THE RELEVANCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE IN UNIVERSITIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS’ ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

Y. Owusu-Agyeman

University of the Free State (South Africa)
Presentation outline

- Introduction
- Research question
- Methods
- Results
- Discussions and conclusions
- References
Introduction

The transformation of universities globally have focused on aspects such as curriculum improvement and development, increased funding for research, staff and students demographics, community support and entrepreneurship education.

However, While findings from seminal researches in other geographical contexts point to positive achievements in entrepreneurial education, not much success has been reported from universities in most part of Africa particularly in relation to the establishment of start-ups and businesses by students.
Introduction (contd)

The urgency to investigate the relevance of entrepreneurial culture in universities to the development of students’ entrepreneurial skills served as the motivation for this study.

In order to understand the entrepreneurial culture of a university, this study argues that, it is important to understand the culture of institutions. In the context of higher education institutions, culture represents the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p.28&28)
Introduction (contd)

An entrepreneurial culture in an academic setting can be linked to the national entrepreneurial culture. Significantly, when the entrepreneurial culture of a country is strong, it encourages entrepreneurs to develop their businesses through society’s acceptance, support and high esteem for their activity (Bosma & Kelley, 2019).

This study further argues that a national entrepreneurial culture has a direct effect on the entrepreneurial culture of educational institutions. Additionally when national governments commit to the promotion of entrepreneurial skills, it results in increased involvement of educational institutions in the promotion of entrepreneurial culture.
Introduction (contd)

The map shows the extent to which social and cultural norms encourage actions that result in new business methods or activities and can potentially increase personal wealth and income. Ghana recorded sufficient value of 3.09 as compared to Angola (2.85), Cameroon (3.08), Algeria (3.19), Namibia (3.20) and Nigeria (3.32).
Introduction (contd)

Significantly, the transformation of any institutional culture will depend on the relationship between the existing culture and the anticipated change (Keup, Walker, Astin & Lindholm, 2001).

With the current spate of dwindling financial support from national governments to higher education institutions and the continuous drive for higher education institutions to develop ways of attracting funding, universities all over the world are now resorting to entrepreneurial activities in order to generate revenue (Streitwieser & Light, 2018; Streitwieser, Bryant, Drane & Light, 2019). It is therefore important for universities to develop an entrepreneurial culture.
Research question.

What factors are essential to the development of an entrepreneurial culture in a university setting.
Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Additionally, data for the study was gathered by way of interviews from three former students of three different universities and two lecturers in entrepreneurship from two different universities in Ghana.
The responses from the interviewees were categorized into four major aspects: partnerships, institutional structure to embrace entrepreneurship, academic factors and community factors demonstrate strong effect on entrepreneurial culture in universities. These factors were derived from thirteen items that were highlighted by the interviewees.
Discussion and conclusions

Results revealed that, the entrepreneurial culture in universities do not adequately provide students with the desired entrepreneurial values, beliefs, positive assumption that could lead to the setting up of their own businesses. Additionally, many students who start their own businesses develop their entrepreneurial skills from their family businesses. It is however important for universities to develop policies and structures that will enhance entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that is necessary for transforming not only universities but also the economy of countries.
References


