

## **PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF THE ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT MASVINGO REGIONAL CAMPUS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The re-engineering of the Zimbabwean economy in the contemporary environment characterized by globalization has attracted the attention of the domestic policy makers. This is shown by the commitment by government on the re-positioning of the economy through the formulation of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development and the churning of the empowerment and indigenization policies. For these policies to reach fruition, Higher Education in the form of Open and Distance Learning has to shoulder the burden. In the quest for the country to forge ahead with the development of the economy, entrepreneurship development has to be promoted through the ODL platform. The current study used an open ended questionnaire administered to 50 students from the Zimbabwe Open University, Masvingo Regional Campus using the purposive sampling technique. The data collected were analyzed thematically and results showed that entrepreneurship education is vital for the enhancement of the economy and entrepreneurship education inadequacies cause business failures. It was therefore recommended that the ODL institutions should design short courses in entrepreneurship, compulsory course for entrepreneurship in all faculties and Higher Education curriculum to provide options for entrepreneurship development among university students.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Open and distance education, Indigenization.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Across the world, Higher education has turned from a mere privilege available to the elite few into a mass expectation. This trend has not spared the developing countries like Zimbabwe. In 1980, when Zimbabwe attained its independence from the British colonialist, the ZANU PF government introduced the 'education for all policy' to correct the previous education access imbalance. As a result of the policy, enrolment in schools rose in leaps and bounces (Dumbu and Chadamoyo, 2012). The rise in enrolment in schools swelled the demand for higher education in the country. Higher education in Zimbabwe, and to be specific, university education became the centre of debate for policy makers in a bid to absorb the students that were being churned out by

the secondary schools. This led to establishment of the Zimbabwe Open University in 1999, which started as the Centre for Distance education under the then only university in the country, University of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Open University was established by an Act of Parliament in 1999 and mandated to provide tuition through open and distance learning. Thereafter, the university's enrolment at some time rose to 35 000 students. This means that the university was releasing graduates in to the labour market which is already saturated. The current Zimbabwean situation is that there is high unemployment coupled with high levels of poverty. Thus in any situation today, the Higher Education is perceived as the source of solutions to the challenges bedeviling the society. The society looks upon the Higher Education sector to provide solutions to its unending challenges in the form of unemployment and poverty reduction.

Studies have established that the panacea to the challenges bedeviling today's society lies in the hand of Higher Education in the form of Open and Distance Education. A change in curriculum of the university curriculum to move in tandem with the economic changes can be instituted in the Open and Distance Learning institutions like the Zimbabwe Open University. The trends are showing a rapid fall in employment such that the higher education andragogy should be used as a veritable vehicle to solve these problems in the society. The advantage that falls on the laps of the Zimbabwe Open University in this situation is that it is a university that is offering flexible learning opportunities to its students. Most of the students that are enrolled with the university are mature and some are from the world of work. With that in mind, one can be tempted to say there is need of a paradigm shift (Dumbu *et al.*, 2012) in the designing and development of the university education curriculum in the Open and Distance Learning institution. The best route to take in order to tackle the unemployment challenge in Zimbabwe it to mandated the Open and Distance Learning institution, the Zimbabwe Open University to develop curriculum which include Entrepreneurship Education (EE). The design of the curriculum should be that all students that are enrolled by the university have to do courses in Entrepreneurship Education as compulsory courses. Students from across the university faculties should be given a chance to study entrepreneurship basing on the fact there are certain entrepreneurial characteristics that are commonly shared. Some shared entrepreneurship characteristics are creativity, dedication, determination, flexibility, leadership, passion and self confident. Thus, it becomes difficult to say those students who are enrolled in the Faculty of Commerce are best placed to become entrepreneurs. Students from the other faculties also share the same entrepreneurial characteristics. Therefore this calls for the revision of the university curriculum to include Entrepreneurship Education to all students in the four faculties namely: Faculty of Commerce and Law, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education and the Faculty of Sciences.

According to Odunaike and Amoda (2013) entrepreneurship is the art of setting up and running an enterprise in a profitable and sustainable manner. The entrepreneurs are those people who are innovative, discover opportunities for existing and new products and have the quest to satisfy the needs of the customers in market. To satisfy these needs, the entrepreneurs have to

start up new ventures in line with the identified needs of the market (Dumbu and Chadamoyo, 2012). Therefore we can regard entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of the individual entrepreneur to identify and exploit the investment opportunities in an environment. However, not every individual is entrepreneurial but only those activities performed by the individual that bring innovation to the new satisfaction of the customers' demands. From this one can see that the individual differences that exist in people calls for the radical paradigm shift from the simple thinking that those students in the Faculty of Commerce in a university have a strong entrepreneurship drive. The contemporary business environment characterized by stiff competition demands those individuals who are innovative, that can risk to exploit the business opportunities with the scarce disposable resources. This is done though the identification of the varying and dynamic demands of the market (Akpan *et al.*, 2012). It was argued by Odunaike and Amoda (2013) that entrepreneur, in their endeavor to satisfy the new demands of the market can be described as innovative modern industrial business leaders. Overall, entrepreneurship can be regarded as the ability of the individual to mobilize scarce resource, attaches risk to the exploitation of the existing business opportunities in a profitable way. The desire of entrepreneurship is to gain in the process, some revenue that are above the cost and risk associated with the entrepreneurial activity. Hence in developing countries those problems of unemployment and poverty can be alleviated drastically.

Entrepreneurship Education is a lifelong learning process starting from an early age as at elementary school and progressing through all levels of education (Odunaike and Amoda, 2013). The focus of EE is on making the learners understand and capacitate them for pursuit of entrepreneurial behavior. From the definition above one can observe that Entrepreneurship Education can sometimes be equated to Business Education. In this study the terms are going to be used interchangeably to mean the same thing which is the instruction that directly and indirectly prepares businesspersons for entrepreneurship calling. It is a type of training which has a primary objective of preparing people to enter into a career which advances efficient service delivery in the modern market to meet the dynamic demands of the consumers. The basic Business Education affords an individual an opportunity to develop skills, abilities and understanding that will enable him to handle his personal business affairs and to assume his/ her citizenship responsibilities through enlightened participation. In order to exonerate the developing countries like Zimbabwe from the challenges of poverty and unemployment, Higher Education should be proactive in designing curriculum that aim at addressing such issues.

Entrepreneurship Education in the Higher Education is of critical importance and it should be the role of Open and Distance Learning institution that should be the leaders in developing university curriculum that cut across faculties to equip every university student with entrepreneurial skills. The Open and Distance Learning delivery mode is one that is flexible and allows learners to learn whilst enjoying the comfort of their homes, workplaces and even travel. Open and Distance Learning institution identify and explains the role of business as an economic institution and provides content and experience that prepare the individual for effective

participation as a citizen and consumer hence increases the level of economic participation and patriotism. The International Institute for Educational Planning (2007) argued that the university play a crucial role in generating new ideas, accumulating and transmitting knowledge, yet they have remained out the peripheral to solutions of developing countries on poverty reduction, unemployment and economic stability. Open and Distance Education in the Higher Education landscape contributes to the growth of national income and individual earnings which translate to high transactional volumes in the economy. In today's information based societies, knowledge drives economic growth and development. This is one of the aspects that many developing countries are thriving to achieve as one of the millennium goals. For these nations to achieve this, the Open and Distance Learning institutions should shoulder the burden. In contemporary societies, universities are considered to be the knowledge factories and the longevity of a university is dependent on its knowledge production process. Therefore Higher Education in the form of Open and Distance Learning should be adventurous in Entrepreneurship Education to stimulate entrepreneurial behavior through curriculum innovations and change fine tune it to the needs of the present situation where graduating students quickly join the reserve army of labour. According to Pungello *et al.* (2009) entrepreneurship is like language, where early language is associated with later academic achievements. The fruits of Entrepreneurship Education would be realized latter.

The researcher therefore, examines the role of Open and Distance Learning in promoting Entrepreneurship Education in the Higher Education landscape based on the objective of unemployment reduction and promoting patriotism among the university graduates. As the Higher Education is mandated to promote education for sustainability, its role in the contemporary education platform can be viewed as to prepare the university graduates to become productive workers, intelligent consumers, effective and patriotic citizens. The next section of the study looks at the statement of the problem.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The emergence of the importance of Entrepreneurship Education has moved a motion in the Entrepreneurship Education debate worldwide. The debate moves from the assumption that Entrepreneurship Education can be something which can be taught through a proper way of curriculum design by the Open and Distance Learning institutions. According to Drucker (1985) who is the leading management thinkers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, entrepreneurship is not magic and is not mysterious but is a discipline that can be included into the Higher Education curriculum. Therefore the current study sought to examine the role of the Open and Distance Learning institutions in promoting entrepreneurship.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the views of students in the Faculty of commerce and law at the Zimbabwe Open University about the promotion of entrepreneurship?
- What are the perceptions of students from other faculties on the promotion of entrepreneurship in the Zimbabwe Open University?
- How can the Higher Education promote the entrepreneurship culture in the curriculum?

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study reviews literature related to the promotion of entrepreneurship in the Higher Education giving particular attention to the role of the Open and Distance Learning institutions. Entrepreneurship was established in the 1700s and its meaning has evolved ever since (Alberti *et al.*, 2004). In simple terms it is equated to starting one's own business but economists believe it is more than that. To the economist entrepreneur is one who is willing to bear risk of a new venture if there is a significant opportunity for profit making (Akpan *et al.*, 2012). The term emerged from the founding father, Schumpeter who regarded the process of entrepreneurship as a creative destruction because the entrepreneur introduces new combinations thereby helping render the old industries obsolete (Theddius, 2012). This means that the traditional and established means of doing business are destroyed by the creation of innovative and creative ways of doing business. The issue was taken further by Drucker who is regarded as one of the leading management thinkers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Drucker (1985) further described the entrepreneur as someone who searches for new opportunities and try to respond to these in a positive exploitation of the scarce resources. Thus, many nations today agree that entrepreneurship is the ingredient for stimulating economic growth and development hence leading to increased employment opportunities (Ossai and Nwalado, 2012). Stimulation of the economy cannot ignore the presents and role that is played by the Higher Education as a creator of knowledge and its disseminator. It has been argued by Abdullah (2012) that entrepreneurship activity is associated with generation and founding of new firms which become the engine for the growth and innovation of the economy during the times of economic challenges.

Education is an essential ingredient of economy prosperity especially in developing countries that are characterized by low income and high unemployment level (Ndibe *et al.*, 2013). There can be little doubt that the development of the modern economy is underpinned in the curriculum of its higher education sector. For example, in Zimbabwe where the government introduced the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, dubbed the Zim-Asset, the development and the attainment of this objective has nothing short of amazing when it comes to the role of Open and Distance Education. This implies that to support the objective of the country there is need to talk about the education quality that is being offered by the higher education sector. In Zimbabwe we have experienced the increase in the number of universities stemming from both the private and the public where Zimbabwe Open University is also a player. Each province has a state run university with the Zimbabwe Open University having a regional centre to offer higher education in the form Open and Distance Learning. Also a number of private

owned universities are competition in the higher education field. However, it is quite interesting that all these universities have curriculum that provides training in entrepreneurship in the Faculty of Commerce only.

### 3.1. The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

In this section attention is brought to the concept of Entrepreneurship Education. The concept of entrepreneurship has its roots in the early works of [Drucker \(1985\)](#), who is regarded as the contemporary management thinker. Elsewhere, entrepreneurship is rooted in the Shigeru Fijii, a scholar and teacher in this field at Kobe University in Japan. Thereafter the concept was adopted in other parts of the world with the first course in Entrepreneurship introduced in United States of America at Harvard Business School. This phenomenon later gained acceptance and more recognition until it got its way in to universities in developing countries and other parts of the world. Although the concept of entrepreneurship can be traced to the olden days of Schumpeter, the concept is still at its infant stages in the universities in Zimbabwe although the past twenty years has experienced a rise in the number of small business management and entrepreneurship courses being offered in higher education institutions. The rise in the number of entrepreneurship courses being offered in the higher education is associated with the need to meet the demand for entrepreneurship in the country. The demand for entrepreneurship in the country is three fold.

Firstly, it is the government which has recognized the need for the introduction of the concept in the higher education for it to advance some of the economic and social transformation goals. It is the demand by the government to deal with the perennial challenges of unemployment and poverty reduction. Through education the government aims at developing an entrepreneurial culture which is oriented to job creation. Most jobs arise from entrepreneurial small firms rather than from large enterprises. The second strand of demand for entrepreneurship education is that of students. The students may want to start up their own businesses and also wish to acquire knowledge helpful in their careers in large corporations. The last strand of the demand for entrepreneurship education is the business world itself. There seems to be a general scarcity of managerial skills in enterprises and of managers who are oriented to the development of new businesses to assure a continual renewal. Therefore, it is the role of the Higher Education sector to deal with the satisfaction of the three folds of demand for entrepreneurship education leading to the promotion of entrepreneurship in the country.

[Drucker \(1985\)](#), the contemporary management thinker regards entrepreneurship as the way individuals who quest for exploiting business opportunities search for change in meeting the dynamic demands of the market. [Drucker \(1985\)](#), in this case, viewed entrepreneurship as a practice behavior that can be learnt. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a process which involves the effort of individual entrepreneurs in identifying viable and profitable business opportunities in the environment. [Keat et al. \(2011\)](#) argued individual entrepreneurs mobilise resources for the exploitation of the existing business opportunities. They interact with the environment through

their capacities to scan and make feasibility studies of the environment to see what can be obtained at a profit. Similarly, [Timmons and Spinelli \(2004\)](#) opined that entrepreneurship is an activity that causes destruction of the traditional methods of doing business in the environment by bringing in new methods and technology which is the essence of economic development. [Aina and Salako \(2008\)](#) described entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out profitable investment opportunities. In the process of taking advantage of investment opportunities, scarce resources are employed ([Ogundele et al., 2012](#)). Reward in the form of profit is the major driver and incentive for entrepreneurship but this is always accompanied by financial, social and economic risks ([Kikechi et al., 2013](#)).

Entrepreneurship Education is the veritable vehicle for intervention by the university in the life of the learner to input entrepreneurial skills. The intervention by university is to enable the university product (graduate) to survive in the world of business and also assist the government in achieving one of its main objectives of reducing loafing among the university graduates. Entrepreneurship education result in the new business start ups ([Isaac et al., 2007](#)).

When included in the university curriculum, Entrepreneurship Education has the potential to let graduates systematically acquire job related knowledge, skills and attitudes that help in business management. In many cases the graduate, after acquiring the Entrepreneurship Education will develop orientation towards new business start up. Business management skills that differentiate an entrepreneur from a manager is the technical skills which involves the technical knowhow of starting and running ne w business in a fashionable way than before. In oderd for one to have the entrepreneurship technical skills, the entrepreneur should be in possession of rare or innate control ability which allows for high degree of self discipline. [Ogundele et al. \(2012\)](#). Argued that entrepreneurs should be innovative, change oriented and lastly be visionary.

Contemporary research in the field of entrepreneurship concur that there is need to emphasis entrepreneurship education ([Alarape, 2008](#); [Bukola, 2011](#); [Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo, 2011](#); [Dumbu and Chadamoyo, 2012](#)). Traditionally the universities have dwelled ore on Business Education which has a more limited scope and coverage than Entrepreneurship Education. Entrepreneurship Education is a lifelong learning process where competency awareness, creativity, application, start ups and growth depict the Entrepreneurship Education curve. Governments of the world are faced with a common problem of unemployment and Zimbabwe is not spared. The country, in it bid to deal with the unemployment phenomenon which is rising in the university graduate sector has to grapple also with other policies aimed at improving the performance of the ailing economy. To deal with the current situation like any other government there is need to through weight on the policy of indigenisation and empowerment. These two policies are seen as enabling policies to react to the unemployment that the country is currently facing. These policies cannot go a long way if they are not supported by the universities and especially with the Zimbabwe Open University through introduction of Entrepreneurship Education in the university curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum change for inclusion of

Entrepreneurship Education other than Business Education cannot be over emphasized. The next section of the study devotes itself to research methodology.

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current section addresses the methodology issue. This study was largely a qualitative descriptive survey that used an open ended questionnaire as an instrument to solicit information from the students about what they perceived is the role of the Open and Distance Learning in promoting Entrepreneurship. Open ended questionnaire has the advantage over other data collection instruments in that it allows the respondents to respond to the items in their own words.

This produces qualitative data. Therefore, the current study is deeply rooted in the qualitative research paradigm. The study employed a convenient sampling technique to come up with the sample of 60 students. The sample comprised of the Open and Distance Learning students drawn from the four Faculties of the Zimbabwe Open University at Masvingo Regional Campus Centre namely: Faculty of Commerce and Law, Arts and Education, Science and Technology and Applied Social Sciences. An equal representation of the participants from each faculty was recognized and in each faculty, 15 students were given the opportunity to respond to the open ended questionnaire on a first come first serve basis. Students were asked to respond to the open ended questionnaire that was placed at the reception of the Regional Campus Centre between October and November 2013. The targeted students in this study were those who had registered for a semester with the region. Therefore, the respondents were conversant in some way with the Open and Distance Learning systems. Data collected through the use of the open ended questionnaire were analysed through coding themes that emerged from the responses to the open ended items. The next section deals with the results and discussion.

#### **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study examined the promotion of entrepreneurship in Higher Education by the Open and Distance learning institution in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Open University. The students from the various faculties of the university provided several sentiments on the idea of promoting entrepreneurship in the university. These perceptions and views are discussed below following the major themes that were generated from the responses by the research participants. In this paper the university students' perceptions on the role of the Open and Distance Learning institution in promoting entrepreneurship was examined critically in following entrepreneurship education variable, that is the role of university to promote entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship curriculum and content, the gender issue, work experience and parental occupation as significant variables.



### 5.1. Perceptions of the Students from Other Faculties on the Zimbabwe Open University's Role on Promoting Entrepreneurship

The majority of the respondents in the study lamented that the Zimbabwe Open University has a major role to play in promoting entrepreneurship in the country in wake of the a disturbing labour market that is characterized by high university graduate unemployment. Many students who are off loaded by the universities at their annual graduation ceremonies imply an increase in the graduate's population joining the reserve army of labour. Some respondents shared the following comments on this issue:

- *In the dawn of the new economic situation in our country where unemployment is high one should be equipped with some lifelong skills in business management and entrepreneurship.*
- *I am going to graduate next year (2014) and will definitely join the unemployed group of the population. I am studying a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Studies but the degree has not prepared me for life out there where there are no jobs.*

From the above sentiments given out by the respondents in this study, one can conclude that there is high demand for entrepreneurship education in Zimbabwe's universities. Literature has pointed out that the demand for entrepreneurship education is three fold and one of the crucial folds here is the student. Students in the higher education environment, in this situation of high unemployment, need to be equipped with the entrepreneurship skills. The students demand entrepreneurship education in all the faculties of the university. Those students from the other faculties such as Education and Arts, Applied Social Sciences and Science and Technology alluded that if they are given an opportunity to choose curriculum they would opt to learn entrepreneurship. One of the respondents from one of these faculties said:

- *If one is taught entrepreneurship, one has the opportunity to scan the environment and identify the business opportunities in it. Therefore every student from the university must receive entrepreneurship education, not that the subject is for Commerce and Law students only.*

The above statement indicates that even students from the other faculties which are not the faculty of Commerce and Law are also demanding the entrepreneurship education. The role of the university is being placed on its capacity to change the curriculum to meet the demands of the learners. The Zimbabwe Open University has to make sure the curriculum is appealing to the demands for the entrepreneurship education in the university across all the faculties. The demand for entrepreneurship education is being prompted among the students by the lack of employment opportunities in the country when they complete their studies.

Another student from the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences provided a very interesting comment as follows:

- *I regard the Zimbabwe Open University as the seedbed for entrepreneurship development because it teaches students think and behave entrepreneurially.*

The assertion above can be concluded to mean that the Open and Distance Learners are seeing the university as the veritable vehicle to drive the entrepreneurship education and hence lead to the development of an entrepreneurship based economy. In this respect, universities

should position themselves as hubs of entrepreneurship by making a substantial contribution in nurturing entrepreneurship environment for their students to benefit. To the students who were the respondents in this study, Zimbabwe Open University is seen as a provider of entrepreneurship training programmes because one of the respondents said:

- *Even if I am not a student from the Faculty of Commerce and Law where business studies make the curriculum, the skills that I have been equipped with by this university allows me to engage in starting up a business.*

The respondents indicated that the role of the university is critical in the development of entrepreneurship education in the students from across the faculties of the Zimbabwe Open University. It is believed that the dissemination of information for the development of the country is in the hands of the higher education sector. Therefore, the Zimbabwe Open University should stand to support this through curriculum innovation that suits the demands of the students in this situation where the job opportunities are shrinking.

The general response given by the student in the study is that they do believe that the University (Zimbabwe Open University) has a role to play in the enhancement of the entrepreneurship education in the country. The university is seen as the major stakeholder in the development of the entrepreneurship drive which should create an entrepreneurial culture across the faculties to influence students' decision to create new businesses.

## **5.2. Perceptions of the Students from the Faculty of Commerce and Law on the Zimbabwe Open University's Role on Promoting Entrepreneurship**

The students in the Faculty of Commerce and Law viewed the Zimbabwe Open University as the modern age tool for the development of entrepreneurship education in the country. They indicated that the university is responsible for weaving the government policy on indigenisation and empowerment policies into the university curriculum. What has been observed by those students in the Faculty of Commerce and Law is also similar to perceptions of the students from the other faculties that the Zimbabwe Open University has the mandate to deliver Open and Distance Education that has the potential to rescue the country from the problems of unemployment. One of the respondents from the Faculty of Commerce and Law shared the following idea:

- *The Zimbabwe Open University has a bigger role to play in promoting the culture of entrepreneurship because it is the only university that enrolls students from across the industry with varying experience.*

From the above view, one can argue that the Zimbabwe Open University has a mammoth task in the country to leverage the country on the economic challenges bedeviling it. There is no much better solution to the problem of unemployment and poverty alleviation which can be better than equipping the graduates with entrepreneurship education. This is so, if the country would want to achieve a hundred percent total empowerment and indigenisation policies. The general thinking of the majority of the Commerce and Law students of the Zimbabwe Open University is

that the university should make sure that each and every student coming out of it should be equipped with entrepreneurship skills. These skills are necessary for new business start ups and improved management of the existing businesses. The current situation in the country is characterized by the rise in the number of the small firms and backyard businesses which have become the livelihood of many families. Therefore in order for the country to realize the benefits of these small firms the university should intervene by promoting entrepreneurship education.

On the issues of the entrepreneurship education being disseminated to other faculties of the university, the Commerce and Law students had mixed perceptions. However the majority of the students in the faculty felt that Entrepreneurship Education should be taught across faculties. The design of the curriculum would be such that the entrepreneurship course should be borrowed from the Faculty of Commerce and be taught in other faculties of the university. The same course should be taught in the other faculties using the same lecturer and tutors from the faculty of Commerce and Law. The assessment of the students will be done by the same faculty using the same assessment tools. Supporting the above view one of the respondents from the Faculty of Commerce and Law said:

- *In line with the agenda for the development of the national economy every university student should be in possession of the entrepreneurship skills so that the challenges that are faced by the country are dealt with. So there is need for the Zimbabwe Open University to relax some of its enrolment regulation and allow every student in the university to access entrepreneurship education regardless of the faculty one is enrolled in.*

However those few who shared a different perception to the majority of the students in the Faculty of Commerce had the following comments:

- *Business education courses demand a lot of mathematical calculations and one should have a good calculation inclination. Therefore, those students from the Arts and Education or Applied Social Sciences may not cop up with these demanding mathematical subjects.*
- *The entry qualifications for the Commerce degree require one to have Mathematics at Ordinary level and most of the students in the Faculty of Arts and Education do not meet these requirements. Then how can they be taught entrepreneurship?*

It can be concluded from the above sentiments that the few individual students feel that entrepreneurship education should be only be received by those students gifted in mathematical calculations as Mathematics at Ordinary Level is a prerequisite for enrolling in the Faculty of Commerce and Law. This observation was quite interesting as these respondents were seen to very conservative when it comes to the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship in the university. However the majority of the students believed that the course should be taught and learnt across the faculties without any segregation.

From the perceptions indicated above one can conclude that the Zimbabwe Open University has a role to play in the development of the economy. The role can be emancipated through the review of the curriculum to meet the needs of the economy which is currently facing the

challenges of poverty in both the urban and rural population and high unemployment of the university graduates.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the responses given above the respondents on this study content that the Zimbabwe Open University has a major role than any other university in promoting Entrepreneurship. The Zimbabwe Open University is the only university in the country that has a flexible delivery mode that can allow students from across the faculties to access entrepreneurship education. The university, as said by the respondents must develop curriculum to suit the needs of the current economic status of the country which is characterized by high university graduate unemployment. Students from the other faculties of the university other than those from the Commerce and Law lamented that they also need to be equipped with the entrepreneurship education so that they can be able to deliver new business start ups that correspond with their own studies for example in Art these students can be involved in Theatre business. It was also concluded that that students from the faculty of Commerce and Law might have low esteem in starting up new enterprises but have just enrolled in the area for the fact that they meet the minimum entry requirements. Being a student in Commerce and Law does not guarantee that the students are all have an inclination towards commerce and the reverse is true for those students from other faculties in the university.

The results obtained in the current study confirm that there is an urgent need for the re-visitation of the promotion of Entrepreneurship Education in the Open and Distance Learning institution. As Zimbabwe Open University is the only university in the country with the university charter to deliver through open access and learning, a paradigm shift is expected in the curriculum issues. Therefore the study recommends that the Zimbabwe Open University curriculum should cater for the needs of every student across the faculty divide. Compulsory Entrepreneurship education courses should be taught in the university's four faculties so that every student has access to the courses. However, Entrepreneurship education courses should not be examined because when it comes to entrepreneurship there is nothing like textbook about starting a business. That said, there are three key things that the Open and Distance Learning institution, the Zimbabwe Open University should do to promote entrepreneurship in the students. The university should stress the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education so that the students can navigate business issues in the real business world. It is therefore recommended in the study that the university should stress its curriculum on entrepreneurship education and the teaching of the foresaid should focus on coming up with someone who is innovative and creative. The course in business communication should be one of the foundation courses that should be taught to every student enrolled in the university. The university should establish a centre for Entrepreneurship Development. That centre should cater for the development of the entrepreneurship culture and behavior amongst all the students. Therefore the curriculum of the university should be refocused on the best ways to develop entrepreneurship

consciousness in every employee and student of the university. The best way to do this is to link the centre for Entrepreneurship Development with the university's alumni association. This helps to improve the communication of the industry ideas to the university in terms of what is exactly happening in the business environment. Alumni association is responsible for the cross pollination of the commerce ideas as these are people already into the business and industry. There is a likelihood that the alumni association will be able to share experiences with the current students in the university about the challenges and fortune that in existing out there. There reason for the amalgamation of the university' centre for the Entrepreneurship Development and the alumni association is that, to stay relevance in the volatile world of emergence of new businesses and markets, academic programmes must focus on the real world tools of business and face reality in solving today's problems of graduate unemployment.

Lastly, the Open and Distance Learning institution, the Zimbabwe Open University should understand that it has a key role to play in the social competitiveness challenges by offering high quality training that is appropriate to the current economic situation which is characterized by lack of graduate employment. It is therefore recommended that the university should be responsive to this situation by recognizing the preparation of university graduates who can address the real labour market challenges bedeviling the infant economies like that of Zimbabwe through the ability to mobilize technical knowledge to any situation with discernment. In this, paradigm of university tuition, the learner assumes an increasingly important role and responsibility in managing its own career.

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