Research ethics: These were observed during the entire process of planning, collection and analysis of data, included getting informed consent of participants, confidentiality, integrity and verification of statements (Naagarazan, 2006).

Data analysis: Since the study was qualitative and used unstructured interviews, the findings were analyzed using the content analysis method which involved the categorization of data, classification and summarization, as well as, providing narrative statements to reflect what exactly was said by some of the participants (Gravetter and Forzano, 2018).

VI FINDINGS

• Non-proactive attitude of ZOU towards entrepreneurship

There was a clear indication that students had a problem with the way they were being socialized or groomed by the entire education system even up to tertiary level. One ODL student said, *'our mindset is only focused on getting employment from already established businesses'*.

Most of the lecturers (academics) lacked hands on approach as majority did not own any businesses and could not 'walk the talk'. One academic had this to say

'My brother, I do not even dream of running a personal business because I do not want to have BP (blood pressure). That is why in our curricular, not much covers entrepreneurship because we were brought up on the condition that if I excelled at school and college, I would be guaranteed formal employment. So there is need for paradigm shift and whilst we have mixed feelings on the new curriculum being introduced by the Ministry of primary and secondary school, I think that is the best way forward for entrepreneurship to create sustainable development''

However, a senior faculty member sang a different tune.

'Entrepreneurship is here to stay. Recently our minister called all Vice chancellors emphasizing the need to conduct practical research which could benefit universities as they could sell patent rights on new discoveries, or enter into strategic partnerships with industry, or offer research consultancy services to augment government insufficient funding. That is why our ministry (Higher and tertiary education, science and technology development) is taking bold measures on the implementation of STEM (teaching Science, Technology, Engineering

and Mathematics). So definitely we have to change our delivery approach so that we move in line with the National development strategy document to promote entrepreneurship”

• **Major challenges affecting teaching of entrepreneurship by ZOU**

The following were the reasons given for the low reinforcement of teaching entrepreneurship at ZOU;

(i) Original ZOU mandate and target group changed

ZOU became a fully-fledged (established) university in 1999 to cater mainly for those who had been disadvantaged from attaining university degree since there were few universities by then. Most universities offered conventional training targeting especially Form six school leavers. ZOU was then supposed to make university education accessible to all corners of the country, that's why it is found in all the 10 provinces as well as an additional virtual region to cater for those mostly outside Zimbabwe. The target group was largely those employed who could do their studies without having to take study leave since tutorials were conducted during weekends only (Saturdays and Sundays). They could still continue to fulfill other obligations in society or to still stay with their families. The other objective was to empower entrepreneurs or business people so that they could improve their business skills. However, this seems to have changed according to a senior ZOU official who said;

“Over the past 7 years or so, conventional universities have turned most of their programmes into ODL mode of delivery such as the popular block release. This was worsened by the government's move to remove students' grants at these conventional universities and that has caused a 'scramble' to target those employed who can easily fund their education. A lot of conventional universities have already established a lot of satellite centers in other towns which used to be a preserve or only served by ZOU. As of now, ZOU is now getting a sizeable number of its students directly from schools and is vigorously pursuing outreach programmes targeting 'O' and 'A' levels. The level of competition has changed everything and some universities are making programmes shorter to lure students so that they do not part with a lot of their hard earned money through more tuition fees if semesters are many like in our case, ZOU”

(ii) Lack of funding worsened by difficulties in accessing bank loans

Zimbabwe is generally known to have restrictive conditions for entrepreneurs to access bank loans. This was supported by a student who said

“You become demoralized when you want seed money to start up a business from financial institutions in the country. Foremost they set difficult conditions, such as need for collateral security or if you want to recapitalize your business, they want audited financial reports/statements. Over and above, the interest rates are so high averaging between 18 -24%. So that is why one looks for formal employment in already established organizations even if you earn so little but there will be no option. Even the government efforts through the Agriculture bank (Agribank) and Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO) to assist with seed money even for emerging entrepreneurs has not been fruitful at all due to a struggling economy”

(iii) Lack of trained academics in entrepreneurship

ZOU had hardly any academics with degrees or other professional qualifications with a strong bias in entrepreneurship. So there were already challenges in mooted the idea of entrepreneurship as a course in many programmes across faculties. Most qualifications of academics were largely theoretical with majority having had no “hands on skills” during their

studies, so that could be the reason why even establishing a department was difficult despite government thrust to promote entrepreneurship as enshrined in the National development strategy document.

(iv) High overheads

This was one of the major reasons why entrepreneurship has not been so successful. To run a business has been risky owing to viability challenges and reduced profits as a result of a lot of costs incurred such as; high Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) taxes, high social protection or security costs to cover medical aid, insurance and pensions, prohibitive rentals especially in the Central Business District (CBD), high water and electricity bills despite frequent power and water cuts.

(v) Recycling curricular in tertiary education

Most academics were not technocrats and had not been trained in curriculum development. That is why most programmes were being recycled and used by most universities including ZOU without regular reviewing to take into account changing global trends or even the economic situation in Zimbabwe such as the taking into account the goals of the mainstream economic programme in the National development strategy document.

(vi) Lack of availability of industrial attachment places

Entrepreneurship requires blending both theory and practice. The economic situation was making it difficult for attaching students in industry and commerce because a number of businesses have been liquidated or have been downsizing their operations. This has made opportunities for industrial exposure limited.

(vii) Lack of local authorities' support

The local authorities were not supportive of entrepreneurship as they did not provide space, facilities or premises to be used by emerging entrepreneurs. Allocation of rental space in urban areas was usually based on corruption and political affiliation. The rentals were also high yet provision of ancillary services was almost non-existent. This is why in many urban areas there were lots of illegal vendors on the streets who usually fight running battles with the municipal police.

(viii) Fear of self-employment

Most students said that they are rather better off if employed in an already existing organization rather than starting their own 'risky' businesses. One had this to say after being asked if she could start her own business,

'I fear risk associated with running a business given that even government owned businesses like ZUPCO and Willowvale Mazda Motor Industry and ZiscoSteel, to name just a few, are almost history. A lot of cheaper products from the Middle East especially China and even from neighboring South Africa will kick you out of business. You also need the political muscle to get support from those influential key stakeholders such as politicians in some cases. I would rather continue pursuing further studies hoping that one day I will get employment than seek a risky venture (business)''

Majority of these traditional beliefs and perceptions about employment were also raised as a major stumbling block to the teaching of entrepreneurship even in tertiary institutions (Mauchiet al, 2011).

VII CONCLUSION

The study concluded that not much was being done by ZOU as the largest ODL institution in Zimbabwe to promote entrepreneurship as a strategic avenue to avert ever increasing unemployment rate in the country as there were a plethora of challenges that needed to be

addressed first. However, no one can dispute the fact that entrepreneurship can play a pivotal role in promoting the industrialization of a free economy like Zimbabwe as well as addressing employment woes that she is facing. Tertiary institutions both conventional and ODL have not done much to promote entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe despite the country having been rated as the country with the highest literacy rate in Africa.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Reinforcement of teaching STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses**

ZOU falls under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development. The ministry was spearheading the teaching of STEM in colleges and universities, so ZOU was supposed to implement this policy initiative which was emphasizing for the need to inculcate a sense of value addition and beneficiation especially among college and university graduates, so that the country would have producers of final products. Such finished (manufactured) products can earn the country the much needed foreign currency rather than relying on expensive imports. In a way the initiative is also a drive towards sustainable entrepreneurship.

- **Curriculum review to incorporate entrepreneurship in all ZOU programmes**

This was needed in order for ZOU to move in tandem with the government's thrust to empower Zimbabweans including those in rural areas who can be covered by ZOU because of its regional campuses found in all the country's provinces. This is also in line with the thrust of ZIMASSET policy framework (2013-2018).

- **Training of MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) including those in the Informal sector**

Another avenue would be to provide short courses geared to improve business operations and growth of MSMEs given that they have since become the largest employer in Zimbabwe. This can be done through ZOU partnering with the donor community or government ministries such as that of SMEs and Cooperative development and that of Youth, Indigenization and Economic empowerment since they are interested in entrepreneurship, employment creation, economic empowerment and sustainable development.

- **Resource mobilization**

Entrepreneurship requires resources for it to be successful. This should begin by ZOU setting the department of entrepreneurship which should then feed other departments by providing expertise (tutors). Such a department needs government financial support through the parent ministry and these experts need to be in all the 10 regional campuses. In addition, the curriculum review or development in line with national goals and policies such as those enshrined in ZIMASSET, requires paying experts who should develop and produce the necessary learning materials such as modules. There is also need to provide seed money for those graduates with promising business ventures in order to kick start them by finding interested partners.

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