

Entrepreneurship Education Practices among Private Higher Learning Institutions in Rwanda. Case of Members of ORIPES (Organization Rwandaise d’Institutions Privees d’Enseignement Superieur)

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education in Rwanda requested institutions of higher learning (IHL) to have entrepreneurship education as part of their programmes in order to produce graduates who have acquired entrepreneurial competence. However, the literature has indicated that teachers’ perceptions and practices have remained uncertain and neglected in as much as entrepreneur education literature and policies are concerned (Volkman, 2004; Solomon, Duffy & Tarabishy, 2002). This study focused on teachers’ practices of entrepreneurship education in private higher learning institutions, members of ARIPES in Rwanda.

The research employed realism as philosophical paradigm and mixed methods approach; Cross-sectional design was more appropriate for this study. The quantitative data were collected from 43 teachers of 8 private higher learning institutions of Rwanda members of ARIPES. Qualitative data were collected by using observation for exploring the practices of entrepreneurship education in classrooms. Quantitative data were analyzed by using mean, percentages and standard deviation. Qualitative data were also analyzed by using data transcription focusing on core objectives of the study. The findings have shown that practices of entrepreneurship education are theoretically well understood by entrepreneurship teachers as shown by the mean of 3.17, but the data from observation have shown that the reality of what they do is different from the normal entrepreneurship education pedagogy. Based on the findings, the general recommendation was that private HLIs should work closely with the ministry of education for supporting teachers so that they can be able to connect their perceptions, practices with the existing policies for overcoming the challenges of entrepreneurship education.

Key words: Entrepreneurship Education

1. Introduction

The article examines the teachers' practices of entrepreneurship education in private higher learning institutions in Rwanda.

As opposed to the general education, entrepreneurship education seeks to promote entrepreneurship culture. Therefore, central to change in pedagogical orientation was the need to develop the students' capacity to develop, organize and manage a business venture in order to make a profit.

Developing students' capacity to manage a business venture, the focus of entrepreneurship education is to provide opportunities for students to construct knowledge and apply it beyond the school. Guided by experiential learning developed by John Dewey (1859 - 1952) and Sociocultural theory developed by Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) as a theoretical framework, the article examines the implementation of entrepreneurship education from the practices and experience of instructors in private higher learning institutions of Rwanda, members of ORIPES.

Entrepreneurship Education has been introduced widely in higher learning institutions. Most higher learning institutions have seen the importance of teaching entrepreneurship education, and many insist that entrepreneur education provides students with new ideas, skills and the ability to think and respond entrepreneurially to societal challenges (Bikse *et al*, 2016). It also provides entrepreneur skills as necessary for the improvement of social and economic performance (Valliere & Peterson, 2005; and Holcombe, 2006).

Alberti *et al* (2004) defines entrepreneurship education as the structured formal conveyance of competencies. These competences include, skills and mental awareness to facilitate the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. According to Brown (2000) entrepreneurship education can be viewed in terms of characteristics that can be engendered to help students to develop new and innovative ideas.

Over the past century, society has required schools to prepare students for competences, so they can negotiate in an

increasingly complex set of social and economic realities (Christensen, 2008; National Academies of Science, 2007). In response to these requirements and changes, educators have developed new approaches to the provisioning of education, moving away from the notion of providing knowledge to students, to providing students with the strategies to process the knowledge. This new approach provides to the learners an active, individualized, and engaging learning experience: an experience which the teacher facilitates but does not dominate.

People in politics complain that education that does not create competition in learners and solve unemployment and reduce poverty serves no one. Following the millennium development (MDGs) and education for all (EFA) goals, emphasis from the politicians has been more on changing students' attitudes towards sustainable development and ethical values (Lopez et al., 2005). In other words, entrepreneurship education from the political point of view, is that which can develop in the learners, the knowledge, skills, perspectives and

values necessary to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future (Abdone, 2016).

Since entrepreneurship education helps to solve social problems (Freire, 1970) and helps to think critically and with autonomy (Simon, 1992; Kanpol, 1999 & McLaren, 1994). An entrepreneurship educator, therefore, is supposed to view students as creators of knowledge, as problem solvers and as critical and autonomous thinkers. There are some scholars who suggest the link between entrepreneur education and learner-centered teaching approach (Cope & Watts, 2000). These scholars suggest that entrepreneurs learn primarily through learning-by doing and reflection. Minniti and Bygrave (2001) for example assert that learning how to be entrepreneur can only be acquired through learning by doing or direct observation and participation in an activity. Gendron (2004) adds to that debate, saying, 'entrepreneur educators can continuously improve the teaching and device ways to encourage the learners to actively participate in the knowledge construction.

In the recent years, considering the global development, there have been many calls and support for higher learning institutions to provide entrepreneurship education in higher learning institutions since entrepreneurial skills are necessary for the improvement of social and economic performance of any country (Lusena-Ezera; Rivza & Volkova, 2016; Valliere & Peterson, 2005; Holcombe, 2006). The Ministry of Education in Rwanda requested institutions of higher learning (IHL) to have entrepreneurship education as part of their programmes in order to produce graduates who have acquired entrepreneurial competence. Different measures have been taken by the Ministry of Education in Rwanda to promote entrepreneurship education in both public and private higher learning institutions to reduce the number of graduates who are unemployed.

Teaching entrepreneurship education alone cannot make an entrepreneur yet this education has to be practical oriented and student-centered in order to produce graduates who are able to compete in the market. This requires teachers to adapt their teaching perceptions and practices.

Since some teachers providing entrepreneurship education have not been trained, this may affect the way entrepreneurship education is delivered and its outcomes.

A large number of empirical studies have also shown that teachers' conceptions play a significant role in framing the ways they plan, implement, and evaluate the curriculum and competence (Hancock & Gallard, 2004). However, the literature has indicated that practices have remained uncertain and neglected in as much as entrepreneur education literature and policies are concerned (Volkman, 2004; Solomon, Duffy & Tarabishy, 2002). Also there is no serious attention given to how teachers support students, which could enhance deeper learning (Gijssbers & Schoonhoven, 2012). Therefore, this study intends to fill this gap by analysing teachers' practices of entrepreneurship education in private higher learning institutions, members of ORIPES in Rwanda.

1. Methodology

The research employed realism as philosophical paradigm and mixed

methods approach; Cross-sectional design was more appropriate for this study because it helped to obtain data from respondents at a given period of time instead of several times as it is for longitudinal designs. The quantitative data were collected from 43 teachers of 8 private higher learning institutions of Rwanda members of ARIPES. Qualitative data were collected by using an interview administered to the heads of departments and observation for exploring the practices of entrepreneurship education in classrooms. Quantitative data were analyzed by using mean, percentages and standard deviation. Qualitative data were also analyzed by using data transcription focusing on core objectives of the study.

2. Results and Discussion

3.1. Summary of findings

This section focus on the findings related to teachers practices as they teach entrepreneurship education. Questionnaire and observation checklist were used to get this information. Questionnaire was used to gauge what practice of teachers in delivering entrepreneurship education, while

observation checklist contained the elements of entrepreneurship teaching that were used to determine the actual practice and the extent to which quality entrepreneurship education was practised in classrooms.

The practices of the teachers in conducting entrepreneurship education took into consideration the following aspects: students participation, students interaction in group work, learner-centered teaching approach, teacher facilitation, and development of students self-motivation. The findings collected through observation and views given by teachers through self-administered questionnaire, have shown that entrepreneurship education practices are the following: students' participation, students' interaction and teamwork, the use of learner centered approach, teacher facilitation and students' self-motivation. The findings were presented in summary table. These findings were analysed and interpreted by using mean and standard deviation in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics on the Teachers’ Practices

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Entrepreneurship education practices:	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Students participate more actively	43	2.00	4.00	3.27	.09602	.62965
Students are more interacting through group work	43	1.00	4.00	3.23	.14443	.94711
Student are at the center of the learning process	43	1.00	4.00	3.09	.12808	.83990
The teacher is facilitator	43	1.00	4.00	3.18	.14219	.93238
Motivation comes from within;students are truly interested in what they’re doing	43	1.00	4.00	3.11	.12544	.82258
Average Mean				3.17		

The study used the recapitulation of all the indicators of teachers practices of entrepreneurship education by using mean and standard deviation. The findings are summarized in Table 3.1.

According to this table the highest mean is that indicating that entrepreneurship education involve student; students participate more actively with the average of 3.27 and avarage mean for all the indicators was calculated to be 3.17.

The above quantitative results were also supported by the qualitative findings from observation. The researcher visited some entrepreneurship education classes and the focus was on the practices of entrepreneurship education.

Observational checklist with items to observe was used. The status was measured by number 1, 2, & 3. Number 1 being the least practiced and number 3 the most practiced.

Table 3.2: Observational Checklist

Item to Observe	Status of answers:		
	1	2	3
Students participate more actively		√	
Students are more interacting through group work		√	
Student are at the center of the learning process	√		
The teacher is facilitator	√		
Motivation comes from within: students are truly interested in what they're doing			√

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 3.2. describes the practices of entrepreneurship education observed in some classes of entrepreneurship education and showed that students participate actively in classroom moderately, students' interactions through group work is moderately practiced, use of student- centered approach was least practiced, teachers' facilitation was least practiced, students self-motivated was most practiced. Students practice and

work on the project given, individual and group work, but majority of students do not do the assignment given voluntary, but under pressure of the teacher; they do and submit, but there is no self-motivation.

It has been observed that students' participation and motivation is not yet at good level, because you find them working in groups on the projects and case studies given by teachers, but they work under pressure of the teacher. For self-learning most of the teachers gave

individual work to be submitted and marked by teacher. There was no class that was observed, students did self-assessment between them. They all depended on a mark from the teachers. Further, very few teachers gave students a chance to identify, discuss and provide solutions to social problems.

In general, it has been observed that student's role is to follow passively and actively the framework designed by the teacher. Some students in ICT department were observed working on their software which related to community problems, proposed by themselves and collaborate in their respective teams and ask questions to teacher where they find difficulties.

The most frequent practices were students in classrooms following what the teacher is teaching them, students in groups working on the task given by the teacher and individual students concentrated in case of preparation of a test or exam. This is consistent with Ruskovaara & Pihkala (2015) who did a study to analyze the practices of entrepreneurship education in schools and what role the school and the teachers

were playing in determining the entrepreneurship education practices. Ruskovaara & Pihkala found that teachers did not practice entrepreneur education because they had no training in this field. They concluded that the training that the teachers received had a lot to do with how they practiced entrepreneur education. They suggested that more studies should be done in education for teachers to be more conversant with this emerging field.

3.2. Detailed Analysis of Teacher

'Practices on Entrepreneurship Education

3.2.1. Teachers' practice concerning students participation

Students' participation is a crucial practice for entrepreneurship education. This means that students should be on the center of the whole process of teaching, learning and assessment. Table 3.3 shows the extent to which teachers promote students' participation to be fully part of the process.

Table 3.3: Teachers' Views on Students' Participation

Students participate more actively:	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	9.3
Agree	23	53.5
Strong agree	16	37.2
Total	43	100.0

Source: Field data, (2018)

Table 3.3 reveals that teachers promote students participation in entrepreneurship education to a large extent since students are involved in all teaching learning and assessment activities which make them full participants in entrepreneurship education. The findings have shown that majority of teachers 90.7% agree that students are facilitated to participate actively in all teaching, learning and assessment activities. The rest did not have experience in involving students in teaching, learning, and assessment activities. Entrepreneurship teachers have responsibilities of engaging students and create a class environment which encourages students to participate actively.

Thus, entrepreneurship education is theoretically understood by teachers, but the practices is not yet matching with the

existing philosophy and theories which have been set by the ministry of education. In this study, 90.7% of teachers agree that students participate actively in their learning process. Moreover, the mean of 3.27 and standard deviation of .62965 have shown that entrepreneurship teachers are positive with what they are practicing and most of them look at it in the same perspective as indicated in Table 3.1. Therefore, qualitative data from observation have shown that students' participation is moderate. This means that entrepreneurship teachers need to put more efforts in promoting entrepreneurship education. John Dewey's theory lays in a number of areas in teaching entrepreneur education. First, his belief that education must engage with and enlarge learners' experience and reflection of that experience before

interaction with the environments, provides a framework for teaching from the learners’ experience and stretch them to reflect and make sense of what is available in their environment practice.

3.2.2. Teachers’ Practices on Students’ Interaction and Teamwork

Learning is not only a relationship between the teacher and students but also students should interact in their respective groups for sharing and

discussing on the issues related to their subjects. For entrepreneurship education, it is advised that the role of teacher should be to encourage interaction and teamwork. This study has asked whether teachers’ practices encourage interaction and network. The results are described in Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Teachers’ Practice Concerning Student’s Interaction and Teamwork

Students are more interacting through group work	Frequency	Percent
Strong disagree	4	9.3
Disagree	3	7.0
Agree	15	34.9
Strong agree	21	48.8
Total	43	100.0

Source: Field Data, (2018)

Students interactions and teamworks have been investigated and teachers have given their views on this important practice. The findings showed that entrepreneurship teachers’ practice in entrepreneurship education encourage students interaction, as indicated by the large number 83.7% of those who have agreed and strongly agreed to this practice. Additionally, the mean of 3.23

and standard deviation .94711 as indicated in the table 3.1. This have shown that majority of teachers help students to interact by giving them group assignments even if there are some who do not practice this as standard deviation shows.

This have been also observed that students’ interactions and group work are moderately done. It has been observed that students team work in

entrepreneurship education, majority of the classrooms observed, students were working in groups, some good students were found in front of their colleagues explaining and helping them in preparation of exams and tests, others making presentations of what have been done by peers in the groups.

Quality of learners has been always an important element of quality education. Therefore, this element becomes fruitful when a teacher is able to facilitate students to build a strong collaborative relationship among students. This study, the teachers' views have demonstrated that students' interaction and teamwork is practiced in entrepreneurship education provided by private higher learning institutions of Rwanda, members of ARIPES. It has been also observed that students' interaction and teamwork is moderately practiced but the only problem is that they are still missing experience.

In line with efforts to improve the quality of education, the government of Rwanda emphasizes the importance of focusing on entrepreneurship practices in classroom by focusing on student's

motivation and practices, student's teamwork, the role of teacher and the role of students in order to ensure that the system is producing the kind of citizens the country needs (REB, 2015). This is in line with Vygotsky who used a system, which is known as cooperative learning, to encourage cooperation and team work spirit within each learning group. Vygotsky believe that in any task, the members had to successfully help and empower their fellow group members understand and succeed at the task.

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3.2.3. Teachers’ Practices on the use of Learner Centered Approach

Learner centered is a teaching approach which covers a big part of entrepreneurship education practices. It

involves more practice on the side of students, self-learning, collaboration with classmates, etc. The study focused on whether this practice is adopted by teachers conducting entrepreneurship education in private higher learning institutions in Rwanda.

The teachers’ practices reflect students centered pedagogy. This is confirmed by the majority of teachers (79.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that students are at the center of learning process. Entrepreneurship education and Learner Centered teaching approach go hand in hand.

Table 3.5: Teachers’ Practices Concerning Learner Centered Practices

Student are at the center of the learning process	Frequency	Percent
Strong disagree	2	4.7
Disagree	7	16.3
Agree	19	44.2
Strong agree	15	34.9
Total	43	100.0

Source: Field data, (2018)

In this study learner centered approach the teachers views shown that learner centered approach was practiced by teachers and the observation data indicated that learner centered was least practiced. The mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of .83990 as indicated in Table 3.1. This was consistent with percentages which showed that learner centered pedagogy is practiced but not at very satisfactory level. This shows a contradiction between teachers views and observed reality in some classrooms. This situation is critical situation which shows that entrepreneurship teachers have not yet understood properly and operationally what entrepreneurship education means, since the observed reality is different from teachers views.

This means that entrepreneurship teachers may have theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship education pedagogy without having enough experience of applying learner centered approach. This situation is consistent with the point of view of (Dhliwayo ,2008). He argues that most of the existing entrepreneurship education curriculum emphasizes the

theoretical knowledge and gives less attention to the practical application of the subject. The programs accentuate the established knowledge; however, they are frail on skill development and tacit experiences, which are critical features for nascent entrepreneurs.

It has been also observed that the role of teacher is the one who manages the class activities. He is the one who gives the class direction by providing all course material, prepare the problems to be solved by the students, provide guidelines to be followed. But in some cases, some teachers have been observed using traditional methods where they were in front of students talking and students passively and attentively following what the teacher is instructing them.

3.2.4. Teachers' Practices Concerning Facilitation

Facilitation is a methodological approach that emphasize teachers as a facilitator and not as an instructor. It is appropriate to help learners take responsibilities in teaching and learning processes. The study investigated whether teachers' practice in entrepreneurship education is

based on facilitation approach. Findings are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 4.1: Teachers’ Practices Concerning Facilitation Approach

The teacher is facilitator	Frequency	Percent
Strong disagree	3	7.0
Disagree	6	14.0
Agree	14	32.6
Strong agree	20	46.5
Total	43	100.0

Source: Field data, (2018)

Findings in Table 3.6, reveals that teachers’ practice is based on facilitation approach as confirmed by majority of teachers (79.5%). Moreover the study used mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.14219 as indicated in Table 3.1. It is obvious that in entrepreneurship education pedagogy, teacher is a facilitator instead of being instructor as it is done in traditional teaching. In this study, entrepreneurship teachers’ views illustrate that teacher is a facilitator. Therefore, the findings from observation indicate that teacher is least a facilitator. This explain that teachers are still using traditional teaching methods even when they are teaching entrepreneurship education courses.

These findings were linked with what Aladağ (2017) found when he was

assessing the views of class teachers on the strategies they use to inculcate entrepreneurship abilities. He adopted phenomenology research approach and interviewed eight classroom teachers working in primary schools in Aydın. The data of the study were collected using a semi-structured interview technique. Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. Aladağ found that the views of class teachers on the strategies to develop entrepreneur skills and abilities differed.

Based the existing knowledge from the literature and the philosophy of Rwanda education system comparing to the findings from this research, it is proved that Rwanda education system has to work hand in hand with the Higher Learning Institutions of Rwanda for improving the quality of teaching,

learning and assessment procedure, especially more effort should be put on what is happening in the classroom. The classroom is like industry, students come in as law material, is the teacher who run and process the law material (students) for finally having output (graduates with expected knowledge and skills).

Thus, the quality of process which is considered as teaching, learning and assessment which is operated by the teacher is the one determines the quality of graduates who are self-employed, innovative and equipped with employable skills. Entrepreneurship education practices in private higher learning institutions of Rwanda needs to shift from teacher centered or traditional method to learner centered approach

which may contribute to the reduction of unemployment rate in Rwanda.

3.2.5. Teachers’ Practices Concerning Students’ Self-Motivation

Students’ self-motivation is a practice that focuses on students commitement and intrisinc motivation. Teachers should create a class environment which encourage students to enjoy and their studies and work without being pushed. The study investigated whether teachers’ practice in entrepreneurship education is based on students’ self-motivation approach. Findings are presented in Table 3.7.

Table 4.2: Respondents’ Practices on Student’s Self-motivation

Motivation comes from within; students are truly interested in what they’re doing:	Frequency	Percent
Strong disagree	3	7.0
Disagree	3	7.0
Agree	23	53.5
Strong agree	14	32.6
Total	43	100.0

Source: Field Data, (2018)

Finding in Table 3.7 is showing that teacher practices take into consideration Student's self-motivation. by considering the level of agreement which is positive at (86.1%). and this also means that teachers create a situation whereby students motivation comes from what they are doing. The mean was also calculated and was equal to 3.11 and standard deviation of .82258 which shown also that the role of teacher is really a facilitator and most of the respondents have common understanding.

This was supported by observation data which report that self motivation is the most practiced. This is in the same line with Aladağ (2017) assessed the views of class teachers on the strategies they use to inculcate entrepreneurship abilities.

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entrepreneur skills and abilities differed. Some had a view that the use of drama method was the best strategy.

3. Conclusion

This study on entrepreneurship teachers' practices in private higher learning institutions in Rwanda can be concluded by saying that although the government is seeking to have graduates who can be involved in self-employment and engage into entrepreneurial activities; the findings revealed that skills cannot be enhanced without creating proper conditions of teaching and learning in higher learning institutions; the work of teachers has been considerable but with the current trends of challenges, nothing substantial will be achieved unless more efforts are put into promoting proper pedagogical skills, exposure of teachers to new ways of teaching, improved classroom management and aligning curriculum, teaching and assessment. In a nutshell, teachers are knowledgeable and skilled but need to practice more for entrepreneurship education to become a culture and a reality in private higher learning in Rwanda.

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