

Development of an Entrepreneurial Mentorship Model for Job Creation and Youth Development in South Africa

Peace Amaka Mbadugha

Management and Entrepreneurship/EMS/UWC, South Africa

Chux Gervase Iwu

Professor, Management and Entrepreneurship/EMS/UWC, South Africa

Abstract:

Background and importance of the research: South Africa has one of the highest youth unemployment rates globally, which presents a severe problem. Educational curriculum that does not align with the demands of the market, economic structural issues and socioeconomic disparities that have their origin in the apartheid era all contribute to the worsening situation of youth unemployment. Scholars across the globe have produced rich literature on the importance of entrepreneurial mentorship in developing countries, primarily focused on promoting entrepreneurial intents/uptake and its contribution to the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and national economic growth. Typically, their argument centres on harnessing entrepreneurial spirit among students in tertiary education, which could culminate in revenue-generating entrepreneurship. Other schools of thought account for its significance in lowering unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Entrepreneurial mentorship is one of the promising remedies for improving youth employment and development. Moreover, it involves a practical way of teaching, leading to skills acquisition that fosters growth and harnesses entrepreneurial mentorship among students.

Synopsis of the research problem: There is an urgent need to create an entrepreneurship model in higher education institutions. Entrepreneurship mentorship can be utilized to eradicate poverty and improve job creation, particularly among the youth in South Africa. This study seeks to address the issue of youth unemployment and ways to foster youth development. Hence, this study hopes to evaluate the implementation of the entrepreneurial mentorship model as a tool to combat youth unemployment.

Objectives & Questions:

Research Objectives: To determine the influence of entrepreneurial mentorship on undergraduate students' entrepreneurial intention to establish students' perceptions of a career in entrepreneurship and to investigate the effectiveness and challenges of existing government intervention frameworks addressing youth unemployment/youth development. And explore the efficacy and issues of current youth entrepreneurship intervention initiatives. To identify the elements influencing the perceptions

of **students' entrepreneurial skills acquisitions**: Research Questions: To what extent does mentoring influence entrepreneurial intention among students in higher education institutions? What do students of HEIs think about a career in entrepreneurship? How effective are the existing youth entrepreneurship intervention initiatives? What elements influence how undergraduates perceive entrepreneurial skill acquisitions?

Methodology: This study seeks to expand the curriculum in higher education to enable students to acquire theoretical and practical entrepreneurial skills that would drive their mindset towards the types of businesses they can establish to generate jobs (not preparing them as job seekers but as job creators). This research employs qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the qualitative data will be collected through a semi-structured interview, whereas the quantitative data will be collected using a questionnaire. The population includes all first-year and second-year Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) students and 9 Lecturers. The data that will be collected will offer insightful information that the study needs to reach the appropriate conclusion and make recommendations.

Research results (if available) / Expected outcomes: Given the study's aim to create a model that addresses youth unemployment, this study is expected to offer some recommendations for applying the entrepreneurial mentorship model to tackle the issue of youth unemployment in South Africa and other affected countries.

Significance: The significance of this research is to provide relevant counsel on entrepreneurship development and exposure to how that can be achieved by having an entrepreneurial mentoring and training model implemented and included in higher education curriculum to enable students to develop themselves to acquire new skills that would help exclude them from unemployment statistics and allow them to contribute to the growth of South Africa economy which is utmost pivotal.

Practical implications: This research is essential considering the issue of youth unemployment in the country. No nation is likely to advance or develop if a large proportion of its youth are unemployed. According to Statistics South Africa, about 61% of youth are unemployed; having that percentage of unemployed youth is indeed a troubling situation for a country like South Africa that already has a handful of various forms of crimes like gender-based violence (GBV), armed robbery, kidnapping among other crimes that are commonly committed by youth. It will prepare students to become entrepreneurs, even as students, and to venture into businesses that will create jobs; the study will further guide policymakers and HEIs boards in expanding the entrepreneurship curriculum.

Keywords:

Youth unemployment, Entrepreneurship Mentoring, Entrepreneurial Intention, Mentoring Model, higher education in South Africa, and Entrepreneurship Development in higher education.