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## ENTREPRENEURSHIP, TRADE AND EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

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### ANALYSING THE DIFFERENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INITIATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONDUCTIVE AND MOTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM IN MAURITIUS

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**Abstract.** Mauritius ambitions to be a high-income economy and therefore seeks to develop an entrepreneurial culture by furthering entrepreneurship knowledge in its education system. The government is keen in encouraging youths to develop an entrepreneurial mindset through significant reforms in both secondary and tertiary education. The setting of the African Leadership University in Mauritius tries to fill the knowledge gap in leadership skills necessary for the development of entrepreneurship education. The African Leadership University is also using different pedagogies of education to create the right skills set for students so that they can embrace leadership and entrepreneurial roles in future. The current research uses a qualitative approach using multi-case methods and content analysis to analyse the initiatives for empowering potential youth entrepreneurs in secondary and tertiary education in the Mauritian context. The purpose of the research is therefore to analyse the different entrepreneurship education initiatives being undertaken to promote the right entrepreneurial culture both at secondary and tertiary level of education. The government has made Business and Entrepreneurship Education compulsory from Grade 7 till Grade 9 in secondary schools. The research findings show that students in secondary school are motivated to develop entrepreneurial knowledge and the subject highly meaningful. Conversely, there is lack of entrepreneurship courses at tertiary level especially in public universities. The African Leadership University is using the flipped classroom teaching pedagogy for promoting entrepreneurship with their students. Besides, NGOs such as YUVA are also supporting youths and entrepreneurs to upgrade their business knowledge. It is worth noting that SMEs already represented 40% of the GDP of our economy in the year 2017.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship education, unemployment, economic development, educational model, SMEs.

**JEL Classification:** A20, M13.

## INTRODUCTION

Mauritius has an unemployment rate of around 7% for the last five years (Statistics Mauritius, 2019). The government has provided various incentives for the development of Small and Medium enterprises to boost up the overall economic growth. However, there are high failure rates for SMEs

in the Mauritian context which can be partially attributed to the lack of proper entrepreneurship skills (Ministry of Business, 2013). There is also a fear of business failure and lack of entrepreneurial culture amongst youths (S  raphin et al., 2013) and the high uncertainty in the business environment which are discouraging them to embark on new entrepreneurial ventures. Mauritius has witnessed a slight increase in women entrepreneurship but reports suggest that they face enormous pressures to have access to finance and in many cases they lack entrepreneurship education (Le Defi, 2018). It is therefore important to analyse the entrepreneurship education ecosystem in Mauritius based on the different initiatives being taken in secondary schools to promote the right entrepreneurial culture. The research study hence simply seeks to synthesise the different initiatives based on existing policy decisions by the government and universities in Mauritius. The government has also recently launched the National Innovation Framework to develop a set of policies and processes for product, process and system innovation in a highly buoyant business environment.

Table 1 provides some key statistics that may help to understand the current enterprise ecosystem in Mauritius. The statistics and data show that SMEs in Mauritius is facing dire difficulties to develop their business.

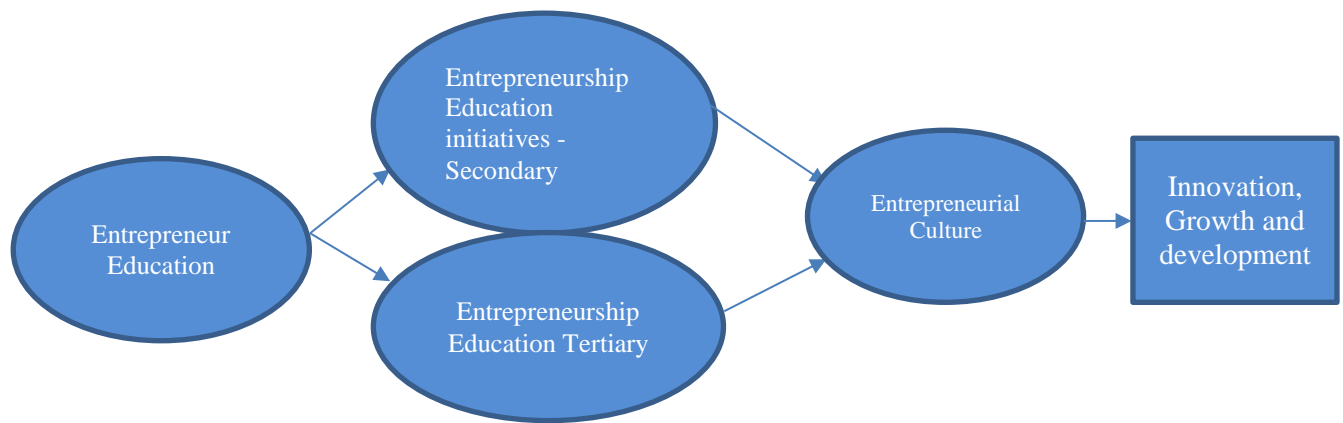
*Table 1*

*Statistics of Entrepreneurship in Mauritius*

Statistics	Figures	Comment
SMEs Contribution to GDP	40%	The government aims is to increase it to 55% in five years
Number of SMEs	125,000	47% are at subsistence level with less than 5 employees with a turnover of less than MUR 2M.
Objectives of Masterplan (Relevant to Entrepreneurship Education)	<p>Objective 3 and 4 (Masterplan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Upgrade skills and job opportunities by supporting SMEs to address skill mismatch and upgrade human capital to respond to new market demands.</li> <li>❖ Improve design and value addition by supporting SMEs in research and development, innovation and brand identity to move into niche markets.</li> </ul>	Hence, these objectives show a strong link with the need for entrepreneurship education to achieve the objective of making Mauritius a high-income economy

*Source: Ministry of Business, 10 Year Masterplan for SMEs (2013)*

Besides, there is a lack of contextualised literature review and research related to entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context. It has been reported in various studies that entrepreneurs lack technical, marketing and leadership skills especially for the development of SMEs (Padachi, 2014). It has also been advocated that one of the causes of unemployment is the lack of intrapreneurship and soft skills by university graduates as the education system is highly academic (Roopchund, 2019). The lack of experience and internship possibilities for graduates is another problem that needs to be tackled. The research uses existing data and the case studies of different universities and entrepreneurship courses for analysing some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current educational entrepreneurship ecosystem.



*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Study*

*Source: Author (Own)*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship education has seen a steady increase in attention over the past two decades (Garcia-Rodriguez et al. 2017). This can be evidenced by the increasing research and publications in this field as well as the surge in Entrepreneurship courses globally as well as in the Mauritian context. There is also an increasing need for Faculty members in the field of Entrepreneurship (Henry and McGowan, 2016). In the Mauritian context, many entrepreneurship courses have been designed to cater to the need for more entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs.

Celuch et al. (2017) are of the view that entrepreneurship is a key Module of many business and management programmes. However, it is important to note that entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary field as we have entrepreneurs in different fields requiring a different skill set. In the past years, entrepreneurial education has been growing very quickly. The whole vision of entrepreneurship education started in the early 1970s.

Globally, it has found that there is a significant increase in entrepreneurship education in many countries such as UK, Spain, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan (Levie, 1999; Koch, 2002; Arasti et al., 2012; Hamzah et al., 2016). It has generally been observed that in colleges and universities entrepreneurship as a subject has become fastest-growing. Nobody can deny the importance of entrepreneurship courses, programs, and activities that is why such courses are not only offered in schools of business but are also well-liked by engineering, social science, and arts students (Sun et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurial education helps to shape the entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions as well as various other skills in line with the overall economic development of the country. Pham (2018) strongly believes that entrepreneurship education leads to a higher level of entrepreneurial engagement.

### The Entrepreneurial Educational Model

The Young Entrepreneurship- Development in Action (YEDAC) helps to integrate entrepreneurial education in the school curriculum. This model is part of the action plan of the European Commission Entrepreneurship Action Plan for 2020 (YEDAC, 2019). Some of the entrepreneurial competencies which are promoted are the ability to take initiatives, communicate ideas in different settings, market and realise business ideas. It is believed that entrepreneurial education also helps in improving the overall academic performance of students.

### **The Entrepreneurial didactic model**

There are some prerequisites for an entrepreneurial educational model namely the learning competencies, learning culture, learning environment and learning activities which create the overall entrepreneurial competencies required (Blenker et al., 2006). The four components are briefly described below:

- ❖ Learning competencies: The goal is that the students develop entrepreneurial competences. Competences in this context include the ability to use knowledge, skills and hold positions in certain situations in a qualified way.
- ❖ The learning culture is ideally characterised by the partnership- and team-based learning.
- ❖ Learning environment: The learning environment consists of workshops, involvement of different types of knowledge and the involvement of the surrounding environment, which results in project-based working, where also the virtual space is part of the learning environment.
- ❖ Learning activities: Learning activities take place in the above-described learning culture and learning environment. Learning activities consist of a. o. generating new ideas, defining and planning projects, finding information, collaborate with external partners on development, experiment with different solutions and reflect on process and progress.

Leitch and Harisson (1999) are more in favour of a process-oriented model for entrepreneurship education which is seen more of a partnership between the different actors in a business environment. This partnership emphasises the impact of intra-group and inter-organisational learning on both the participants and on the context of their organisations.

### **Entrepreneurship Education and Influence on Students Motivation**

Research with 269 student entrepreneurs showed interesting results which helped to build up the entrepreneurial culture. The research findings showed that (1) there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and innovation (2) political skills and entrepreneurial opportunity play a mediating role between entrepreneurship education and innovation and also, in general, it helps build important skills for the entrepreneurs (Wei, Liu, and Sha, 2019). Fox and Pennington (2009) are of the view that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on economic development that creates more employment opportunities and revenues for an economy. European Commission, elucidates entrepreneurship education as a dynamic process because it involves a change in perception. Entrepreneurship is a socio-cultural and economic way in which people as individuals or in harmony recognizes various avenues for innovation as discussed earlier and materializes the ideas into reality through focused tasks (Papagiannis, 2018).

### **The link between Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Competencies**

Garcia-Rodriguez et al. (2017) suggest that a person's attitude toward entrepreneurship and skills could be directly influenced by his or her entrepreneurial education. It is a general understanding that entrepreneurial education is as much about developing general creative and enterprising skills to enhance business performance. The literature reveals that entrepreneurial education developed the entrepreneurial competencies (skills) to successfully do the business and help build their confidence in being able to perform entrepreneurial activities (Engle et al., 2010).

## **Entrepreneurship Education in the Mauritian Context**

There is a paucity in academic literature and rigorous research related to entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context. This seems quite contradictory given that SMEs contribute to 40% of the overall GDP (Statistics Mauritius, 2019). There are four public universities and almost 60 registered private institutions providing post-secondary courses in Mauritius. For the current study, focus will be more on the public universities and the major private universities such as African Leadership University and Middlesex.

The creation of the African Leadership University seeks to bridge the skills gap in the field of entrepreneurship. The Vision statement of ALU created in 2015 already shows that it seeks to focus on the development of entrepreneurial education (ALU Webpage):

“ ALU’s Leadership Core program and the first year of real work experience will prepare you for our unique approach to individualized learning. We build the skills that you, as a young leader and entrepreneur will need for the future. Harness the characteristics essential for creating a mission-based life of impact and purpose. All ALU students develop 21st-century skills and network that will remain relevant amidst rapid global change.”

Hence analysing the overall mission, it is clear that ALU focuses on the creation of leadership skills targeting youngsters for developing potential entrepreneurs. The educational approach and pedagogy used will be discussed in the analysis and discussion.

The Honourable Minister of Education of Mauritius (2016) was very much determined to prepare the youth to take an entrepreneurial role. She was of the view that entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and development as explained earlier in the literature. She believed that entrepreneurship education also helps “inculcate such soft skills as creativity, initiative-taking and the taking of calculated risks, working in teams, leadership, and decision-making, she stated. At a time when Small and Medium Enterprises are coming to play a major role in our economy, launching personal businesses certainly appears as one of the right directions to take, the Minister added”. The Mauritian government is also providing training to the existing educators so that they are pedagogically trained to teach the module to the students. Gooriah (2013) highlights that the main challenge for Mauritius is to mass educate and train students in entrepreneurship in a cost-effective and sustainable approach. It is also important to change the mindset as many youngsters are risk -averse and prefer secured government jobs. She proposed the simulation game as a pedagogical tool to improve the entrepreneurial mindset.

## **NGO’s Involvement in Entrepreneurship Education**

YUVA (Youth in Voluntary Action) organises an annual leadership and entrepreneurship seminar to empower youths to come out of the poverty trap. The YUVA annual leadership and entrepreneurship summit is a platform for developing future leaders by improving their managerial and leadership skills (YUVA, 2019). The NGO calls upon local and international leaders to share their experiences for entrepreneurial development.

The Turbine is another great initiative towards the entrepreneurial culture in Mauritius. The Turbine is a co-working space and start-up incubator and accelerator based in Mauritius (Turbine, 2019). The company provides potential entrepreneurs with space and support they need to build successful, profitable businesses based on a sustainable model. The organisation is targeting incubators both locally and in the region which seeks to develop into profitable ventures into the future.

## **PAPER OBJECTIVE**

The current study makes a significant contribution for enhancing the existing knowledge of entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context. The Mauritian government is putting a lot of efforts to develop the right entrepreneurial culture in Mauritius by designing courses and curriculum in the field of entrepreneurship both at secondary and tertiary level of education. The current research therefore aims to:

- (a) Develop a better understanding of the entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context
- (b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current educational initiatives
- (c) Evaluate the pedagogical tools being used in entrepreneurship education
- (d) Develop some recommendations for policy development

## **METHODOLOGY**

The current research is a qualitative insight on understanding the different initiatives to inculcate entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context. There are three main research questions for the current study (1) Why is entrepreneurship education important in the Mauritian context? (2) Understand the different initiatives to promote entrepreneurship education in Mauritius and (3) analyse the current pedagogical tools and approaches in the local context (4) Evaluate any potential limitations and loopholes in the educational entrepreneurship approaches used based on benchmarking. The research philosophy used is that of interpretivism based on interviews and observations and content analysis. It may also entail the use of existing secondary data for contextualising the research findings. The ontological perspective adopted is that entrepreneurial education may help in the overall economic development of the country.

### **Choice of Case Studies**

The government has decided to promote entrepreneurship education both at secondary and tertiary education. At the secondary level, all educational institutions have the same curriculum and materials and therefore a broader discussion based on existing literature and student perception will be done. At the tertiary level, there are four public universities and many registered institutions providing post-secondary courses. Hence, the analysis will entail analysing the courses and entrepreneurship initiatives being undertaken in the public universities and a few major private universities such as Middlesex, Charles Telfair Institute and the African Leadership University. It is important to state that the current study being exploratory in nature will simply analyse the entrepreneurship initiatives in terms of courses and capacity building at the national level.

### **Research Approach**

In the first instance, an analysis of the compulsory Business and Entrepreneurship module will be done through content analysis. The existing documents and a structured questionnaire with students are used to get a more in-depth understanding of the different entrepreneurial initiatives by educational institutions to promote an entrepreneurial culture. Besides, existing interviews in newspapers will be analysed for a more in-depth understanding of the relevance and challenges of entrepreneurship education. With regards to tertiary education, existing interviews and information available on the websites of the Mauritian tertiary institutions will be used to understand how higher education institutions are filling the institutional void in terms of leadership and entrepreneurship as explained earlier in the literature review.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Case Study 1: Introduction of Business Entrepreneurship Education in Secondary Schools

From January 2014, the Business and Entrepreneurship education has become mandatory in all schools [Grade 7 till Grade 9]. At the Ordinary- Level (after Grade 9), entrepreneurship education is optional. The Entrepreneurship Education will be provided with 15 hours or two periods per week. Students of prevocational courses are also covered for the business entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneurship Education, as announced in the 2012-2015 strategic plan of government for the education sector, includes both theoretical and practical knowledge to prepare young people to be responsible citizens and to change the world professional (Ministry of Education, 2019). The curriculum and materials for the courses have been designed by the Mauritius Institute of Education. The government programme for 2012-2015 encapsulates the overall vision of the government as follows:

"To inculcate an entrepreneurial culture in our youth, Government will, in consultation with all stakeholders, introduce new Entrepreneurship studies as part of the secondary school curriculum."

The main objectives (Saubu, 2018) which were formulated to promote entrepreneurial culture are:

- ❖ To provide all learners with an early understanding of the key concepts of entrepreneurship
- ❖ To enable learners to recognize business activities in their environment &
- ❖ To enable learners to identify how entrepreneurship is beneficial at individual and society levels

The Ministry of Education also wanted to promote the use of innovative pedagogies of education to achieve higher level of student engagement through collaborative work approaches and role plays amongst others.

### The Rationale for Business Entrepreneurship Education

The Ministry of Education seeks to develop the entrepreneurial skills of youngsters. There is a high level of graduates' unemployment and therefore there is a need to improve employability through the creation of SMEs. However, this may also be a way to bring 'convergence between education and training to prepare them for the world of work'. It should be noted that recent trends in recruitment by multinational companies have been more skills-oriented. Google, Apple, and IBM, among others, have eliminated the need for specific degrees in job applications (Glassdoor, 2018). According to heterogeneous skills theory (Green and McIntosh, 2007), there are considerable skills variations in education for different jobs, and highly skilled workers are likely to be recruited for complex jobs. Hence, entrepreneurship education may not only be helpful for the development of new ventures but also in developing intrapreneurial skills needed in organisations. Some of the content included for the students are:

- ❖ Creating your own Business
- ❖ Law and Marketing
- ❖ Managing your own Business
- ❖ Preparing financial statements
- ❖ Health and Safety courses

Naeck et al. (2018) had the following to say about the development of cognitive skills of

students in the textbook proposed for Grade 7:

‘As per the philosophy propounded by the National Curriculum Framework, the content and pedagogical approach, as well as the activities, have been crafted to allow for incremental and continuous improvement of the learners’ cognitive skills’.

The overall philosophy of the introduction of Business and Entrepreneurship Education is explained in the following statement by Naeck et al. (2018):

‘Business and Entrepreneurship Education’ (BEE) has emerged as a new subject, which is in line with the objectives of the Nine Year Continuous Education Reform 2016. The BEE curriculum lays the foundation for understanding the diverse aspect of the modern business environment while initiating learners towards a culture of entrepreneurship and developing an interest in business acumen’

However, Abbass (2014) believes that just educating businesses will not provide a strong grounding to inculcate entrepreneurial culture. Students should be exposed to real business problems and students should have the possibility to have business internships. In addition, she is of the view that workshops should be conducted by people from the industry and existing entrepreneurs to make the system more effective. She is also of the view that there is a need to adapt the pedagogical tools through the use of simulation, case studies and other techniques to muster leadership amongst youth.

Twenty students studying for Business Entrepreneurship were asked about their opinions about the module using the following statements. All the students surveyed were in Grade 7 they were all in the same class. The purpose of analysing these statements was to do a reality check on how receptive the students are to the Module. As the students are young (12-15), the name of the school and the profile of the respondents will not be reported due to ethical reasons.

*Table 2*

*Students Perception on Entrepreneurship Education*

Statements	Mean
Business entrepreneurship helps me to develop cognitive skills	3.84
The Module can help me in becoming an entrepreneur	4.2
The Module content is highly relevant and meaningful	3.5
I will like to study for Business Studies for GCSE	3
There is a need to have the practical experience to enhance business skills	4.6

*Source: Survey with students*

Hence, from Table 2 it is obvious that students are highly receptive to the introduction of Business Entrepreneurship Education. Students believe that the module can help improve their attributes and more important many believe that such subjects can promote the entrepreneurial culture as explained earlier in the literature review. However, students believe that the entrepreneurship education needs to be more practical oriented as suggested by Abbass(2014). Some fervent critics suggest that rather than focusing on systems and techniques, entrepreneurship education should focus on how to “inculcate the necessary attitudes, values and psychological sets” of effective entrepreneurs (Curran & Stanworth, 1989, p. 13) plus developing the needed personal attributes i.e. creativity, innovativeness, ready to accept risks, prepared to fail then start afresh, strong-mindedness (GaDeamer & Earle, 2004; Garavan & O'Cinneide, 1994a; Gibb, 2002). Hence, as explained by Naeck et al. (2018) entrepreneurship education should nurture ‘higher level’ thinking and requires greater critical thinking (Jack and Anderson, 1999). Entrepreneurship education is about developing creative skills that can be applied in a different business



environments and support a higher level of innovation (Binks et al., 2006; Gundry et al., 2014). Student entrepreneurs use different levels to achieve knowledge creation through networking, the innovation process is the result of interactions among the environment, organization, and entrepreneurs (Anderson et al., 2014).

## Case Study 2: Development of Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education

Parton et al. (2014) wrote a World Bank report entitled Entrepreneurship Education and Training: Insights from Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique suggests that entrepreneurship education may be used to reduce graduate unemployment. The report further suggests that effective entrepreneurship education may help Sub-Saharan Africa to reduce unemployment in the region. However, the most important question is whether the right pedagogical techniques are used for the promotion of entrepreneurship education. Lately, a lot of efforts have been made to promote entrepreneurship education in Mauritian higher education. This part will analyse the different Entrepreneurial courses provided by the different universities and also try to analyse the teaching and research approaches used to promote an entrepreneurial culture.

The table below provides an overview of the different Universities and the Entrepreneurship courses provided at the undergraduate level in the Mauritian Context.

Table 3

*Entrepreneurship Courses in Mauritian Universities*

Universities	Entrepreneurship Courses	Private/Public University	Duration of Course	Note
University of Mauritius	No Entrepreneurship Course	Public	NA	Availability of Management Courses
University of Technology Mauritius	Bsc (Hons) Entrepreneurial Management	Public	3 Years	Availability of other Management Courses
Université des Mascareignes	No	Public	NA	Availability of Management Courses
Open University of Mauritius	Bsc (Hons) Business Entrepreneurship	Public	3 Years	Availability of Management Courses
Middlesex University	No	Private	NA	Availability of Management Courses
Curtin University Mauritius	BCom Entrepreneurship	Private	3 Years	Availability of Management Courses
	BCom Entrepreneurship and Marketing		3 Years	
Amity Mauritius	No	Private	NA	Availability of Management Courses
African Leadership University	BSc (Hons) Entrepreneurship	Private	3	Availability of Management Courses

Source : Author (own – Analysis of Multiple Websites)

From the above table, we find that out of the main Universities in Mauritius only three Universities provide entrepreneurship courses at undergraduate level. This is in direct contradiction with the overall endeavour to encourage entrepreneurship education at secondary level where it is compulsory from Grade 7 till Grade 9. An analysis of the student enrolment for the entrepreneurship courses is also not encouraging. The University of Mauritius has discontinued the Entrepreneurship course though it had some 100 student students in previous batches.

However, there is high enrolment for Management (6902) and Accounting courses (10543). Hence, this shows that students are more willing to embrace careers in Accounting and managerial jobs than to undertake entrepreneurship risks. Hence, overall there is not much interests in specialised entrepreneurship courses. However, it should be mentioned that in many Management and other courses, entrepreneurship modules are embedded to cater for the entrepreneurial vision of the country.

### **Understanding the Rationale for Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Mauritius**

In this section, an analysis of the motivation to launch entrepreneurship courses will be analysed based on content analysis (Websites, curriculum documents and other relevant information available). The institution which has positioned itself as an entrepreneurial university is the African Leadership University which wants to position itself as the Harvard of Africa. Further to that, the objectives of other courses will be analysed.

#### **African Leadership University and Entrepreneurship**

The African Leadership University Entrepreneurship programme as cited on its website seeks to:

‘provides students with opportunities for self-initiative that are led by their ability to identify, understand and address local and global challenges with creative business solutions. By providing students with the practical skills required to act on ideas and opportunities, we are empowering them to apply an entrepreneurial mindset the real-world challenges they will face throughout their lives. This approach enables our students to continuously explore new ways of solving problems in a way that can effectively address the challenges facing Africa both today and tomorrow’

Hence the main objectives of developing the entrepreneurship programme based on the above narrative are (1) address the global challenges (2) provide practical skills to tap on business opportunities (3) develop new ways to solve problems (4) empower the African leaders. Hence, the African Leadership University aims to develop African leadership which may help address the African challenges. Dejardin (2000) analysed the relationship between entrepreneurship education and economic growth documented that entrepreneurial growth may have a positive influence on economic growth and development. Ahiauzi (2010) supports the same relationship between the two variables. Henderson (2007) concludes that entrepreneurship may also trigger greater level of creativity and innovation.

#### **Open University of Mauritius and Entrepreneurship**

The Open University is one of the few Public universities to provide an Entrepreneurship course at the undergraduate level. The programme is for a duration of three years and the rationale for introducing the course is:

‘The aim of this programme is to address the lack of entrepreneurship skills locally and support the creation and growth of small businesses. Small business success will lead to a better quality of life for the entrepreneurs and their families and will result in a stronger domestic and regional economy. The graduates produced can thus create start-up businesses. Moreover, the above

Roopchand, R. (2020), “Analysing the different Entrepreneurship Education initiatives for the development of a conducive and motivating entrepreneurial ecosystem in Mauritius”, *Management and entrepreneurship: trends of development*, Volume 3, Issue 13, pp. 97-113, available at: <https://doi.org/10.26661/2522-1566/2020-3/13-08>

programme will produce business leaders and entrepreneurs who are visionary, realistic and driven to develop innovative business ventures’

Hence Open University has the aim of promoting entrepreneurship and growth of SMEs and also reduce the overall rate of unemployment amongst graduates. This supports the existing literature as supported by Fox and Pennington (2009) and YEDAC (2019). Other studies by Dejardin (2000) and Ahiauzi (2007) similarly make the link between the two variables.

### Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education

A study by Jonathan and Chukwudi (2019) found that graduates face a number of challenges despite the entrepreneurship efforts provided by the Nigerian government and universities. Some of the challenges are the quality of the pedagogy and the experience of the lecturers, lack of infrastructural support and sometimes poor policy decisions may impede on the overall entrepreneurial culture in a country.

### Research Question 3: Pedagogical Approaches used for entrepreneurial education

As explained in the literature, there are different approaches that may be used to teach entrepreneurship education. The three approaches that have been explained are the YEDAC, didactic model and the process approach. In the Public universities, the traditional approaches to teaching namely the lecture method is more prominent. This explains to a large extent why students may not be acquiring the right skills for the development of entrepreneurship. This was advocated in the Nigerian context (Jonathan and Chukwudi, 2019). However, the African Leadership University demarcates by developing a unique teaching philosophy inspired by Harvard and Stanford University where there is the promotion of peer-to-peer learning. The Learning model has been taken from the website of the African Leadership University. The ALU uses a learning cycle which seeks to:

‘incorporate the need to discover gaps in the knowledge and skills set, encourage self-paced learning, peer-to-peer learning and facilitate group learning’

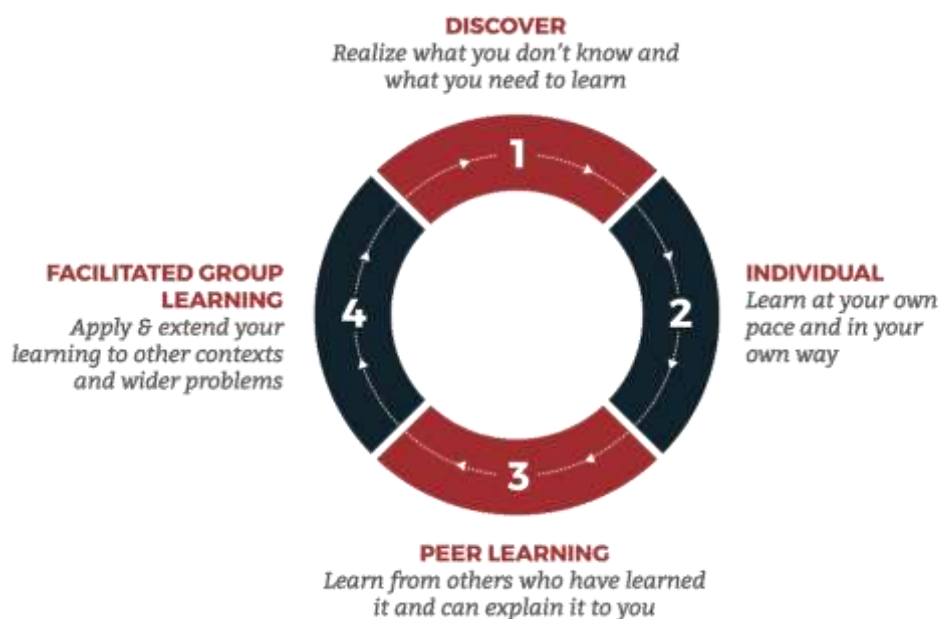


Figure 2. The ALU's system of entrepreneurial learning

Source: ALU Learning Approach (2019)

The African Leadership University also prioritises the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills such as self-leadership, critical thinking, communication skills and problem solving skills. The students are encouraged to go through internship and work-based projects to develop their overall adaptability to the world of work. ALU has also a blend of academics and industry experts who help to coach the students in the overall project development. ALU claimed that graduated completed at least three internships each, and 85% of employers rated these students as 4.5 or higher out of 5. Hence, it is obvious that African Leadership University uses a didactic and process approach by engaging with the different partners and ensuring that students acquire through the core competencies. The Ducere programme together with the University of Mauritius seeks to develop effective enterprise skills and developing global leaders who can operate in a volatile, uncertain and ambiguous environment.

Mauritian higher education institutions should promote effective entrepreneurial pedagogy in the classrooms with some key operational considerations (Kearney, 1999). To promote entrepreneurship, a pedagogical sequence should have the following ingredients:

- ❖ The programme should be empowering. It encourages students to take charge of their own learning.
- ❖ The learning should be highly experiential. It allows the student to learn through experience rather than learn from the experience of others.
- ❖ The courses should be highly reflexive. It encourages students to think about what is learned and how it is learned.
- ❖ The programme should be highly collaborative. Collaborative work enables the different members of a team to contribute to the learning process of others.

Blenker et al. (2006) based on his research regarding the different pedagogical forms explain that personality development of university education should be pursued with more consciousness. Education and teaching could advantageously be seen as a process, inspired by didactic and pedagogical theories and models.

### **Policy Ramifications**

The research shows important limitations for promoting entrepreneurship education in the Mauritian context. The decision to make Business Entrepreneurship education compulsory in secondary education is indeed a good decision as it will provide some basic knowledge and acumen for our youngsters (Ministry of Education, 2014). This may help in reducing unemployment as it empowers youths towards creation of SMEs and business ventures. However, the educational pedagogy is very theoretical and does not provide students hands-on experience to develop the entrepreneurial skills. In addition, the educators who are academic may also not have the relevant experience to inculcate practical problem-solving skills and creativity (Roopchand, 2019). It has been observed in the African context that many schools do not have the resources to provide practical problem solving skills such as the use of simulation games (Abbas, 2014). At the tertiary level, though there is high demand for management and accounting courses; there are very few students enrolling for entrepreneurship courses. In fact, University of Mauritius has stopped some of the courses and other public universities are not even offering courses in this field. This contradicts the whole philosophy of the government which wants to develop an entrepreneurial culture. This requires further analysis as to why there is lack of demand or supply for such courses.

In an economy, where SMEs contributes 40% to the overall GDP we would normally have expected more entrepreneurial courses. However, this may be explained due to the fact that most of the SMEs are sole proprietor businesses where the entrepreneur does not believe that he requires any specialist skills. This could also be one of the causes of the high failures of SMEs in the Mauritian context. In addition, SMEs are locally geared and are not ambitioned by regional

expansion and development. This explains why the Minister of Trade has developed a 10 year Masterplan so that Mauritian SMEs may export their products and services in the region or even globally. The research also highlights the paucity in the pedagogical approaches being used for entrepreneurship education in the public sector. The pedagogical model used by the African Leadership University seems to be highly effective. However, it is important to assess its implementation as well as evaluate how far it is leading to successful entrepreneurship. Overall, the government and the Universities seems to be very much concerned about creating a new breed of entrepreneurs who have the right skills set including technopreneurship for boosting the economic growth and development of Mauritius and Africa at large.

### **Future Studies and Limitations of Study**

The study is largely exploratory and fills the gap of understanding the current entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Mauritian context. Many studies have been conducted at the international level in the field of entrepreneurship education as evidenced by increasing number of scholarly publications in the field (Garcia-Rodriguez et al., 2017). As the current study is largely qualitative using multi-case methods with content analysis, there can be a certain degree of bias or subjectivity in terms of the opinions being reported. However, the research shows that entrepreneurship education needs to be customised depending on the different needs of the individuals (ALU, 2019). A survey needs to be carried out in different economic sectors to identify the entrepreneurial training needs and more important to devise the right pedagogical tools to meet the industry requirements.

The National Human Resource Development Council and other agencies such as SME Mauritius and Turbine can be very helpful in devising a national policy framework for entrepreneurship development. Future studies can focus on understanding why there is lack of engagement on the part of students and universities for promoting entrepreneurship except for the African Leadership University. It will also be very important to assess whether lack of institutional support or excessive bureaucracy which is impeding the development of the entrepreneurial culture. It would be also very interesting to analyse the female contribution and participation in the entrepreneurial culture. However, it is important to emphasise that the research has focused on the important research questions explained earlier.

### **CONCLUSION**

All governments have emphasized on the role of entrepreneurship for promoting the overall economic growth and development. SMEs contribute to about 50% of GDP in Singapore and employs 65% of its overall workforce. In South Africa, the contribution of SMEs is around 47% to GDP. Hence, comparatively Mauritius is lagging behind which can be partly attributed to lack of coaching, mentoring and development of a holistic entrepreneurship education framework. Anthony (2015) explain that Singapore's emergence as an entrepreneurship hub is due to factors such as a friendly business environment, great level of institutional support, and the increasing use of soft power to address barriers to entrepreneurialism. Singapore ranks as the tenth strongest start-up ecosystem globally (Compass, 2015). The city-state has witnessed more than 3,600 start-ups in industry sectors ranging from e-commerce to social media to gaming. Hence, Mauritius should seek to benchmark from such countries to improve the contribution of SMEs towards economic growth and also make the SMEs become more export-oriented in future.



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### АНАЛІЗ ІНІЦІАТИВ З НАВЧАННЯ ПІДПРИЄМНИЦТВУ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ СПРИЯТЛИВОЇ І МОТИВУЮЧОЇ ПІДПРИЄМНИЦЬКОЇ ЕКОСИСТЕМИ НА МАВРИКІЇ

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Маврикії прагне стати економікою з високим рівнем доходів і тому прагне розвивати культуру підприємництва шляхом поширення знань про підприємництво в своїй системі освіти. Уряд докладає зусиль для сприяння молоді до розвитку підприємницького мислення за допомогою значних реформ, як в середній, так і у вищій освіті. Африканський університет лідерства на Маврикії намагається заповнити прогалину в знаннях про лідерські навички, необхідні для розвитку навчання підприємництву. Африканський університет лідерства також використовує різні педагогічні методи навчання, щоб сформувати правильний набір навичок для студентів, щоб вони могли прийняти лідерські та підприємницькі ролі в майбутньому. У даному дослідженні використовується якісний підхід з використанням багатоетапних методів і контент-аналізу для аналізу ініціатив, спрямованих на розширення прав і можливостей потенційних молодих підприємців в області середньої та вищої освіти на Маврикії. Таким чином, мета дослідження – проаналізувати різні ініціативи з навчання підприємництву, що вживаються для просування правильної підприємницької культури, як на рівні середньої, так і вищої освіти. Уряд зробив освіту в сфері бізнесу та підприємництва обов'язковою з 7 по 9 класи в середніх школах. Результати дослідження показують, що учні середньої школи мотивовані на розвиток підприємницьких знань і предмета. І навпаки, не вистачає курсів з підприємництва на вищому рівні, особливо в державних університетах. Африканський університет лідерства використовує методику викладання в класі для просування підприємництва серед своїх студентів. Крім того, такі НУО, як YUVA, також підтримують молодь і підприємців у підвищенні їх знань про бізнес. Варто зазначити, що малі та середні підприємства становили 40% ВВП нашої економіки вже в 2017 році.

**Ключові слова:** навчання підприємництву, безробіття, економічний розвиток, освітня модель, малий і середній бізнес.

## **АНАЛИЗ РАЗЛИЧНЫХ ИНИЦИАТИВ ПО ОБУЧЕНИЮ ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСТВУ ДЛЯ РАЗВИТИЯ БЛАГОПРИЯТНОЙ И МОТИВИРУЮЩЕЙ ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСКОЙ ЭКОСИСТЕМЫ НА МАВРИКИИ**

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Маврикий стремится стать экономикой с высоким уровнем доходов и поэтому стремится развивать культуру предпринимательства путем распространения знаний о предпринимательстве в своей системе образования. Правительство стремится поощрять молодежь к развитию предпринимательского мышления посредством значительных реформ, как в среднем, так и в высшем образовании. Африканский университет лидерства на Маврикий пытается восполнить пробел в знаниях о лидерских навыках, необходимых для развития обучения предпринимательству. Африканский университет лидерства также использует различные педагогические методы обучения, чтобы сформировать правильный набор навыков для студентов, чтобы они могли принять лидерские и предпринимательские роли в будущем. В текущем исследовании используется качественный подход с использованием многоэтапных методов и контент-анализа для анализа инициатив, направленных на расширение прав и возможностей потенциальных молодых предпринимателей в области среднего и высшего образования на Маврикий. Таким образом, цель исследования – проанализировать различные инициативы по обучению предпринимательству, предпринимаемые для продвижения правильной предпринимательской культуры, как на уровне среднего, так и высшего образования. Правительство сделало образование в сфере бизнеса и предпринимательства обязательным с 7 по 9 классы в средних школах. Результаты исследования показывают, что учащиеся средней школы мотивированы на развитие предпринимательских знаний и предмета. И наоборот, не хватает курсов по предпринимательству на высшем уровне, особенно в государственных университетах. Африканский университет лидерства использует методику преподавания в классе для продвижения предпринимательства среди своих студентов. Кроме того, такие НПО, как YUVA, также поддерживают молодежь и предпринимателей в повышении их знаний о бизнесе. Стоит отметить, что малые и средние предприятия составляли 40% ВВП нашей экономики уже в 2017 году.

**Ключевые слова:** обучение предпринимательству, безработица, экономическое развитие, образовательная модель, малый и средний бизнес.