

# The Scottish University Level Entrepreneurship Education Initiative: Lessons for Ghana in Dealing with Graduate Unemployment

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## Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate entrepreneurship education at the university level in Scotland and lessons Ghana could learn from their experience in solving graduate unemployment. The main data used for the study was primary, collected through interviews with six academics involved in university level entrepreneurship education at four universities in Scotland. Qualitative approach was used for this research so as to have a first-hand perception of academics on the entrepreneurship education at the university level. Scottish Enterprise is using entrepreneurship education at the university level as a policy strategy for increasing business birth rate among Scottish university graduates. It clearly emerged from the perspective of academics that entrepreneurship education at the university level cannot significantly lead to business start-ups and therefore cannot be used as a strategy for self-employment among graduates. It became therefore evident that entrepreneurship education cannot be used as a sole strategy for solving unemployment; it can though equip students with some employability skills. The lessons that Ghana can learn from the Scottish experience is that entrepreneurship education could equip students with some enterprise skills (which are needed by employers in Ghana) that would make them employable, thereby contributing to solving graduate unemployment in Ghana.

**Keywords:** enterprise and entrepreneurship education, universities, unemployment, Scotland, Ghana, graduates.

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study: Graduate Unemployment in Ghana

One of the biggest problems facing the Ghanaian economy is unemployment amongst the youth. It is however interesting to note that there are no official statistics on the unemployment situation in the country. The situation as at 2001 according to unofficial unemployment statistics, was 20.3%. (Prospects.ac.uk Autumn 2003) Opportunity International Australia stated that the rate was 20%; and Index Mundi (02/09/2005) also gave the same rate. Regarding the actual unemployment rate among graduates there are varying perceptions and there has not been much research in the area to find out the reality. The only specific report on it is the survey conducted by Dr. Kwabia Boateng & Professor Ofori-Sarpong of University of Ghana. (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong, 2002:12). According to this study many employers assert that the problem of graduate unemployment is due “to low government demand for graduate labour, low productivity of recent graduates, and lack of career counselling and guidance for students”. (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002:44).

The Ministry of Education conducted a survey in 1996 ‘to examine the labour market experience of workers who graduated from the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, between 1985 and 1994’ with the objective of obtaining a “broad overview of the study programmes, employment situation, occupation, and professional career of graduates”. (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002:45) The study showed that the unemployed among the sampled were the most recent graduates and those unwilling to take up jobs in teaching, or farming. It is noteworthy that although some of the unemployed wanted to go into self-employment, they felt constrained by lack of capital, and therefore were willing to wait to get jobs in the public sector which were not guaranteed.

Again in March 1999 the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment in Ghana carried out registration of unemployed graduates with the aim of finding out the dynamics of unemployment among Ghanaian graduates and “providing some interventions to mitigate the problem”. (ibid) The survey was limited to unemployed graduates living in the regional capitals of Ghana. The findings indicated that over 35% of unemployed university graduates and 20% of other tertiary unemployed graduates in 1998 were those with social science background. Once again it is interesting to note that over 65% of them were ready for either wage or self-employment and 21% preferred wage employment only. The study hinted that about 98% of them raised the need for financial and entrepreneurial skill development assistance to be able to start a new business. According to Aryeetey, (2011) about 50% of graduates who graduate from tertiary institutions in Ghana would be in the

unemployment queue for two years after their national service, and 20% of them would be jobless for three years. The study report of the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment indicated that the problem of graduate unemployment in Ghana is attributed basically to two major factors, which are: “the mismatch between supply (by programmes and courses) and the demand; and the mismatch between the expectations of graduates (to get stable, high-paying jobs in the formal sector) and what the market is currently supplying”. (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002:61-63) The study further revealed that employers hinted that the main areas of skill shortage, which needs government attention, include: information technology, engineering, office management, human resource management, entrepreneurial and leadership training (ibid).

### *1.2 The Problem of the Study*

In a bid to solving the graduate unemployment canker in Ghana in recent times, and in response to government’s call to tertiary institution to help find solutions to graduate unemployment, a number of tertiary institutions in Ghana including Universities and Polytechnics believe entrepreneurship education could offer graduates skills set that would enable them create jobs for themselves by starting their own businesses. In line with this belief, most tertiary institutions are offering entrepreneurship as a module in their curricula to create awareness, and recommend self-employment as an alternative and a better lucrative career path. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, for instance is now running entrepreneurship development programme with Business Incubator and Enterprise Centres (Adarkwa, 2010). It is interesting to note that no one knows the impact these initiatives are having on unemployment as there are no statistics on graduate business start-ups; and the graduate unemployment queue continues to get longer and longer. According to Owusu-Ansah and Poku (August 2012, p. 8), entrepreneurship education at Business school of KNUST is creating entrepreneurship awareness and encouraging students to include “self-employment in their career intentions and aspirations’ options as well as inculcating a positive attitude towards business start-up”. But the question is, have these awareness creation and encouragements led to self-employment or reduced graduate unemployment in any way? According to Ghanaweb news item, the cause of failure to find a solution to graduate unemployment in the country has stemmed primarily from the wrong diagnosis of the situation and the wrong prescriptions offered. It further expressed the view that tertiary institutions that have been mandated to train graduates for the job market have not lived up to expectation, leading to graduates’ deplorable situation of being in the grips of unemployment (www.ghanaweb.com, October 18, 2013). These revelations and concerns have been the motivation behind this study of exploring the Scottish experience in entrepreneurship education (which is meant to increase business birth rate) so that lessons could be learned to purge and improve our initiatives to be effective in achieving the goal of using entrepreneurship education to solve or reduce graduate unemployment in Ghana.

### *1.3 The Research Question*

From the deliberations of the literature, the question that became obvious was: is the Scottish entrepreneurship education in the universities yielding the desired results of increasing graduate business start-up rate such that Ghana could learn lessons to revamp and consolidate scattered initiatives for solving graduate unemployment? This question was looked at from the perspective of the academics implementing the Scottish initiatives.

### *1.4 Objectives of the Study*

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education at the university level in Scotland on business start-ups/self-employment amongst university graduates. The specific objectives of the study were:

- a. to find out from the perspective of the implementers (the academics) of entrepreneurship education the effects of the initiative on business start-ups/self-employment amongst university graduates in Scotland and;
- b. to draw up useful lessons from the Scottish experience in dealing with graduate unemployment in Ghana.

### *1.5 The Significance of the Study*

The ultimate purpose of university education and education in general is to prepare students to make significant economic contributions to the economies in which they live. Educational institutions especially the tertiary ones therefore have the primary obligation of providing their students with appropriate education for them to be able to make meaningful contributions to their national economies. (Keogh and Galloway, 2004) In Ghana however, there is high unemployment among university graduates. People have been suggesting that graduates should establish their own businesses and this obviously can be part of the solution to the problem. According to George Gendron, editor of *Inc* magazine, “the traditional admonition of one generation to the next ‘Get a Job’, has been replaced with the more complex and bewildering mandate, ‘Go out and create a job for yourself.’” (Bridges, 06/06/05 web) This can be applied to Ghana given the unemployment situation among graduates in the country; but the obvious question is, how do they start businesses as fresh graduates lacking skills and experience for rolling viable businesses. There is therefore the need to investigate the potential of

entrepreneurship education of being a vehicle for self-employment awareness creation and skills development among graduates; and develop a strategic framework for consolidating existing initiative and introducing entrepreneurship course in the universities and other tertiary institutions that do not have one already, as a strategic solution, or at least as part of the solution to the unemployment problem. This investigation would reveal the impact of the Scottish initiative and confirm and affirm or otherwise that entrepreneurship education could be an initiative for reducing graduate unemployment.

## **2.0 Research Methodology**

### *2.1 The Research Paradigm*

An interpretive paradigm was used and therefore the qualitative research method was adopted. The interpretive approach was appropriate for this research as the main data for the research was the views and perception of academics involved in entrepreneurship education from four universities in Scotland, on the impact of entrepreneurship education at the university level on business start-up/self-employment. Phenomenological inquiry or qualitative research was deemed most appropriate, as this method uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. (Patton 2002 quoting Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Hoepfl, Fall 1997; Patton, 1990) Furthermore, qualitative method can be used to have a better understanding and new perspectives on any phenomenon whether little is yet known or much is already known, or to have more in-depth insight and information that may not be easily ascertained quantitatively. (Cassel and Symon, 1994) This study used interviews to collect data from the academics on their perception on the impact of Scottish university level entrepreneurship education. This approach was used as ‘qualitative interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge’, (Patton, 2002:4) which perfectly helped achieve our study objectives.

### *2.2 Data Collection*

The primary data comprised the perceptions of academics on the initiative. The data was sought by interviews with semi-structured questionnaire; and academics involved in the higher level entrepreneurship education in four selected universities in Scotland were the interviewees. They were selected from Queen Margaret University (1), Napier University (2), Edinburgh University (2) and Strathclyde University (1). These universities were selected purposively in view of time and financial constraints in travelling to faraway universities to contact and conduct interviews. The purpose of the interviews with the academia was to find out what it takes to run the programme as well as if the initiative could lead to business start-ups or self-employment amongst graduates among others.

### *2.3 Data Analysis*

The data set was qualitative so right from the beginning of the data collection process, coding of the responses was started so as to identify patterns and relationship to be used as data blocks for the content analysis. In addition, track was kept on identifying the pattern and appearance of specific variables such as impact, employable skills, start-up businesses, self-employment and employment in the data set. These variables serve as central tendencies for identifying the pattern and coding them and finding the common trend, digressions and convergence in the data. (Punch 2005:196) This approach helped to discern easily the line of thinking, perception and practice of the academics of entrepreneurship education in their respective universities.

## **3.0 Literature Review**

### *3.1 Promotion of Entrepreneurship Education in UK Universities*

The notion of promoting “enterprise” in young people from schools through to graduate level in the development and application of enterprise skills has become a fundamental requirements of the emerging knowledge and enterprise economy. Many governments today, including UK are of the opinion that the prosperity of their countries depend heavily on their ability and smartness in the competitive environment of the ‘knowledge based economy’ (DTI 1998 web, Duffy and Stevenson, 1984). The UK government has therefore emphasised the need to develop skills necessary for entrepreneurial action and behaviour in the UK for it to be able to maintain its competitive position in the global enterprise environment. (Rosa 2003 quoting Gibb, 2000; Department of Trade and Industry [DTI], now Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 1998 web) In view of this the UK government has been emphasising and directing policies to assist the “development of enterprise skills set among the working population”. (Galloway et al., 2005: 8) The onus is now on young people to take responsibility for their future employment and financial affairs as the traditional jobs for school leavers and university graduates are fast growing leaner and leaner. Bridges (no date, web) gives the reasons for this phenomenon:

1. the present technologies have made it possible, to automate the production line where repetitive tasks were carried out by many hands, to automate information processing, and to create new types of information-based work to be done;

2. big firms are outsourcing and downsizing their various activities and farming them out to little firms;
3. with the use of laptop computers, faxes, modems and cellular phones, the need to maintain central offices has decreased significantly and firms are now operating virtually; and
4. governments are divesting and privatising many public services and bureaucracies are thinning as we seek to cut down government budget and decrease the national debt.

The obligation and responsibilities of educators have never become more critical, as they have to be flexible and creative in order to meet the expectations of students in preparing them for the new economy—knowledge and enterprise economy. Much has been done in the UK in the higher education sector to develop the needed skills and competencies and behaviour for enterprise. (Galloway et al., 2005) It is believed that education holds the key to the development of positive attitudes and behaviour towards entrepreneurship and employability. (ibid) Many researches carried out in many parts of the world indicate that students' attitude towards enterprise and small business are positive among business college graduates and students are increasingly becoming disillusioned with career as bureaucrats. (Jackson and Vitberg, 1987) Wilson, et al. (2007) reported that, entrepreneurship education could motivate student's interest in entrepreneurship as a career. A phenomenon is emerging in USA and many European countries that increasing number of students consider running their own businesses as an alternative career path (Duffy and Stevenson, 1984).

Studies have revealed that there is a strong correlation between enterprise and entrepreneurship education and the possibility of establishing a new business. A survey conducted by Charney and Libecap's (2000) on Arizona enterprise and non-enterprise graduates concluded that entrepreneurship education programmes have had a positive impact in encouraging graduates to develop start-ups. The study reported that entrepreneurship graduates are three times more likely to start new business ventures. The report further established that (controlling for personal characteristics, including gender), enterprise and entrepreneurship education graduates were more likely to earn \$12,561 more a year than non-enterprise and entrepreneurship education graduates; and those who are fortunate to work for large firms earned approximately \$23,500 more a year than other graduates. Some studies have confirmed that there is a positive relationship between enterprise and entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level and employability and earnings. (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2013) The European Commission (2012) carried out a survey of alumni of enterprise education courses in nine universities by using a control group to look for evidence of a relationship between participation in enterprise and entrepreneurship education and employability outcomes. The findings indicated that more of participant of entrepreneurship education (76%) compared to the control group (59%) entered paid employment immediately after graduation. A smaller percentage of entrepreneurship alumni (12%) remained unemployed for some period after graduation compared to 30% of the control group and about 16% of entrepreneurship alumni became self-employed (either as entrepreneurs or freelancers) compared to 10% for those who did not participate in enterprise and entrepreneurship education.

The universities in UK therefore have been challenged with the role of training graduates in this arena. The major part of UK's strategy in this direction involves improving the science base and the partnership between universities and industry. (Rosa 2003) It has therefore become necessary more than ever before to increase partnerships between universities and industry and the need to enhance entrepreneurial motivation and capability among university educators, researchers and students. In line with these needs, there have been "15 Science Enterprise Centres set up in science-based universities". (Rosa 2003:436). One of the aims is to increase the entrepreneurial skills of staff and students. Most of the Centres are developing and running undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in entrepreneurship and commercialization; and introducing entrepreneurship components into MBA programmes. In addition, business plan competitions are organised, especially business plan related to technology. Commercialization workshops and "fast track" entrepreneurship programmes and seminars are run for staff and students. The government has challenged the regions in the UK to come out with local entrepreneurship education initiatives in a quest to unleashing the potentials of young people in preparing them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges (Rosa 2003).

### *3.2 Entrepreneurship Education Initiatives in Scottish Universities*

The Scottish Enterprise was among the first regional development agencies to come out with a strong policy towards developing business start-ups and the development of entrepreneurship by launching 'The Business Birth Rate Strategy' in 1993. (Scottish Enterprise web 11/08/05) This policy has recently gone through a thorough review 'with the new approach being adopted representing the final stage of an important process of change.' (ibid) The new approach was launched in February 2002, with the following policy objectives:

1. "to learn about the processes, risks and rewards of entrepreneurship and venture capitalism ..."; (Hayward April 2005 web) and therefore ultimately
2. " increase the number of new business start-ups by graduates" (ibid)

Scottish Enterprise entered into explicit contractual arrangements with institutions, so that the initiative would be integrated into the academic framework of the universities and by emphasizing the practical application of the

knowledge and skills gained by students for economic purposes. (Hayward and Sundnes, Autumn 2000 web) This new face of the policy focuses on three priority areas one of which was ‘increasing the contribution of education to the development of entrepreneurship’ by developing enterprise among young people, school and university students, and socially-excluded groups’ (Scottish Enterprise web 11/08/05).

For instance, at the Engineering Department of Heriot-Watt University, entrepreneurship education covers a wide range of areas which are of significant importance to individual students in preparing them to become chartered engineers. In a survey by Keogh and Galloway (2004) to document the experiences of introducing and embedding entrepreneurship education into vocational disciplines at Heriot-Watt, and in a paper presented by Anderson and others (2003) at a conference, the reports indicated that the majority of science and engineering students at Heriot-Watt believe that the skills learnt during an entrepreneurship module would be of significant importance for employment within an existing business, as well as in business start-up or self-employment. In Keogh and Galloway’s study, more than 33% of the students claimed that the skills learnt would help them to be creative within an existing organisation. Using a control sample to find out the career intentions of entrepreneurship student and non-entrepreneurship students, it was revealed that

“those who have studied entrepreneurship at Heriot-Watt are less likely to perceive poor status of entrepreneurs, or risk as barriers to business start-up or self-employment than those who have not. Additionally, those who have completed a module in entrepreneurship are more likely to have skills such as initiative, team-working and perseverance than those who have not” (Keogh and Galloway, 2004: 538)

This assertion is in line with the European Commission’s (2012) survey report about this positive relationship. Rosa (2003) also alleged that there is a positive correlation between education and business survival and success, and therefore business founders with higher education are much more likely to be successful in high technology companies. He noted that the most successful business founders tend to be those that combine education and experience. Rosa (2003: 438, 439) enumerated the following list of skills that higher education develops in student because of which their businesses can perform better than those on the lower ladder:

“general reasoning and analytical skills; the ability to be critical of the status quo and to seek new and better solutions and practices; opportunities to specialize in scientific, technological and other knowledge based fields close to the frontiers of knowledge; networks of expertise and contacts with university staff; networks of peers, many of whom move on to influential positions in the professions and industry; confidence emanating from a history of examination success; the language of professional communication; the ability to work in teams, a skill that has been encouraged in Business Schools since the early 1980s through group projects and opportunities to access programmes designed to enhance entrepreneurial capabilities.”

Because of these skills even students with no work experience on leaving university would be able to run “quality businesses located in the innovative knowledge based sectors that the UK government has been so keen to develop”. (Rosa 2003: 439) According to Hayward (April 2005 web-based) Scottish Enterprise set out the following teaching methodologies that the universities have to use in delivering the courses and programmes so that students can develop knowledge based applied skills as enumerated above: analysis of real entrepreneurial case studies, business plan development, highly interactive teaching, teaching by entrepreneurs in addition to academic staff. (Hayward G. and Sundnes O. Autumn 2000 web)

Rosa’s (2003) conclusion supported that of Keogh and Galloway (2004) that the graduate entrepreneurs involved in his survey had more enterprising attitudes to life and work than students who did not have such a background. He however lamented that graduate entrepreneurs were not in high performing businesses; and that most of their businesses were small and often self-employed businesses. It is surprising to note that many of the graduates who had started businesses still preferred regular employment as many of them considered self-employment to be lacking in personal and financial rewards. The most successful businesses were not in biotechnology, computer software or other cutting edge knowledge driven businesses, but restaurants, retail stores and furniture manufacturing. This is disappointing as science is the most important area for creating knowledge economy, which is the destination of Scottish and UK governments’ entrepreneurship education efforts. A research report by Hytti and O’Gorman (2004) gives us an insight as to what could have gone wrong or what was not put in place because of which the Scottish initiatives has not yielded the desired results. Hytti and O’Gorman, (2004:12 quoting Gibb and Cotton 1998) suggested that there has been a proliferation of entrepreneurship education today, but with “considerable conceptual confusion as to what constitutes enterprise education” The cause of this confusion is the lack of definition of what exactly enterprise education is, what it aims to do and to achieve. They have therefore suggested that there is the need first and foremost to have a clear understanding of what objectives an educational intervention like enterprise education is meant to achieve at its very design stage in order to enable easy evaluation of the intervention when the time comes to do so. Hytti and

O’Gorman concluded by saying, “we argue that in order to operate an effective enterprise education programmes, policy makers and educators need to have a thorough understanding of the diverse and alternative aims and objectives of enterprise education interventions, the alternative forms such interventions can take, and of the need to “train the trainers” “. (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004:12)

#### 4.0 Results and Findings

Interviews were conducted with six university lecturers in four universities in Scotland teaching and researching into entrepreneurship education. The interviewees were from Queen Margret University Edinburgh (1); Hunter Centre For Entrepreneurship, Strathclyde University, Glasgow (1); Moffat Centre & Bright Red Ventures, Napier University, Edinburgh (2) and Edinburgh University (2). They were asked questions on: why the need for entrepreneurship education in Scotland, especially at the university level; what it takes to run entrepreneurship education in Scottish universities; what is taught in entrepreneurship education and other questions which are discussed below. The individual academic interviewees will be referred to in this report as academic/interviewee A, B, C, D, E and F for the purpose of anonymity.

On the question of why the need for entrepreneurship education at the higher level of education in Scotland, academic D believes it gives students basic employable skills which will help them perform on the job than usual. Academic C asserted that entrepreneurship education at the higher education is as a result of Scottish Executive’s policy based on the fact that the level of entrepreneurship among the population is less than it should be. Entrepreneurship education at the university level was seen as an avenue for enhancing the level of entrepreneurial skills among Scottish. Again, interviewee E explained that the appropriateness of this initiative was reinforced by the result of an academic study led by Fraser Allender Institute (2001) at Strathclyde which showed that there is a link between the number of small firm start-ups and employment. Also as Scotland is undergoing restructuring as a result of decline in large scale manufacturing and other heavy industries, policymakers have the aspiration to have a replacement for this vacuum and small firms are considered to be good means of filling the gap.

Interviewee F added that entrepreneurship education at the university level became desirable because Scottish Enterprise believes that entrepreneurial failure is an important cause of relative economic underperformance in Scotland. It therefore considers it a need for more business start-ups at all levels of Scottish society. A large number of start-ups is needed because only a small number of them grow into large businesses. Entrepreneurship education is needed at all levels of society but any businesses started by tertiary education products are mostly likely to grow which is in line with Rosa’s (2003) assertion. This is because people at this level are much more knowledgeable, so support for graduate businesses would most likely not go waste. (Academic E) One of the interviewees added two interesting reasons for running entrepreneurship education in his/her university. In the first place, it is a means of involvement with the community (corporate social responsibility) thus having a role beyond teaching and learning and two, they have entrepreneurship and small firms course as one of the strategic priority avenue to generate money from the government and from the funding bodies to pay for research projects. This does not mean that the university does not have a positive attitude to entrepreneurship education but it is using the avenue to carry out more research in the area, it was added.

Concerning what it takes to run an entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level, all the interviewees responded that running an effective entrepreneurship education course or programme at the university level calls for committed, research active and enthusiastic lecturers and staff. A small number of them said that entrepreneurship course at this level should be taught by staff with business experience. Those academics claimed they have a number of years of business experiences. Most of the interviewees mentioned the need for spacious and good quality lecture accommodation and teaching equipment like overhead projectors, data projectors and computer facilities just like any other course. Willingness on the part various departments to accept entrepreneurship course as part of their curricula and helping students know the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship education is crucial. A few of them added that an education system which is prepared to accept and accommodate the programme is a prerequisite. The universities/tertiary institutions that are to run the courses should themselves be entrepreneurial by being in the awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education as a framework for equipping students with relevant skills and entrepreneurial innovation which would help students in their future careers.

On the contents of entrepreneurship programmes in various universities of the interviewees, they were noted to be different in each of the universities. Academic F brought out the reason for the differences, which is that the modules taught are designed by lecturers teaching the courses. So the design of courses arises from the lecturers’ own research interest. The contents basically centre on entrepreneurship and business start-up; developing, protecting and commercialising ideas; innovation and creativity; business law/entrepreneurial law; business planning process; growing a business; evolution of new markets; corporate entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship and e-commerce; research for enterprise, policy, counselling and theory; venture management; entrepreneurial

consultancy project; the understanding of the importance of the team and the skills needed in a team and the importance of entrepreneurship to the economy. Some of these modules are core whilst others are optional depending on the university. Apart from one university, all others do not have entrepreneurship programmes but courses or various modules from which students choose electives.

On teaching methods, most of the interviewees responded that the teaching and learning mode for entrepreneurship courses are not different from other courses run in their respective universities. The main teaching and learning method they all mentioned is interactive through PowerPoint presentations. Other methods used are reflective and group learning, use of cases, group work, workshops, videos, preparation of business plans in groups and presentation of group output. Few of them hinted that they use less lectures and allow student to do things on their own as a way of giving them the opportunity to try to do things for themselves, which is student-centred-learning approach. This approach is flavoured with seminars, group projects, games, role play, and sometimes some students are placed with industries for projects, which offers them the opportunity to simulate or try their ideas in practice. In order to arouse and boost the confidence of students, sometimes external speakers such as model entrepreneurs are invited to speak to and interact with, students and staff.

Regarding target students for entrepreneurship courses at the various universities, majority of the academics mentioned undergraduate students from their respective business schools as their first target and priority. Most of these schools have entrepreneurship modules as core. Only two of the interviewees said they have elective modules for postgraduate students. Other departments that are targeted are all the other departments, especially engineering, creative studies, food science, design, manufacturing, journalism, music, complementary therapy etc. Most of these students take the entrepreneurship modules as elective.

One of the main rationales for undertaking this study is to find out if entrepreneurship education could be a strategic solution to graduate unemployment problem in Ghana. Four out of the six interviewees (over 66%) answered no, it cannot be a solution. One of them said it could only be a solution by necessity for Ghana; that is if there are no better alternative solutions Ghana could give it a try. He/she explained that usually students need to go into employment to gain experiences for some years before some of them if they wish could run successful businesses, even after several attempts. Academic A made a similar point that “even with work experience, businesses would still be small, as starters would work on their own without employing people at the early stages and 1-3 attempts may be a failure partly due to misjudgement of the market and making of large financial mistakes”.

Interviewee B added that skills and attitudes gained from entrepreneurship education make students more employable. It will basically help them to be more employable in the short term but in the longer term they can start businesses if they want to. Few can start businesses right after university and succeed. Another interviewee said that it would take a maximum of 10 years to start a business and be successful. But to have a massive success in business in Scotland would take about 30years because it would take time to change the culture of stigmatisation in Scotland. In Scotland there is a stigma attached to business failure so there is the need for this to change which could take decades. Academic F summarised why entrepreneurship education cannot be a solution to graduate unemployment anywhere in the world. Entrepreneurship education can help unemployment but not a solution to it. The solution to unemployment is to have a healthy economy. Of course education will lead to healthy economy. Employers want enterprising students who are able to find solutions to problems at the work place but these types of skills cannot be produced by entrepreneurship education. This is contrary to assertions found in the literature, that enterprise and entrepreneurship education can develop in students valuable employable skills.

A question was asked (following the assertion that fresh students cannot start business) about what prevents graduates from starting ventures right after universities. The consistent responses were that fresh students lack experience of how businesses work. Other hindrances are lack of finance and their youthful age (too young to have collateral for loans). There is also the problem of knowing and identifying what opportunities there are, it was claimed; and knowing clearly what they want to do.

## 5.0 Conclusion

From the findings, majority of the academics are aware that entrepreneurship education course is the implementation of Scottish government policy aimed at increasing business birth rate. For this to succeed in Scotland and anywhere in the world, the universities running the course would have to be entrepreneurial and the academics teaching the course would need to be committed, enthusiastic and research active. The modules taught at the various universities are diverse, with few common ones; and the teaching and learning methods used were mostly interactive, flavoured with group work, case study, preparation of business plans etc. It emerged that the courses usually are run at the undergraduate level, with limited modules offered at the graduate level. It was unanimously answered that entrepreneurship education can be run anywhere in the world because

there are entrepreneurial people in every country; but the socio-economic environment can be a significant success factor. But caution was given that a model working in one country cannot be replicated in another country wholesale. What need to be taken into consideration in any environment are the need to understand the available opportunities, the market needs and the culture of the environment. It was explained that even though culture gives people permission or prevents people from being entrepreneurial, it can be changed by changing the system in the country. It was added that apart from entrepreneurship education other critical factors for creating an enterprise economy include favourable institutional framework which strongly support private ownership of property, the rule of law, educated population, free economy, public support for small businesses, infrastructure and responsible people with can-do attitude. It however became clear that entrepreneurship education at the university level cannot be a solution to graduate unemployment; but it can only increase the employability skills of students.

Entrepreneurship education therefore cannot be used as a direct solution to graduate unemployment in Ghana; it could only be part of a strategic solution. This is because fresh students lack experience of how businesses work. There is also the problem of knowing what opportunities there are; and knowing clearly what they want to do, as well as knowing the market needs and the economic environment.

### **6.0 Lessons and Recommendations for Ghana**

The academics who are implementing the initiative believe that entrepreneurship education at the university level would first and foremost give students employable skills to be able to perform on the job, and not necessarily skills to start businesses. Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) reported in their study that the main areas of skill shortage, which needs government attention, included among others entrepreneurial and leadership training. The report concluded that the problem of graduate unemployment in Ghana is attributed basically to two major factors, which are: 'the mismatch between supply of and the demand for jobs'. (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002:61-63) Entrepreneurship education could therefore provide students with enterprising skills to become much more employable, which would help solve to some extent the graduate unemployment in Ghana. Ghana cannot copy the Scottish model hook, line, and sinker, but it has to design one that would fit the Ghanaian economic and social situations. If Ghana should decide to adopt some of the Scottish approaches, it should do so with great discretion. The government should first of all have the political and economic will to prepare a comprehensive policy paper to that effect. Because some employers in Ghana complain of lack of enterprising skills on the part of graduates, Ghana government's entrepreneurship education initiative should involve representatives from the industries, academics and policy makers so that all would make inputs into it. If Ghana Government would like to get involved in entrepreneurship education at the higher level, it would have to make its policy objectives clear at the initial stage to the implementing institutions; and mechanisms should also be put in place to make sure the courses and programmes are driving towards achieving the policy objectives of the government. The government would also have to play its part by being responsible in resourcing the implementing universities with the necessary facilities so that they could run the initiative effectively. It emerged from the study that entrepreneurship education cannot be a solution to unemployment but it rather calls for healthy economy to rectify the canker; therefore if the Ghanaian economy is not sound, the entrepreneurship education initiative would not work magic to solve the unemployment problem. Ghana government should have in place friendly institutional frameworks which encourage, support and protect private property and initiatives.

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