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# Evaluating Entrepreneurship Education as a Tool for Economic Growth: The Ghanaian Experience

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**Author's contribution**

*This whole work was carried out by the author GDG.*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine how entrepreneurship education serves as the means of improving the economic growth of a nation through job creation ventures. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the data obtained from 100 participants who were graduates from University of Professional Studies, Accra, who studied entrepreneurship courses and graduated from 2005 to 2010. The findings revealed that most entrepreneurship graduates establish their own business ventures. It was established that the teaching mode of the entrepreneurial courses at the universities should be reviewed to enhance experiential learning for the full benefit of using entrepreneurship education as a tool for economic development to be realized. It was also realized from the study that most students study the course because it is perceived to be the most appropriate means to job creation that enables students to become effective entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship; education; graduate; employment; business venture; economy; development.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**Graduates-** These are individuals who graduated from University of Professional Studies, Accra from 2005 to 2010.

**Employed Graduates-** The graduates who were in employment during 2012.

**Graduate Entrepreneurs-** These are the graduates who had established their own business ventures during 2012.

**Unemployed Graduates-** These are the graduates who were seeking employment but were still not getting jobs to do during 2012.

**Students-** These are the graduates who were pursuing further studies at institutions of higher learning for postgraduate qualification during 2012.

**Entrepreneurship Education-** Education from undertaking entrepreneurship courses received.

**Economic Growth-** Advancement of an economy through job creation and employment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of entrepreneurship education is to empower graduates, irrespective of their areas of academic specialization, with knowledge and skills that will enable them to create their own income generating ventures, even if they are not able to secure jobs in the public sector [1]. Entrepreneurship education is an orientation that seeks to transform graduates from job seekers into job creators in order to reduce graduate unemployment and it increases students' interest in entrepreneurship as a career [2] The rationale for introducing entrepreneurship course in universities curricular development is to help the students to acquire increased understanding of entrepreneurship. The focus is to equip them with relevant skills and competences that prepare the students to become entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses soon after graduation in order to increase their household income [3]. Nevertheless, "social and commercial entrepreneurial entry is facilitated by strong property rights and government activism that impacts on entrepreneurship [4].

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The type of education provided in most higher education institutions produce graduates for whom there exists little or no job market demands [5]. On annual basis, graduates are produced to be gainfully employed by the formal sector of the Ghanaian economy with little focus on graduate entrepreneurship. There is the observation from the public, especially industry players (employers and human resource managers), that most graduates in Ghana lack certain qualities that enhance their performance on the job soon after their graduation. The main reason given for this perception is that there is little collaboration between university faculties and the industry/job market. Underlying the unemployment menace, the training received by university students has not been fully successful in equipping students with the required skills and competences needed for job creation and self -employment [6]. This perception of most employers in Ghana has made many fresh graduates find it difficult to get jobs soon because almost all the job advertisement through the mass media request for people with a number of postgraduate working experience.

In Ghana graduate unemployment has undoubtedly become a herculean national canker of which every government has to deal with. A section of the public are of the view that job opportunities for new graduates are few while others contend that there are enough job opportunities but the type of graduates produced from the institutions of higher learning are

not all that suited for the available jobs. Most of the employers, therefore, select the fresh graduates who studied in the relevant fields for their jobs as trainees for a number of years before decision is taken either to hire them on full-time basis or as casual workers.

This problem has necessitated this research to evaluate entrepreneurship education in Ghana and its effect on improving the economic growth of Ghanaians through job creation. The study is to research into the type of entrepreneurship education received by the participants that developed their abilities to create their own jobs as graduate entrepreneurs soon after their graduation.

## **1.2 Objectives and Questions of the Study**

The broad objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of entrepreneurship education at institutions of higher learning on the improvement of national economy through job creation. The specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the level of entrepreneurship education at University of Professional Studies, Accra that develops the abilities of their graduates to create their own jobs.
2. Identify the effectiveness of the introduction of entrepreneurship education in institutions of higher learning in reducing graduate unemployment.
3. Identify what is expected of policy makers in developing entrepreneurship education that will enhance economic growth.

To achieve the objectives the following questions were asked, "To what extent has entrepreneurship education served as a tool for job creation for fresh graduates who studied entrepreneurial courses at their universities?" "How effective is the entrepreneurial education in the higher education institutions curricular in reducing unemployment through job creation?"

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The results of the study would enable institutions of higher learning to improve on the development of entrepreneurship courses in order to equip students with the requisite skills and knowledge needed to start their own businesses. The study would also help to promote entrepreneurship among graduates from institutions of higher learning and also help in the formulation of policies to improve on entrepreneurship education.

Even though it is envisaged that some researches on entrepreneurship education have been carried out, systematic research on studies relating to entrepreneurship education and its economic development in Africa and many developing countries have been neglected. This has created a knowledge gap that this research seeks to contribute to fill. This study is to help to increase entrepreneurial graduates' responsiveness to self-employment as a career preference and to enhance their ability to become not only employees but also employers [7]. The study is to enhance the creation of more theories in the area of entrepreneurship education and its economic significance. It is to draw attention of leadership of institutions of higher learning to focus on development of entrepreneurship curricular that will gear towards economic development by equipping the students with both the knowledge and skills that enhance the effort of their graduates to become job creators instead of job seekers. The findings would help to serve as a source of knowledge for future research into enhancing entrepreneurial education for improvement of national economies.

## 1.4 Theoretical Perspectives

*Entrepreneurship* is a derivative from the French verb *entreprendre*; meaning to undertake, to attempt, or to adventure. It is the process of giving individuals the prospect that enables them to identify profitable opportunistic ventures and the needed application of knowledge, skills and attitudes to initiate action to enter into the venture [8]. There are various schools of thought on how entrepreneurs are developed: some believe that entrepreneurs are born while others are also of the view that they are not born but rather made. Some are also of the view that some aspects of entrepreneurship could be taught but certain aspects could not be taught [9].

No matter whatever perception that people have about entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education is very relevant to provide effective job creation. However, effective teaching approaches to the study of entrepreneurship have been the focus of inexhaustible debate that the attentions of many experts have focused on. [10] clearly asked two questions: “what exactly should we be studying about entrepreneurship, and how should we be doing it?” (p. 142). In their attempt to specify an imaginary view for the study of entrepreneurship, they outlined a basic transformational principle: “entrepreneurs are socially important not because they exist, but because they succeed in creating organizations” (p. 142).

## 1.5 Contribution of Entrepreneurship Education to Advanced Economies

Entrepreneurship education has recently grown substantially in many parts of the world [11]. Hitherto there was the perception that entrepreneurship education was for the less privileged and only those interested in acquiring vocational skills [12]. However, there has been a growing interest in acquiring the competences to become successful social entrepreneurs in this contemporary era. Many universities have introduced academic programs that aim at equipping students with the requisite skills that bridge the social welfare, commercial, and the public sector logic of social enterprise [13]. Realizing the benefits associated with entrepreneurship education, many researchers are now shifting their focus to the study of economic development through entrepreneurship education [14]. Entrepreneurship education has become the determinant for a framework that strengthens the creative potential for business establishment [15].

Research carried out by [16] proved that economic transformation is directly related to acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge and new innovative skills that contribute significantly to the development of many enterprises. American universities, for example, have been the pioneers in the field of entrepreneurship education since 1947. Entrepreneurship education started at the graduate level at the Harvard Business School in America. It has been found that Peter Drucker offered a course on Entrepreneurship and Innovation in 1953. It is revealed that entrepreneurship courses are taught in almost all the over 1400 post-secondary schools that are accredited by American Assembly of Collegiate School of Business [17]. Entrepreneurship contributed to the creation of 27 million jobs in the United States economy between 1980 and 1995 [18]. Germany also introduced entrepreneurship education into their tertiary schools' curriculum in 1998 and since then, entrepreneurship has been well developed and successful [19]. This is an indication of the relevance of entrepreneurship education in economic growth and development.

The General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1993 passed a resolution that recognized entrepreneurship as a key social and economic force in the growth and development of nations. Member nations were, therefore, encouraged to formulate and implement appropriate policies, strategies, and programs that would encourage and support entrepreneurship among the populace [18]. Many entrepreneurs have some form of education ranging from the basic level to the graduate levels. This is an indication that entrepreneurship education is very useful for both the under privileged, those in the vocational institutions, and for every business-minded individual [17].

A number of studies have been conducted on the field of entrepreneurship and its effect on students' career intentions and the rate of unemployment which connect entrepreneurship education with the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises [20]. In a study conducted by Tkachev and Kolvereid [21], it was revealed that self-employment intentions among students of institutions of higher learning could be increased through entrepreneurship education and training programs. The studies support the need to design effective entrepreneurship courses and teaching methods that can inspire students' interest in self-employment. [22] revealed in their study that there was a considerable relationship between students' awareness of university administration's provision for tertiary entrepreneurship education and course objectives, instructional methods, entrepreneurial traits and graduate self-employment potential.

There is the need to have an effective entrepreneurship course in tertiary institutions' curriculum that can have an impact on students' potential to be self-employed after school. Higher education institutions have contributed enormously to ensure the economic vitality of many economies through the introduction of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurs have contributed significantly to the advancement of many nations and enhancement of local economic development [23]. There is, therefore, the need for university administrators to provide for an effective entrepreneurial education that equips students with necessary knowledge and skills to set up own ventures that lead to economic development.

There is a positive correlation between universities' investment in the promotion of entrepreneurship and the percentage of students becoming entrepreneurs [24]. Entrepreneurship courses motivate students to be self-employed thereby contributing to the reduction of graduate unemployment. Since the main objective of entrepreneurship education is to raise students' awareness of self-employment as a career option [7], both the government and heads of higher education institutions are expected to invest more resources in the development of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education can serve as the best possible alternative to reducing the rate of graduate unemployment.

## **1.6 Developing Entrepreneurial Programs**

Many institutions of higher learning that have realized the contribution of entrepreneurship education in economic development, have enriched the entrepreneurship curricular with practical approaches such as case studies, simulations, and on-the-job studies in order to bring out the entrepreneurship skills of students. Such an approach enables job creation to rise to relieve the government and the entire society of the burden of unemployment. Start-up businesses reduce the burden on governments in creating jobs for the high rate unemployed population. It does not only help the government but also individuals and the society by reducing the dependency rate and consequently leading to economic growth and development [23]. There is the need to design more practical approaches to the study of entrepreneurship at the higher education institutions to promote the economic development

of a nation. With the current trend of high rate of unemployment, many graduates have considered venturing into entrepreneurship since the labor market is choked and there exist virtually no vacancy for fresh graduates. [12] argues that “the types and quality of the education received sometimes do not develop the specific skills needed in the venture creation and management process.” (pp. 18-19).

Despite the fact that graduates have developed interest in becoming entrepreneurs after school, there seems to be the lack of specific skills to commence the venture creation and management process with. As a result, most graduates seek employment in certain jobs that enable them to sharpen their capabilities and increase their knowledge base. Others also add-on to their entrepreneurial ability knowledge from books written by renowned authors, attending seminars and enrolling for additional courses [12].

The course content of entrepreneurship programs mostly differs from one university to the other and entrepreneurial skills can be categorized into three broad areas namely; technical skills, business management skills and personal entrepreneurial skills. The technical skills encompass writing, listening, oral presentation, organizing, coaching, team playing and technical know-how. The business management skills cover starting, developing and managing, marketing, finance, accounting, production, control, negotiation and decision-making courses. The personal entrepreneurial skills on the other hand include inner control (discipline), risk taking, innovativeness, persistence, visionary leadership and change oriented courses [12].

The skills and the objectives of the universities should inform the modules of an entrepreneurship course curriculum. This helps to cover the most relevant areas in an entrepreneurship course that is geared towards raising a generation of innovative and creative entrepreneurs. A good understanding of the learning process of entrepreneurship helps to design effective teaching methods that are appropriate to create more business-minds in the country. Since the introduction of entrepreneurship courses in higher education institutions, traditional methods such as lectures, use of reading materials, tutorials and examinations have been mostly used by many institutions of higher learning. It is envisaged that these traditional methods have proved to be ineffective and inappropriate in activating the entrepreneurial spirit within graduates [25]. The traditional lectures are too predictive and may not be the most effective method since it ignores the relevance of the entrepreneurial process [26]. With these revelations on the effectiveness of the traditional teaching methods, [25] recommended that these methods should be complemented with other methods such as learning by doing or experiential education. Gorman, Hanlon and King [27] also added that students will be able to assume greater responsibility to solve problems if they are placed in a problem-based environment. This, according to the writers, will enable students to actively explore their skills, competences and their self-awareness.

In making constructive contribution to improving the orientation of people that results in the acquisition of skills, creativity, confidence, drive and courage to create self-employment, entrepreneurship education is highly essential in its ability to enhance job creation.. Entrepreneurship education has come to represent all forms of knowledge that empower individuals to create wealth of an economy and to advance the development of a nation as a whole [5].

Most graduates have to grapple with the problem of unemployment years after their graduation. This has become very frustrating for both the society and the government. The most appropriate option in reducing graduate unemployment is self-employment [5]. Self-

employment initiatives are being encouraged with the hope that they will provide the best alternative for employment. [28] observed that the direct entry which easily allowed graduates to enter the job market is now non-existing and cautioned that there was a need to put in systematic efforts to train graduates for specific jobs. Such systematic efforts most importantly, should be geared towards training future entrepreneurs as the main engine of growth. Some of the Universities that have introduced entrepreneurship courses in their curriculum have the hope and the aim that it will equip their graduates with the relevant and necessary skills to start a business on their own; thus, to be job creators instead of job seekers. Formal assessment method in entrepreneurship and proper assessment of the capabilities of individuals after going through an entrepreneurship course program should include the ability to solve problems and also assumption of greater responsibilities in problematic environments [25].

### **1.7 Entrepreneurship Education in Ghana**

In a study on how the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship can reduce graduate unemployment in Ghana, it was revealed that some of the problems that university graduates face include demand for years of experience, understanding the difference between theories and practice and a choked public sector employment. It was also revealed that entrepreneurship courses are relevant and contribute toward curbing graduate unemployment and result in economic growth. According to Amponsah (Entrepreneurship development in tertiary institutions: A case in reducing graduate unemployment. Unpublished Undergraduate dissertation, University of Ghana Business School; 1997), the teaching techniques were found to be mostly theoretical with little or no practical methods. The findings of a research by Owusu-Ansah (The Impact of Entrepreneurship on Career Intentions and Aspiration of Tertiary Students in Ghana. A paper presented at the 49<sup>th</sup> World Conference of International Council for Small Business, Johannesburg, South Africa; 2004), the need to invest more resources to make entrepreneurship education more effective in addressing the unemployment challenge. The study showed majority (77.9%) of students in Ghana's institutions of higher learning responded that they had been motivated to an extent to initiate business start-ups. The findings indicated that there was the need for effective course contents and teaching techniques that would increase students' career intentions in self-employment and the abilities to realize the same after graduating from school. Entrepreneurship education encourages the growth of personality traits, creativity, risk taking, responsibility, and provision of practical and business skills that are needed to initiate new ventures. The exposure of university students to entrepreneurship education unleashes the entrepreneurial spirit in students and significantly leads to the reduction of graduate unemployment [7]. However, there is the feeling that the training received by university students has not been fully successful in equipping them with the required skills and competences needed for job creation and self-employment [6].

In Ghana, many of the tertiary institutions offering courses in entrepreneurship have course contents that are more theoretically inclined. The Ghanaian entrepreneurship course contents include topics such as creativity and innovation, start-up issues, marketing research, managing people, financial planning and business plan. However, most of these are taught theoretically with little or no practical work. Giving the relevance of entrepreneurship, there must be well drafted course contents that will ensure that students are equipped with the necessary entrepreneurial skills with which they can start their own enterprises. The theoretical emphasis of such a course may not enhance the innovative and creative capabilities of the future entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship course has become more relevant in the educational curriculum of most of the higher education institutions in Ghana.

Most of the public institutions of higher learning have realised the importance of self-employment and have taken steps to introduce entrepreneurship in their curriculums. There is a renewed interest in encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship in the country. Most of the public universities and the Polytechnics, including, University of Professional Studies, University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education and the University for Development Studies have introduced entrepreneurship courses in their curricular development with the ultimate aim of getting graduates to make jobs instead of taking jobs.

In addressing the closing session of a four-week interactive workshop, organized by the Sculpture and Painting Department of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in collaboration with Kolding School of Design in Denmark, the Head of Department, Mr. Kwaku Boafo Kissiedu, announced that the university was liaising with the National Board for Small-Scale Industries to roll out training programs in entrepreneurship. Other institutions of higher learning, such as the University of Professional Studies also introduced entrepreneurship as both core and elective courses in the curricular of the university. However, research has indicated that there is little knowledge about the most appropriate and effective teaching and assessment techniques that will enable school leavers harness their abilities and capabilities to start their own ventures after completing their courses in entrepreneurship education [29].

### **1.8 Curbing Unemployment Menace in Ghana**

In curbing the unemployment situation, many universities in Ghana, both public and private, have introduced entrepreneurship courses in their curricular. This is in an attempt to reverse the trend of graduate unemployment through the provision of necessary education and training in entrepreneurial skills for business set ups and the creation of awareness of self-employment as a viable career option.

Ghana government initiatives such as the establishment of Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF) and the Graduate Business Support Scheme (GBSS) are some of the policies and interventions that enable graduates to directly derive some benefit for job creation. The GBSS is a recent private-public sector support scheme aimed at equipping 10,000 unemployed graduates nationwide with business-focused skills, experiences and exposures to enhance their chances of employability. The scheme aims to provide sponsorship for acquisition of practical experience for the attainment of knowledge in international best practices and also to aid graduates to set up 100 trans-generational businesses in Ghana. GBSS was established in collaboration with the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare and the Graduate Business Support Scheme Limited (GBSSL). The scheme is support by the Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Ghana government website). The VCTF on the other hand was established by ACT 680 in 2004 as a Government of Ghana initiative to provide finance to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (Venture Capital website) [30]. Other ongoing government of Ghana support programs such as the Local Enterprises and Skills Development Program (LESDEP), the Youth Enterprises and Skills Development Centre (YESDEC), and the Rural Enterprises Project (REP) are all geared toward curbing the unemployment menace in the country. With the increasing level of unemployment in Ghana, self-employment initiatives have become high on the country's agenda. Self-employment initiatives are being encouraged with the hope that alternative for employment in the formal sector could be achieved. Research findings have indicated that about 250,000 young people enter Ghana labor market annually and less than 5000



representing (2%) get employed in the formal sector, leaving about 98 percent unemployed. It has been estimated that annual graduate unemployment in Ghana is 44 percent. More than 30 percent of the 250,000 Ghanaians who seek employment have education from institutions of higher learning in Ghana [31]. This unemployment situation calls for graduates with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to help in job creation for the development of the economy.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Quantitative approach, using descriptive statistical methods was used to evaluate entrepreneurship education as a tool for economic growth from the perspective of undergraduate students from University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA). During the study, a survey was carried out on 100 graduates, from 2005 to 2010, who undertook both PBBA 302 Entrepreneurship and PBBA 413 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management courses at UPSA when they were students at the university in their Third and Fourth years respectively. A stratified sample technique, using the years of graduation as the strata, was employed to select 40 students from each stratum, constituting a sampling frame of 240 prospective participants. Email addresses and telephone numbers of the prospective participants were obtained from UPSA register of past students. Even though attempt was made to get the prospective participants to receive the questionnaire sent to them through their email addresses, only 100 of them completed and returned the administered questionnaire.

### **2.1 Instrumentation**

Data were collected from the participants through the use of a self-developed instrument (questionnaires). The design of self-developed instrument became very necessary because the researchers were not able “to locate any existing measures that tap the construct” intended to be measured by the team of researchers [32]. In validating, the instrument was piloted on twenty new respondents, under the guidance of experts who rated the items in the pool for the appropriateness of the study. The data collected, using the pilot scheme, helped the researchers to modify the questions, using the appropriate language, with views suggested by the expert researchers in entrepreneurship who were engaged for their guidance in the development of the questionnaire. Most of the questions were close-ended and the participants were asked to indicate their opinions, using 5- items Likert scale to aid analysis and discussion.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

[In this study, results refer to the outcome of the various statistical procedures used in analyzing the data collated and coded. The results served as the foundation for interpretation, discussion and drawing conclusion for the purpose of achieving our objectives.

### **3.1 Demographic Information**

The results disclosed that 60 percent of the participants were employed graduates and 40 percent of them were unemployed graduates. Sixty-seven percent of the employed graduates were male with 33 percent female. Fifty percent of the unemployed graduates were males with 50 percent females. The results in Table 1 below indicate that 50% of the

graduate employees were aged above 40 followed by 27 percent and 23 percent who were aged between 19-30 and 31-40 respectively. Twenty percent of the employed graduates had established their own business ventures and 80 percent of them were either working with a private company or a public company. Among the employed graduates, 20 percent were doing further studies at various universities alongside their jobs. This result indicates that people hardly set up ventures whiles in school or shortly after their graduation. It also shows that more male graduates set up their own ventures than their female counterparts. This is in support of [12] statement that even though graduates have interest in becoming entrepreneurs after school, there seems to be the lack of certain specific skills to commence the venture creation and management process. As a result, most graduates get employed in certain positions that will enable them to sharpen their capabilities and increase their knowledge base. Others also add-on to their entrepreneurial knowledge with books by renowned authors, attending seminars and enrolling for additional courses.

Majority of the unemployed graduates (85%) were aged between 19-30 years. The remaining 15 percent were aged around 31-40 to years. This shows that most of the unemployed graduates were relatively young. Thirty percent of the unemployed graduates were still pursuing further studies and the remaining 70 percent were idle.

**Table 1. Age distribution of respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Employed Graduate</b>	<b>Unemployed Graduate</b>
Below 18	0	0
19-30	16(26.7%)	34(85%)
31-40	14(23.3%)	6(15%)
Above 40	30(50%)	0
Total	60(100%)	40(100%)

This result revealed that 20 percent of the participants were doing further studies at a postgraduate Diploma or a Masters level at institutions of higher learning. This could be due to the influx of private tertiary institutions in Ghana that offer Weekend and Evening programs in business oriented fields.

### **3.2 Economic Importance of Entrepreneurship Education**

The respondents were asked to indicate how entrepreneurship courses offered had had some economic importance in their estimation. The Respondents were to rate the importance of the entrepreneurship education with respect to the Likert scale; very important, important, neutral, not important, and not very important. The results showed that, 80 percent of the respondents' perceived the entrepreneurship education they had at the university to be very important and 20 percent as important for economic development. The Respondents acknowledged the importance of entrepreneurship education and indicated that the curricular for entrepreneurship education should be enhanced to include skills development in order to help address the challenge of graduate unemployment. Majority (90%) of the employed graduates also indicated that there was a link between entrepreneurship education and the reduction of graduate unemployment, 10 percent however, believed entrepreneurship education was not linked to the reduction of graduate unemployment. There were 80 percent of the unemployed graduates who also believed entrepreneurship course contributed to the reduction of graduate unemployment, 20 percent did not believe there was a relationship between entrepreneurship and the reduction of

graduate unemployment. Those who did not believe there was a relationship between graduate education and reduction of unemployment also indicated the need for the government to support young graduates with entrepreneurial background with venture capital.

The majority that believed entrepreneurship helped reduce graduate unemployment were supported by the research findings of Varela and Jimenez [24] that indicated that there exists a correlation between universities investment in the promotion of entrepreneurship and the percentage of students becoming entrepreneurs. This study supports the view that entrepreneurship courses can motivate students to be self-employed thereby contributing to the reduction of graduate unemployment. Tkachev and Kolvereid also revealed in their study that self-employment intentions among higher education students could be increased through entrepreneurship training program. Others such as Wilson, Kickul and Marlino in their study indicated that entrepreneurship education could increase students' interest in entrepreneurship as a career thereby reducing graduate unemployment.

Some of the respondents who, however, had the believe that entrepreneurship education did not contribute to the reduction of graduate unemployment, might had the view that graduate unemployment is always on the increase on yearly basis and also only a few of those who take a course in entrepreneurship are able to start their own ventures. This supports the argument by Hisrich et al. [12] that the types and quality of education received sometimes do not develop the specific skills needed in the venture creation and management process.

### **3.3 Level of Entrepreneurship Education in Ghana**

In order to determine the level of entrepreneurship education in Ghana based on the teaching and assessment methods, respondents were asked to choose the level they thought entrepreneurship education had reached. Out of the sixty (60) respondents who were graduate employees, 80 percent believed entrepreneurship in Ghana was in the beginners/introductory stage; 10 percent believed entrepreneurship was in the advanced/intermediate stage with 10 percent with the view that it was in the advanced stage. Majority (80%) of the respondents who were unemployed graduates indicated that entrepreneurship in the country was in the introductory stage; 20 percent believed it was in the intermediate stage; none of them believed it had reached its complete or matured stage. The result showed that a large majority of the respondents acknowledged that entrepreneurship in Ghana was in its introductory stage. The reason for this result stemmed from the perception that almost all the tertiary institutions in Ghana that undertook entrepreneurship courses focused their curricular mostly on the theoretical aspect of the entrepreneurial program. This view might precipitate the course contents not developed to address the diverse challenges entrepreneurs face in venture creation and management [25].

The respondents were further asked whether they took the entrepreneurship course because of their business inclination. In all 55 percent of the graduate entrepreneurs took entrepreneurial courses because of their business inclination, 45 percent took it without any focus on a particular business but with the view that there could be an avenue for them to enter into a business venture. Majority of the graduate entrepreneurs studied entrepreneurship courses with the view of setting up their own businesses after graduation.

### **3.4 Entrepreneurship Education**

The researchers sought to determine the extent to which the respondents were motivated to study entrepreneurship at the university. They were therefore, further asked whether they would have chosen entrepreneurship if it was only an elective course in their program of study. Majority of the graduate entrepreneurs (85%) said they would have taken it if it was even only an elective course. Fifty-five percent of the unemployed graduates indicated they would have studied it if it was only an elective course. The results showed that many of the graduates generated interest in the course because it served as another means of earning a living and contributing to society after school. Thus, most of the respondents wanted to acquire entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in order to come out with their own ventures.

### **3.5 Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education in Starting a Business Venture**

One of the questions posed to the graduate entrepreneurs was whether their entrepreneurship education had an effect on starting their own businesses. The findings indicate that out of the graduate entrepreneurs, 50 percent believed that the study of entrepreneurship had an effect on starting their own business ventures; 44 percent however, believed that the study of entrepreneurship had no effect on starting their own ventures and 6 percent were unsure of the effect. The findings also indicated that 40 percent of the unemployed graduate respondents believed that the effect was highly significant, 15 percent indicated significant and 25 percent indicated insignificant. Twenty percent believed that it was very insignificant in business venture creation. The results could be explained that the entrepreneurship courses they took were more theoretically inclined and therefore, could not meet their expectations in acquiring knowledge and skills for setting up their own ventures or perhaps because of lack of financial support.

### **3.6 Challenges in Starting Own Business Ventures**

The study provided that 55 percent of the respondents who were unemployed graduates were confronted with financial and other logistical challenges that impeded their efforts to start their own business venture. Forty-five percent blamed the government for not making provision to support the young graduates to either start their own businesses or further their education in entrepreneurship. This supports the views of Owusu-Ansah that majority of students who studied entrepreneurship had interest to establish their own business ventures in order to become self-employed rather than being employed.

### **3.7 Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods (Preferred)**

In examining the preferred teaching methods liked by the respondents for teaching lessons in entrepreneurship, they were asked to choose more than one preferred teaching method and rank the order. This was to determine the method that was mostly preferred. Majority, 55 percent, of the graduate entrepreneurs indicated case studies to be the most effective preferred teaching method, 25 percent indicated ordinary lectures and 20 percent opted for the use of guest speakers for their preference. Majority of the unemployed graduates, 85 percent, also indicated that lectures were the most preferred teaching method of the entrepreneurship course, 5 percent went for case studies and 10 percent for the use of guest speakers.

The results showed that the teaching method mostly preferred by the unemployed graduate was ordinary lectures followed by case studies. The use of practitioners was the least method preferred. According to [25] the use of traditional teaching methods such as lectures has proved to be ineffective in getting students to generate and unleash the entrepreneurial spirit. The views of the graduate entrepreneurs supported this view of Gibb but the views of the unemployed graduates proved otherwise. It is therefore recommended that the teaching methods (lectures) should be complemented with learning by doing/experiential learning. Kirby [26] asserts that the use of lectures is too predictive and it is not the most effective method since it ignores the relevance of the entrepreneurial process. Gorman, Hanlon and King [27] also affirm that when students are placed in problem-based environments, it enables them to actively explore their skills, competences and their self-awareness than placed in a teaching and learning environment.

### **3.8 Entrepreneurship Course Structure**

As a result of the general assertion that the entrepreneurship course structure at UPSA was basically theoretical, the graduate entrepreneurs were asked to choose the teaching modes/structure of the entrepreneurship course that they undertook at UPSA. Majority of the respondents (90%) indicated that their entrepreneurship course content was largely theoretical, 10 percent of the respondents indicated that their entrepreneurial course content was both theoretical and practical. It appears from the findings that majority of the respondents agreed that the entrepreneurship course they studied had a content that was largely theoretical. This means that there was little emphasis on practical application of knowledge and skills and therefore ineffective in activating the entrepreneurial spirit as reiterated by Gibb [25] and Kirby [26].

### **3.9 Entrepreneurship Course Assessment**

In determining the assessment mode mostly used for the entrepreneurship education of the respondents, the results showed that majority of the respondents 80 percent were assessed mostly by end of term examination, followed by 15 percent who indicated that the second most used assessment method was mid-term examination and the remaining students indicated either group work or assignments. Majority of the graduate entrepreneurs, 55 percent, indicated running of a business or simulation for assessment was their preferred performance assessment mode for students who study entrepreneurship; 45 percent also recommended the preparation of business plan. These findings mean that students who study entrepreneurship are mostly assessed by end of semester examination. Simulation exercise was however, scarcely used in assessing students' performance in entrepreneurship. The recommendations made by the graduate entrepreneurs were supported by the argument made by Gibb [25] that the formal assessment method (examination) in entrepreneurship education does not fit very well. Gibb suggested that a proper assessment of the capabilities of individuals after an entrepreneurship course should include the ability to solve problems and also assume greater responsibilities in problematic environments.

### **3.10 Expectations before Undertaking Entrepreneurship Course**

Many people have different reasons for undertaking a course in entrepreneurship. There is the perception that entrepreneurship is easy to pass as an academic course while others

believe it can help activate their entrepreneurial skills. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate their expectations before studying entrepreneurship courses at UPSA.

Table 2 below, shows that most (80%) of the graduate unemployed took a course in entrepreneurship with the expectation that they would gain knowledge and skills that could help to establish own businesses; 20% had the expectation of just going through the entrepreneurship course with the view of passing their examinations and getting good grades. The respondents might have viewed entrepreneurship courses as one of the easy to pass courses that could enable them to better their grades.

**Table 2. Preferred Teaching Methods**

Teaching Method	Employed Graduates	Unemployed Graduates
Case study	57	7
Lectures	23	85
Guest speakers	20	8
Total	100	100

**Table 3. Expectation before the Course**

Expectation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To help get good grades	0	0
Just go through the course	20	20
To gain knowledge on skills and entrepreneurship	80	80
Total	100	100

### 3.11 Meeting Expectations of Participants

Majority of the graduates, who studied the course, representing 60 percent, said their expectation was not met, 40 percent said their expectation was met. The difference in the findings is basically due to what is normally said that *theory* is different from *practice*. Since a smaller percentage of the graduates admitted that their expectations had been met, it clearly demonstrates that their expectation to acquire knowledge and skills to apply in establishing their own business was dashed. This might be attributed to the mainly theoretical nature of the course and the teaching style employed in the delivery of the course.

### 3.12 Entrepreneurship Plans after School

The unemployed graduates were asked to indicate their plans after school. More of the respondents, 70 percent, had planned to get employed in the private sector than to get employed in the public sector. This might be because there were little or no vacancies in the public sector, as envisaged in the research work by Amponsah that one of the problems that contributed to the increase in graduate unemployment in Ghana was a choked public sector. This explains the reason why most graduates aim for private sector employment than public sector employment.

### **3.13 Improving the Study of Entrepreneurship Education**

Based on the perception that entrepreneurship course was mostly theoretically based, the respondents were asked how the study of entrepreneurship course could serve as the most appropriate tool the reduction of graduate unemployment. Twenty percent of the graduate employees were of the view that in order to improve the entrepreneurship course, there should be a national policy where the course would be made mandatory in both public and private institutions. Sixty percent also thought that the course should be added to the curriculum of all the business related institutions and should be run from the third year of all the undergraduate programs to the final years and the remaining 20 percent also thought that in order to improve the study of the course, it should be more practically oriented. The graduate entrepreneurs indicated that the study should involve industrial attachments; 75 percent of them provided that the government should step in to assist with financial supports and tax incentives in order to encourage graduates to start their own businesses. Fifty-five percent of them thought that in order to improve the study of entrepreneurship course, the instructors must use case studies that will help students analyze problems pertaining to venture creation and management.

Forty percent of the unemployed graduates felt that in order to improve the study of entrepreneurship in higher education institutions, the entrepreneurship courses must be made compulsory and must be studied at all the business oriented universities at all the stages of the undergraduate programs. Twenty-five percent of the unemployed graduates thought that apart from making the study theoretical, institutions must make the practical aspect their priority where students would be encouraged to develop viable business ideas, projects and periodic workshops. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were neutral in their response.

## **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study evaluated the views of graduates who studied entrepreneurship courses at the University of Professional Studies, Accra on the effect of studying entrepreneurial courses on economic development of a nation through job creation. Majority of the participants were employed and most of them having their own business ventures. Some of the job creators were also working in the public sector alongside their own personal business ventures. It was also found that the teaching and assessment methods used by their entrepreneurial faculty members at UPSA were mostly lecture delivery and end of semester examinations respectively. The majority of the participants were of the view that for the study of entrepreneurial courses at the universities to serve its purpose of improving the economic growth of a nation through job creation, the traditional lecture mode of teaching should be complimented with experiential learning. The assessment mode should not only be restricted to end of semester examination but must include simulation exercise such as the development of business plans.

The findings revealed that entrepreneurship courses are important and have a significant effect on reducing graduate unemployment. Most graduates study the course (entrepreneurship) because it is perceived to be the most appropriate means to job creation leading to economic development. It was revealed that even though most of the unemployed graduates prefer to establish their own business ventures, they are constrained by both the practical experience and financial support. The study also established that developing countries, like Ghana should encourage the introduction of entrepreneurial programs at their

institutions of higher in order to enhance their economic growth. It could therefore be concluded that entrepreneurship education involving experiential learning can be an effective tool for economic growth through job creation.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The use of experiential learning, involving case studies and simulation exercises, should be made part of the curricular of entrepreneurship courses run by the universities for the improvement of effective learning styles that will equip students with the relevant knowledge and skills needed for job creation.
- Institutions of higher learning should assess their students who pursue entrepreneurship education based on simulation exercises alongside the semester examinations.
- There must also be an increased support from policy makers or the governments in terms of capacity building to equip university graduates, who studied entrepreneurship programs, with the requisite skills as well as in funding for their start-up business ventures.

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## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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