WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR GRADUATES INTENTIONS OF BEING SELF EMPLOYED? AN EVIDENCE OF MBEYA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND TEOFILO KISANJI UNIVERSITY, TANZANIA

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It has been recognized that the route for young graduates from tertiary universities to the labor market is far from straightforward. However, little is known on what accounts for graduates intentions of self employment. This study therefore, assessed factors that account for graduates intentions to self employment along their specializations. This study employed quasi-experimental approach and stratified purpose sampling plan to select finalist students from both Mbeya University of Science and Technology and Teofilo Kisanji University. Closed ended questionnaires were used to collect cross sectional data in which 388 students were interviewed. Descriptive statistics and non parametric approaches were methods for data analysis. Survey findings showed that there were an increase of interviewed respondents to become self employed from 29.4% to 39.7% before and after university studies. Also, there were an increase of respondents from 18.3% to 47.7% and 9.3% to 36.9% in business and technician activities accordingly before and after graduation. It is therefore concluded that specialization accounts for 32.7% and 100% to self employment and activities of graduates' intentions, respectively. Thus, it is recommended that universities should associate specializations with self employment.

Keywords: Graduates, specializations, accounts for self employment, entrepreneurship, Mbeya University of Science and Technology

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190

1.0 Introduction

It has been recognized that the route for many young people from formal education to the labor market is far from straightforward. Evans and Shen (2010) argues that the route tends to be delayed, protracted, complicated and in some cases-fractured. Connor and Dewson (2001) found that most potential entrant students did not have a definite future job or career in mind. Contrary, mature students and those on access courses were more likely to have chosen subjects for career related reasons than younger potential entrants (Connor and Dewson, 2001). However, students' preparation for the educational and workplace of the new economy demands special attention and relevance of the university curriculums, either on competence or knowledge based (Bangser, 2008). Furthermore, Zimmerman (2002) believes that self-regulated students focus on how they activate, alter, and sustain specific learning practices in social as well as solitary contexts. On the other hand, Jedwab (2006) confirmed that self-employment was more likely to be an opportunity rather than being a necessity to entrepreneurs. Though, it is reported that networks have been identified as essential both in pursuing self-employment and in securing employment (Jedwab, 2006). In addition, Comfort and Bonaventure (2012) observed that students' industrial work experience scheme had a positive impact on their academic achievements as well as entrepreneurship skills and intentions to be self employed. Besides, Tretten (2005) and Hailu (2012) found that students had a positive intention, attitude and high level of control over becoming self-employed but were not willing due to lack of ideas, knowledge, and fear of unknowns. This is contrary to the case of Mbeya University of Science and Technology [MUST] and Teofilo Kisanji University [TEKU] where students are taught entreneurship education so as to instill the entrepreneurial spirit of becoming self-employed after graduation along with their specializations. Therefore, this study assessed factors that accounts for students' intentions of being self-employed after graduation.

2.0 Statement of the problem

Quinter and Edwards (2011) found that availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are the most influential factors affecting career choices among students. Also, males students reported that learning experiences and career flexibility as the most influential factor for intentions of being self employed (Quinter and Edwards, 2011). Conversely, Jedwad (2006) explains that background and experience is not recognized and therefore students cannot perform

functions that are consistent with their skills. Furthermore, Meager *et al*. (2011) found that qualification levels had some relationship with self-employment, but not straightforward, even though those with no qualifications were more likely to enter self-employment. Also, Meager *et al*. (2011) observed that prior workplace experience boosts the probability of success in self-employment. The ability to self-realization was the main reason to why students saw self employment as viable option (Tretten, 2005). Though, Hailu (2012) reported that graduates had interest and vision of becoming self-employed but they lacked the necessary skills and self-confidence to involve in such risk bearing undertaking. However, United Republic of Tanzania National Employment Policy (2008) aims at creating human resource development opportunities for the acquisition of demand driven skills and competences for wage and self employment. Yet, both MUST and TEKU offers entrepreneurship skills to its graduates to enhance demand driven skills. But, little is known on what accounts for graduates' intentions to be self employed. This study therefore assessed what accounts for graduates intentions of being self employed upon graduation.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study location

This study was conducted at MUST and TEKU. Both universities were chosen because MUST is the only university that offers its programs based on competence based education training (C-BET) for national technical awards (NTA) level 4 to 8 contrary to TEKU which is knowledge based education training (K-BET). Also, both universities offers entrepreneurship course for those levels with the aim of stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit of graduates and the units for analysis were available and adequate to fulfill the research objective. To achieve the study objective, stratified proportionate number of students from NTA level 6 and 8 (third year diploma and bachelor) students, respectively from MUST and final year students studying bachelor of economics from TEKU were interviewed.

3.2 Research design

The present study employed quasi-experimental research design in which third year diploma and bachelor respondents from two universities were purposively selected given that they had an experience and knowledge required to answer questions (Krysik and Finn, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009). The present study used a sampling frame of NTA level 6, 8 and bachelor students from

specializations offered: Architecture, Business, Civil engineering, Computer engineering, Economics, Electrical engineering, Mechanical engineering and Laboratory Science.

3.3 Sample size determination

The proportion of target study levels of students with desirable characteristics was 0.4, the z – statistic chosen was 1.96, and the desired accuracy of margin error was at the 0.05 level. The proportion of respondents who were interviewed was denoted by $p = 0.5$, and those who were not interviewed was denoted by $q = 0.5$, confidence level $= 95\%$, and margin of error $= 5\%$.

Sample size, n, was given by:

$$n = \left(\frac{Z}{e}\right)^2 .p.q \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{1.96}{0.05}\right)^2 (0.5)(0.5) = 384.16 = 385$$

However, a minimum sample of 388 students was interviewed (Saunder *et al*., 2009; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.4 Sampling plan

Stratified proportionate, systematic random and purposive sampling plans were used because there was a possibility that the outcome of interest could vary among sub groups and to avoid over or under representation (Fisher, 2010; Saunders *et al.,* 2009; Newman, 2007; Krysik and Finn, 2007; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Also, systematic random sampling was used where the class size of particular strata was large, therefore, the sampling interval was computed to get the required number of students while girls in each strata were purposively included to avoid them being under represented (Fisher, 2010; Saunders *et al.,* 2009; Newman, 2007; Krysik and Finn, 2007; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.5 Data collection instruments

Cross sectional data were collected using closed ended questionnaires in which survey was done ones and this was the simplest and least costly approach (Newman, 2007). Questions had categories with responses which were asked in the same manner for both universities students (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Cross sectional data sought to describe similarity or differences

of entrepreneurial skills possessed by students towards self-employment upon their graduation along their specializations (Saunders *et al*., 2009).

3.6 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics was the method for data analysis aimed at giving detailed picture of frequencies / percentages of entrepreneurial skills of students endowed with (Newman, 2007). SPSS package was employed to analyze data in which descriptive information was obtained (Saunders *et al.,* 2009; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.6.1 Non-parametric analysis

3.6.1.1 Chi-square

Also, chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the resulting goodness of fit compared to the observed and expected frequencies in specializations to see either all categories contain the same proportion of values or that each category contains a user-specified proportion of values. According to Kothari (2004) the numerical tool to summarize these deviations between expected (E) from observed (O) is specified as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \left(\frac{O - E^2}{E} \right) \quad \text{..} \quad (2)$$

3.6.1.2 Phi coefficient

Chi-square is not a strong statistic measure as it does not convey information about the strength of a relationship. This is because the combination of a contingency table and chi-square is most likely to occur when either both variables are nominal (categorical) or interval (ratio). The phi coefficient is preferable to chi-square as a test of association between two dichotomous variables. According to Bryman and Cramer (1997) this statistic measure is similar to the correlation coefficient in that it varies between zero and ± 1 to indicate the strength of relationship, given by the formula:

$$phi(\phi) = \sqrt{\frac{chi - square}{number\,of\,cases(N)}} \quad \text{..} \quad (3)$$

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194

Its interpretation is similar to Pearson's r, it is simply the square of phi value multiplied by 100. It provides an indication of how far variation in one variable is accounted for by the other (Mwidege, 2012; Bryman and Cramer, 1997) as a result, this study employed both.

4.0   Results and discussion
4.1 Students characteristics

4.1.1 Age of respondents and their specializations

Findings (Table 1) showed that 55.5% followed by 38.7% of students interviewed were in the age category of 18-24 and 23-31 years old, respectively. This indicates that majority of respondents in these age categories were under the active economic age and they are more likely to be self employed and hence more job creation.

Table 1: Age of students' interviewed

Age Categories	Frequency	Percent, %
18-24	204	55.5
25-31	141	38.7
32-38	14	3.8
39-45	4	1.1
46-52	2	0.5
53-59	1	0.3
Total	**366**	**100.0**

Survey findings (Table 2) showed that 76.8% and 23.2% of students interviewed were male and female, respectively. Results suggest that male students were the majority in those programs than female. This could be attributed by low interests or failure to meet entry requirements of programs surveyed with exceptional of Laboratory Sciences.

Table 2: Sex of students' interviewed

Specializations	Sex of respondents		
	Male	Female	Total
Architecture	19	2	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	48	19	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	49	7	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	36	10	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	43	8	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	20	26	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	58	6	64 (16.5%)

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195

Economics	25	12	37 (9.5%
Total	298 (76.80%)	90 (23.20%)	388 (100%)

Results (Table 3) showed that entry qualification between different specializations was statistically significant at (p<0.01) level. Meaning that, there were differences in entry qualification in a particular program of interest. This is evidenced by the majority who joined with direct form four qualification (36.6%) followed by form six (25.3%). This therefore suggests that their differences could be accounted for 68.2% to specializations that had different entry qualifications as a pre-requisite knowledge and skills depending on the level of study. Similarly, Odia (2014) observed that job prospects or employment opportunities had significant influence on students' enrollment in particular specializations. Also, Dawson *et al.* (2009) believe that market-directed opportunity entrepreneurship is strongly associated with higher educational attainment of particular specializations.

Table 3: Entry qualification of interviewed students

Specializations	Access Course	Direct form four	Form six	Diploma/FTC	**Total**
Architecture	3	18			21(5.4%)
Business Administration	6	12	37	12	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	10	25	7	14	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	14	24	6	2	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	5	19	7	20	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	28	15	3		46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	10	29	3	22	64 (16.5%)
Economics	0	1	35	1	37 (9.5%
Total	76(19.6%)	143(36.6%)	98(25.3%)	71(18.5%)	388 (100%)

$\chi^2 =2.648E2, df =24, Phi =0.826, p<0.01$

Survey findings (Table 4) showed that the occupation of students before joining university studies was statistically significant at (p<0.01) level. Meaning that, there were differences in occupation of students before. This was evidenced by students who were self employed (29.4%), employed (15.5%) and those who were neither self employed nor employed (55.1%). Also, these differences in occupation of students before joining university studies accounted for (50%) to their prior or future specializations / professionals. Survey results agree with observations made by OwusuAnsah and Poku (2012 who found that entrepreneurship education does not only influence the career intentions of graduates towards self-employment (OwusuAnsah and Poku,

2012). But, Dawson *et al*. (2009) report that students who expressed stronger interest in entrepreneurial careers are proactive, creative, opportunity seeking, confident, and have a positive image of entrepreneurship.

Table 4: Students occupation before joining University studies

Specializations	Students occupation before joining University studies			
	Self employed	Employed	Neither	Total
Architecture	0	0	21	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	20	11	36	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	22	12	22	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	7	4	35	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	12	5	34	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	7	4	35	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	18	16	30	64(16.5%)
Human Resource	1	1		2(0.5%)
Economics	27	7	1	35(9.02%)
Total	**114(29.4%)**	**60(15.5%)**	**214(55.1%)**	**388(100%)**

$\chi^2 = 1.9358E2, df = 32, Phi = 0.7066, p < 0.01$

Similarly, results had shown that students' activities (Table 5) which were done before they joined university studies were statistically significant at (p<0.01) level. Meaning that there were differences among activities done before, and there had been a positive association with their specializations or anticipated professionals which accounted for (38.6%) to what they were doing. This was supported by students who were doing business (18.3%) followed by technician (9.3%) while 66.2% of students were not engaged with any economic activity. This could have been contributed by either time being short, unavailability of non-farm activities or lack of qualifications after completing their secondary studies subsequent to university studies.

Table 5: Students' activities they were doing before joining universities

Specializations	Students' activities they were doing before joining university						
	Business	Technician	Informal activity	Teaching	Agriculture	Neither	Total
Architecture	0	0	0	0	0	21	21(5.4%)
B/Administration	21	1	2	0	0	43	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	9	8	2	0	2	35	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	0	3	1	2	0	40	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	6	7	1	0	0	37	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	3	2	1	2	0	38	46(11.9%)
M/Engineering	7	11	4	2	0	40	64(16.5%)
Human Resource	2	0	0	0	0	0	2(0.5%)
Economics	23	4	0	3	2	3	35(9.02%)

| Total | 71(18.3%) | 36(9.3%) | 11(2.8%) | 7(1.8%) | 4(1.0%) | 257(66.2) | 388(100%) |

$\chi^2 = 1.496E2$, $df = 40$, $Phi = 0.621$, $p<0.01$

Contrary to the findings on their prior activities (Table 5), survey observations (Table 6) showed that students had significant different (p<0.01) on activities they were doing. Study results indicate that there were differences among students on their prior activities after joining university studies. It was evidenced that 12.6% of students reported that they were still doing their prior activities after joining universities while 23.2% had stopped doing and the majority (64.2%) had no response on this particular question. These results propose that, some of students who were self employed (29.4% as shown in Table 4) had likelihood (12.6%) to continue with their activities/business while they have joined university studies contrary to those who were self employed. However, there was steep decay for those who were self employed (from 29.4% to 12.6%), almost half way of them had stopped doing their prior businesses. This could be attributed by unfriendly university programs to students' prior businesses, lack of close supervision, or time constraint to do their businesses. Present study observation complies with Luebker (2008) who found that cash incomes of informal workers were extremely low.

Table 6: Are they still doing the same activities they were doing before joining university studies

| Specializations | Are they still doing the same activities you were doing before joining university studies? | | | |
	Yes	No	No response	Total
Architecture	0	0	21	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	11	16	40	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	8	15	33	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	0	5	41	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	2	13	36	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	3	7	36	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	9	17	38	64(16.5%)
Economics	16	17	4	37(9.5%)
Total	49 (12.6%)	90(23.20%)	249(64.20%)	**388(100%)**

$\chi^2 = 92.826$, $df = 16$, $Phi = 0.489$, $p<0.01$

Furthermore, results on parents occupation (Table 7) showed that fathers' occupation was statistically significant at (p<0.05) level contrary to their counterparts mothers' occupation. Results indicate that fathers' occupations were different among themselves contrary to mothers' occupations. Present study results were supported by 74.7% and 67% of mothers' and fathers' who were self employed accordingly contrary to 30% and 18.6% of fathers' and mothers' who

were employed, in the same order. Survey results propose that mothers' occupations were indifferent among them and few were employed in comparison to their counterparts. Female parents' occupations had a more positive likelihood effect on their children/ students' intentions to be self employed upon their graduations contrary to their counterparts' male parents. Survey findings agree with Demirguc-Kunt *et al.* (2007) who observed that students from wealthier households particularly with self employed female parent were more likely to become entrepreneurs and survive in self-employment.

Table 7: Parents occupation of interviewed students

	Fathers' occupation			
Specializations	Self employed	Employed	Neither	Total
Architecture	7	13	1	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	38	27	2	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	38	17	1	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	28	16	2	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	36	13	2	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	31	15	0	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	53	10	1	64(16.5%)
Human Resource	1	1	0	2(0.5%)
Economics	28	7	0	35(9.0%)
Total	**260(67%)**	**119(30.7%)**	**9(2.3%)**	**388(100%)**

$\chi^2 = 28.259$, df = 16, Phi = 0.270, p<0.05

	Mothers' occupation			
Specializations	Self employed	Employed	Neither	Total
Architecture	11	7	3	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	46	16	5	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	45	9	2	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	32	10	4	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	39	7	5	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	34	10	2	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	54	5	5	64(16.5%)
Human Resource	1	1		2(0.5%)
Economics	28	7		35(9.0%)
Total	**290 (74.7%)**	**72(18.6%)**	**26(6.7%)**	**388(100%)**

$\chi^2 = 28.259$, df= 24, Phi =0.253, p >0.05

Moreover, survey findings (Table 8) showed that the intentions of students being self employed upon their graduations were significantly different (p<0.01) among interviewed respondents with respect to their specializations. Present study findings suggest that different respondents along their specialization had different attitude towards self employment after graduation. These differences could be accounted for 32.7% to differential acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among respondents due to their nature of their professional. Results were supported by students

interviewed who had a thought of being self employed (39.7%) contrary to (60.3%) of respondents. However, study results (Table 8) have shown a positive change (39.7%) when compared to the respondents' prior self employment rate (29.4%) before they joined university studies (Table 4). Results concur with Hailu (2012) who observed that personality traits such as hard work, achievement motivation, self-determination, self-confidence, creative and innovative behavior and commitment were found to be influential factors of self-employment.

Table 8: Have you ever thought of being self employed after graduation?

Have you ever thought of being self employed?			
Specializations	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**
Architecture	1	20	21(5.4%)
Business Administration	30	37	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	19	37	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	4	42	46(11.9%)
Electrical Engineering	22	29	51(13.1%)
Laboratory Technology	9	37	46(11.9%)
Mechanical Engineering	39	25	64(16.5%)
Human Resource	2	0	2(0.5%)
Economics	28	7	35(9.02%)
Total	154(39.70%)	233(60.3%)	**388(100%)**

$\chi^2 = 1.268E2$, $df = 24$, $Phi = 0.572$, $p < 0.01$

Also, study findings (Table 9) showed that the type of activities respondents wished to do after their graduation were significantly different ($p < 0.01$) among graduates. Results meant that activities prioritized to be done by respondents after being graduates were different. The differences among them could be accounted for 100% to their specializations and entrepreneurial skills acquired during their university study period. Findings suggest that activities prioritized had a strong positive association with specializations and entrepreneurial skills. The present observations were supported by a positive change from 18.3% to 47.7% and 9.3% to 36.9% of respondents who were doing businesses and technician activities before (Table 5) and after (Table 9), accordingly. Present findings are supported by findings obtained by Hailu (2012) who observed that socio-cultural factors, the entrepreneurial idea of the family and communities significantly contributes to self employment endeavors of graduates.

Table 9: What type of activities they wish to do after their graduation?

Specializations	What type of activity you wish to do?						
	Business	Technician	Civil Engineer	Teaching	Electrical Engineer	Neither	Total
Architecture	9	10	0	0	0	2	21(5.4%)

B/Administration	63	0	0	0	0	4	67(17.3%)
Civil Engineering	13	29	5	0	5	4	56(14.4%)
Computer Engineering	23	17	0	1	0	5	46(11.9%)
E/Engineering	12	32	0	0	0	7	51(13.1%)
L/Technology	14	30	0	0	0	2	46(11.9%)
M/Engineering	22	25	0	0	0	17	64(16.5%)
Economics	29	0	0	8	0	0	37(9.5%)
Total	185(47.7%)	143(36.90%)	5(1.3%)	9(2.2%)	5(1.3%)	41(10.6%)	388(100%)

χ^2 =4.053E2, df = 48, Phi =1.022, p<0.01

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

Survey findings had shown that there were an increase of interviewed respondents to become self employed from 29.4% to 39.7% before and after university studies. Also, there were an increase of respondents from 18.3% to 47.7% and 9.3% to 36.9% in business and technician activities accordingly before and after graduation. It is therefore concluded that specialization accounts for 32.7% and 100% to self employment and activities of graduates' intentions, respectively. Thus, it is recommended that the universities should associate specializations with self employment.

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