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Entrepreneurial learning – a social context perspective: evidence from Kenya and Tanzania

Social context
perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – Drawing on entrepreneurship as a social process, the purpose of this paper is to propose a model of entrepreneurial learning where contextual social and economic structures gain relevance through experiential learning. Concrete experience underpins the emotions, values and interests that support the cognitive and conative processes required to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set. Empirical study undertaken in Kenya and Tanzania explores perceptions of entrepreneurship education (EE) and identifies approaches to a social perspective of entrepreneurial learning that is applicable.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses a multi-phase approach consisting of desk research, semi-structured interview and a participatory workshop. Entrepreneurship programmes in 18 universities are benchmarked against accepted standards and 68 participants are purposively selected within key stakeholders for the semi-structured interviews and participatory workshop.

Findings – The findings indicate that entrepreneurship as a value creation process is a shared assertion but the social context informs a construct of learning outcomes, and specifically what characterises an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial learning is multi-layered and its provision necessitates an engagement with the social context in order to gain relevance for the learners. The learning content should enable learners to develop an understanding of the world alongside knowledge of entrepreneurship. Learning tools should be flexible and action-based, to achieve learning for entrepreneurship as opposed to learning about the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Ultimately, the value creation process can only happen when learning supports the individual and collective capabilities to transform the social context. Particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, meeting job creation and growth aspirations will require the providers such as universities to work closely with businesses of all sizes, including the informal sector, and the use of innovative learning techniques such as local languages where applicable. These findings have policy and practice implications for HEIs and policy-makers in curriculum design and inclusive learning methods.

Research limitations/implications – The study comes short on entrepreneurial orientation and its impact on learning outcomes. Further investigation could establish if necessity entrepreneurs differ from opportunity entrepreneurs in the way they learn, so that national policy and curriculum can respond accordingly. With high levels of unemployment in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, entrepreneurship often presents the only choice for employment or a paid job.

Practical implications – The study findings indicate the need for educators to develop learning approaches that are informed by the contextual realities of the learners. Policy-makers should also foster the development of curriculum informed by contextual realities, so that learners can make sense of their entrepreneurial world.

Social implications – Through the adoption of action learning as essential for the process of creation and transformation, the study makes the case for individual motivations in exploring the realities of the local context.

Originality/value – The study contributes to a deeper understanding of EE from a social context, and proposes a model of entrepreneurial learning which could benefit learners and the community. The informal sector is brought to light as a significant actor in entrepreneurial learning and a considerable source of new knowledge.

Keywords Entrepreneurship education, Learning outcomes, Entrepreneurial learning, Social context

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is acclaimed as the engine of wealth creation, and entrepreneurship education (EE) is valued by stakeholders among which higher education institutions (HEIs) play a key role. As a field of study, EE is part of the general business discipline in a

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context where the competencies required to operate in the global marketplace are rapidly evolving (Chell, 2013; Unger *et al.*, 2011). HEIs have a mandate to design a curriculum addressing the needs of the economy and fulfilling learners' potential (Leitch, 2006). Learning is an active process whereby students can make sense of the changing environment and educators can exhibit and share knowledge and understanding of the belief structures characterising the social context of learning (Krueger, 2007; Bechard and Gregoire, 2005). This represents the challenge facing HEIs, particularly business schools delivering EE based on compartmentalised knowledge. While this has been the dominant pedagogic approach, the reality of entrepreneurship increasingly points to a different model (Gibb, 2002, 2011).

The argument for a different model of EE is gaining traction (Jones, 2010; Neergard *et al.*, 2012; Erickson, 2016; McGuigan, 2016; Gedeon, 2014; Schlee *et al.*, 2013; Rideout and Gray, 2013). From learners' perspective, the value of EE is unsettled and students learning the subject may not necessarily develop an understanding of what the phenomenon they are learning about means in reality, and how it gains relevance in their context. Besides, many entrepreneurs without any formal education become quite successful, although some operate informally by choice or default (Gunther and Launov, 2012). It is questionable whether the traditional learning theory built on behaviourist approaches to pedagogy applicable in most HEIs is suitable for entrepreneurial learning.

Kenya and Tanzania, two countries with distinctive experiences of market economy[1] but aligned visions of entrepreneurship offer the empirical context for this study. Kenya has long enjoyed a reputation as an entrepreneurial country with relatively high education standards (World Bank, 2014a). There is a shared belief that some people may be exceptionally and even innately talented in spotting and successfully commercialising business opportunities, but education can also help to develop entrepreneurial competencies. Integrated entrepreneurship education is part of Business Studies and Commerce syllabus and has been a compulsory and examinable subject at all levels of school-based technical and vocational training where the emphasis has been much stronger since the early 1990s. Kenya counts 52 HEIs with eight dedicated EE centres. Contrary to Kenya, Tanzania has emerged relatively recently from a socialist economic model where central planning left little room for individual creativity, let alone the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture. Following recent reform programmes (World Bank, 2011a), the private sector is developing rapidly and entrepreneurship and business education is part of higher education curriculum in 28 of the country's 30 HEIs. The country lags behind regional education performance partly because the local language of communication *Kiswahili*' is adopted in schools (World Bank, 2014b). With unemployment among young people twice as high as among the adult population, and the informal sector representing a significant proportion of private sector activity, EE is critical in both countries.

The issue framing this paper is to develop an approach to entrepreneurial learning through the learners' social context and experience. In Africa, donors and recipient governments have defined EE as part of poverty reduction and job creation, targeting the youth, graduates and female population (Naude, 2012; Ogbó, 2012). Women particularly represent a distinct group for micro-enterprise creation due to their ability to induce a higher impact on community well-being (Goldman Sachs, 2016). Paradoxically, these programmes have favoured the human capital approach based on behaviourist pedagogy where social structures and support essential in mitigating risks associated with the uncertain environment are not given due relevance (Dejaeghere and Baxter, 2014). The rise of entrepreneurship has also resulted in high failure rates amongst entrepreneurs (GEM, 2014; Ogbó, 2012; Ladzani and Van Vuuren, 2002; Mambula, 2002). It is appropriate to explore a framework where the social and institutional contexts can

contribute to develop learners' capabilities in their contextual reality (Gries and Naude, 2011; McGuigan, 2016; Gibb, 2002).

It is the need to understand how a social context perspective of EE is perceived in developing economies such as Kenya and Tanzania that shapes the research described in this study. The paper has the following objectives:

- (1) to examine how EE is broadly perceived in relation to learning outcomes and entrepreneurial learning;
- (2) to develop a contextually relevant model of EE; and
- (3) to identify learning approaches appropriate for the learners' social realities and experiences in contexts such as Kenya and Tanzania, and make recommendations for policy and practice.

A constructivist pedagogical approach (Bechard and Gregoire, 2005) and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) offer the theoretical framework to develop a model of entrepreneurial learning (Gibb, 2002) that is contextually driven and socially relevant. A multi-phased qualitative research is designed to collect data from a representative sample of stakeholders in Kenya and Tanzania among HEIs, graduates, start-ups, employers and private sector development bodies. Thus, an interesting outcome of this study may be to highlight the different perceptions of EE and the extent to which the social process of entrepreneurship in seemingly different cultures may inform the learning.

EE

According to the EU (2012), EE is about raising peoples' awareness of self-employment as a career opportunity, promoting the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship such as creativity, risk taking and responsibility, and providing the technical and business skills needed in order to start a venture. This definition bestows on HEIs a responsibility to develop well-educated graduate entrepreneurs as job creators and ready for employment (Ghina *et al.*, 2015). However, what constitutes EE is not clearly established. Approaches to EE have been largely unsystematic with variations in content across institutions (Co and Mitchell, 2006; Varblane and Mets, 2010), in delivery methods (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006) and in psychological or mental aspects of students (Gedldern, 2010; Isaacs *et al.*, 2007). Programme evaluation is inconsistent, ranging from entrepreneurial intention as the indicator of effectiveness (Fayolle *et al.*, 2006); learners' inner motivational resource base (Dhilwayo, 2008; Gedldern, 2010); entrepreneurial traits, competences and managerial skills (Isaacs *et al.*, 2007). Thus, the starting point for HEIs and policy-makers could be an approach to EE that encompasses its multi-functional nature. This approach could broaden the understanding of entrepreneurship and how it could be taught, by acknowledging the social process of any enterprise activity (O'Connorr, 2013).

Learners on entrepreneurship programmes can develop entrepreneurial competencies for different motives (Nabi *et al.*, 2016; OECD, 2011). Abilities, such as creativity, problem solving, networking, self-awareness, are not exclusively associated with business venture creation and most HEIs effectively help learners to develop those competencies as part of the employability agenda (Chell, 2013). The rationale stipulates that running a business as an owner/manager or as an employee necessitates some understanding of business principles, and graduates with such skills can contribute to economic growth even if they do not choose to start their own business.

The creation of a business venture requires an entrepreneurial mind-set, which is essential to being an entrepreneur. There may be some innate inclination for seeking opportunity, taking risk, being autonomous and thinking strategically, but education

provides some kind of expertise which can be learnt by applying consistent and reliable cognitive behaviours and processes that are identifiable (Baron and Henry, 2006). Thus, understanding how one becomes an entrepreneur, or at least recognising one, is an essential part of the learning process (Krueger, 2007). Increasingly, EE is focussing on action learning with classroom content targeted at a specific audience of learners (Henry *et al.*, 2005; Mwasalwabi, 2010; Jones, 2010; Neck and Green, 2011; Rae *et al.*, 2012). Being an entrepreneur entails “learning by doing” as fundamental to understanding the mental structures of the social and institutional context (Gibb, 2011; Ollila and Williams Middleton, 2011; Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2015). Pedagogical and institutional constraints to the adoption of action learning (Mwasalwabi, 2010; Pittaway and Edwards, 2012) raise questions about EE integrity (Rideout and Gray, 2013), particularly since some successful entrepreneurs have no formal education. Some HEIs promote spin-offs and use incubator to enhance industry engagement through real experience of problem solving, reflection and commercialisation. This process supports experimentation of ideas in a safe environment where mistakes happen, lessons are learnt and the thought process can invite behaviour change (Alberti *et al.*, 2004; Hegarty, 2006).

EE in Africa faces a socio-political challenge of a context where policies are not consistent with social realities. International donors run parallel programmes aimed at business development and the creation of micro-enterprises and livelihoods dominated by women and unemployed youth. Owners of small business can receive business development skills to grow and create jobs, along with some mentoring (Naude, 2012). Finance is also available for those who progress towards meeting regulatory and fiscal requirements, with some risk bearing capacity and locus for control (USAID, 2011). This approach focussed on job creation fails to include the limited institutional support around innovation and employment (DeJaeghere and Baxter, 2014). In such contexts where HEIs are more prone to applying criteria of formality, incentives to take risks are limited. For the youth and unemployed graduates, the only viable option out of poverty is the creation of micro-enterprise. EE for this marginalised category highlights the “entrepreneurial self” as a potential shared by all (Volkmann *et al.*, 2009). It focusses on skills and knowledge of local markets and business development, with little attention to transforming skills into capabilities and changing mind-sets. The contextual reality is characterised by social and economic structures that constrain individuals’ ability to choose and act, let alone change behaviours significantly (DeJaeghere and Baxter, 2014). Hence, the behavioural transformation required to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set remains unachieved, as high unemployment rates confirm. A policy failure also emerges from the lack of adequate structure beyond the educational sphere to foster formality where, for example, corruption and networks of influence are prominent.

HEIs emulate western models of behavioural pedagogic approach. For example, the University of Nairobi offers an MSc in Entrepreneurship with no incubator for start-ups and real-world interactions are limited to placement and projects arranged by students themselves. An Executive Education programme is set up to bridge skills gaps among small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in growth industries with real growth prospects (UoN, 2017). Limited resources tend to favour classroom interaction with inadequate connection with the community for experience and reflexion. In Tanzania, the University of Dar es Salam holds the only incubator in a HEI designed to be an effective catalyst for job creation, economic development and poverty alleviation through training, research, consultancy and other services in the area of enterprise development (UDEC, 2017). The business incubation encourages and empowers students and graduates to choose self-employment as a career with some mentoring support but limited real-life learning experience is available. In both countries, interactions with the community for learning and reflection opportunities are very limited.

Learning outcomes

The work of Gibb (2002, 2005) provides a template for EE, distinctively introducing action-based practice as a means to develop knowledge of the life-world and forge entrepreneurial behaviour. It has informed studies on action learning (Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2014; Kasturiratne *et al.*, 2012; Jones, 2010). The template has two objectives: stakeholders develop a shared understanding of learning outcomes, and educators have measurement standards. Gibb's (2005) template finds application in HEIs and vocational colleges, continued professional and executive development, and young entrepreneur's programmes. It helps to educate the educators in building their own capabilities, to embed entrepreneurship throughout the learner's experience, and to provide experiential learning opportunities. It is therefore a useful tool in the development of shared understanding of entrepreneurial behaviours, attitudes and skills, as briefly discussed in the following sections. Gibb (2002) makes the point that entrepreneurial learning is not exclusive to high-tech and high growth enterprises, but also occurs among the self-employed in uncertain and complex environments where the need to behave entrepreneurially is driven by the necessity to survive. The rationale for Gibb's template in contexts such as Kenya and Tanzania is that it fosters adequate skills provision particularly among the self-employed where historical business failure rates are often linked to the low level of skills (Frese, 2002; Wheeler and Roy, 2006). Traditionally, people with a good training from secondary education onwards irrespective of the profession, possess the knowledge and skills to lead successful business ventures (Coduras *et al.*, 2010) and an awareness of possible sanctions and fines associated with informal professional activities along with the negative effects on social status (Bitros and Karayiannis, 2010). Thus, complying with formality may deter entrepreneurs who lack managerial skills (Lazear, 2005; Gunther and Launov, 2012; Webb *et al.*, 2013). In such contexts where the informal sector is predominantly driven by necessity rather than by choice, Gibb's template offers a framework where a curriculum encompassing skills, attitudes and behaviours can lead to effective and grounded policy in EE.

Notwithstanding the nature of opportunity (Sarasvathy, 2001), turning it into a commercial idea as a learning outcome requires connections at different stages where learners are part of the development process (Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2011a). The concept of effectual entrepreneurship (Sarasvathy *et al.*, 2011) contrasts with causation (Schumpeter, 1934) which perceives opportunity as pre-existing in the market with a finite set of possibilities as pre-determinants of entrepreneurial goals. In contrast, effectuation is rather a process of creation and transformation that is not necessarily intentional but instead driven by individual motivations to explore how things may work in a local context. As such, it is a dynamic and interactive process of transformation involving self-selected stakeholders and no predictable outcome. This approach has implications for entrepreneurial learning to the extent that the context of dynamic interactions is influenced by who the entrepreneurs/learners are, the state of their individual knowledge and their connections in the relevant context. Thus, effectuation reinforces action learning (Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2011a). By enabling students to take initiative and co-lead the development process, commitment to see things through animates the natural tendency to act autonomously and reflect. The process relies on purposeful connections where networking abilities can develop through practice in a social context within which the learner can gather information, reflect on asymmetries and gaps in knowledge and make strategic decisions, particularly in respect of risk taking. Being entrepreneurial is an emotional process of negotiation, selling and persuading others towards achieving a common goal.

It is established that entrepreneurial learning outcomes call upon the setting, the educator and the learner's affective and conative aspects of mental development

(Rae, 2005; Gibb, 2005; Taatila, 2010), to the extent that attitude can be modelled with knowledge, reflection, judgement and action. Increasingly, HEIs are adopting models of EE with cross-faculty interactions to generate and commercialise ideas, with the support of industry experts and incubator facilities. However, these experiences remain limited, particularly in contexts such as Kenya and Tanzania where pedagogical, institutional and material barriers limit the extent to which entrepreneurial outcomes are achievable. In the same vein, the prospects for educators to engage with the belief structures of the learning context are problematic. Students may successfully learn “about” entrepreneurship, but fail to learn “for” entrepreneurship (Gibb, 2002; Rideout and Gray, 2013).

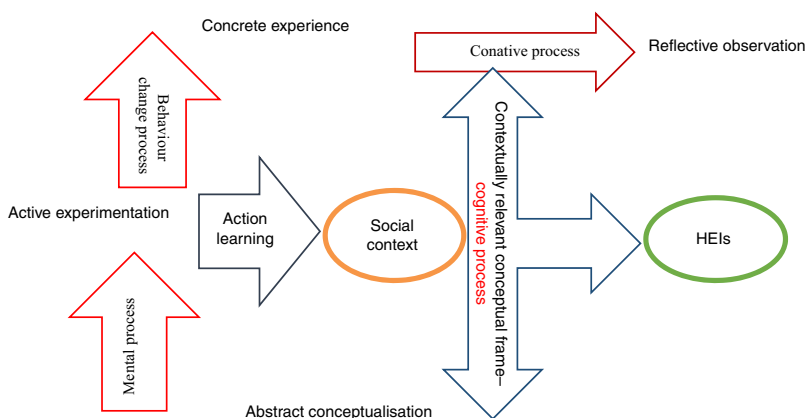
Entrepreneurial learning

The pedagogic issue facing HEIs is to design a curriculum that embeds contextual circumstances in the learning process (Gibb, 2002). This implies working with stakeholders to develop a social construct of learning. This holistic approach diverges from a rational thinking view and integrates the learner’s emotions, values and interests.

Typical pedagogic approaches distinguish between the behaviourist and constructivist approaches (Bechard and Gregoire, 2005). The behaviourist paradigm highlights the transmission and reproduction of knowledge and application of procedures in forms of lectures, reading, watching and listening and so on. Behaviourism assumes that learning consists of transferring knowledge from the teacher to the student. In contrast, constructivism works on the principle that learning is essentially an active participation in the construction of new understanding. Action learning informs a constructivist pedagogical approach where the experience of learning is implicit and involves personal development and self-awareness through real-life experience and emotions. This process draws upon the learner’s affective and conative dimensions in the learning process (Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2011b). Conation reveals a natural proclivity to act and applies in educational settings of action learning, reflection and experience (Kolb, 1984). Advocates of action-based learning argue that it is fundamental to the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set underpinning values, behaviours and skills (Gibb, 2002; Neck and Green, 2011). The affective aspect calls on the learner’s emotional dimension and enhances the learning experience of being an entrepreneur by enhancing through reflection (Boud *et al.*, 1985; Boler, 1999).

The work of Kolb (1984) marks a milestone on how experience can lead to deep and self-directed learning, going through four stages on active engagement consisting of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. It is “learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38) as an integrated process of mutually supportive stages. Entrepreneurship is intrinsically uncertain and uncertainties generate emotion. Connecting real-life experience with the learning process instigates an emotional process of reflexion where the learner attempts to make sense of the experience and to develop schematic mental processes associated with such event. Likewise, the context of the experience engages other actors and switches on a mental process of response patterns, ultimately leading to a certain attitude and behaviour that emerges and develops with active participation. This process of self-awareness and development provides the bedrock for learning from mistake and adjusting attitudes and behaviours. Learners can adapt their cognitive processes to understand the changes they are making and therefore become more proficient at tasks and direct their own learning (Morris *et al.*, 2013; Krueger, 2007; Honig, 2004). Figure 1 shows a model of contextual entrepreneurial learning based on experiential learning cycle.

Entrepreneurship is a social construct defined by cultural and socio-economic factors (Jack *et al.*, 2010; Burt, 2004). The value creation process emerges from supportive



Social context perspective

Figure 1.
A social perspective based model of entrepreneurial learning

relationships where the learning can occur by solving problems, learning from mistakes and copying from others. It is an emotional process involving trust to rely on others, acting on “gut” instinct, developing knowledge from practical experience and action, taking on new challenges and enacting plans. Authors have argued that entrepreneurial learning may be difficult to achieve in the standard education programme, even where seminars, discussions and case studies are included (Fayolle *et al.*, 2006; Neergard *et al.*, 2012; Nabi *et al.*, 2016; Lorz *et al.*, 2016).

With high levels of youth unemployment in countries like Kenya and Tanzania, it is at least desirable that entrepreneurial learning could tap into the vast informal sector for modelling contextual knowledge and action learning opportunities. For many, it represents the only reality they can experience and emotionally engage with (DeJaeghere and Baxter, 2014; Nafukho and Muyia, 2010). The motivations for transition to formality are complex and the societal impacts of belonging to a group and sharing a set of values are powerful drivers that make a cost benefit approach to formality inapplicable in some contexts (Webb *et al.*, 2014). While entrepreneurs operating informally recognise the limitations of their competencies it is the medium of education that has the potential to enhance the benefits of formality. Transition occurs gradually with business and market development where the need to meet certain standards led to a stepped development and appropriate learning at each stage (Sutter *et al.*, 2017).

Methodology

The study adopted a multi-phased qualitative approach in order to achieve the main aim (Stakes, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Phase I consisted of a desk review of the curriculum used in HEIs based on Gibb’s template as the standard for benchmarking. It entailed mapping the programme of study against specified learning outcomes (Gibb, 2002) using material available from various prospectuses.

Phase II entailed a semi-structured interview with a variety of stakeholder groups (see Table I) as a tool to develop a deeper understanding of participants’ perceptions of learning outcomes, how contextual realities can help deliver entrepreneurial learning and help inform EE. The face-to-face interviews provided participants with adequate time to develop interesting insights into each line of enquiry, while ensuring that all questions were covered (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). Each session took about 45-60 minutes and respondents’ feedback was enriched by their engagement and passion with the topic being discussed, including their personal experience where applicable (Wilson, 2012, p. 138).

Content analysis helped to codify interviewees' narratives recorded on each anonymous form where participants were categorised according to the sample (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The questionnaire consisted of three parts: what makes an entrepreneur and how would you recognise one (representing the learning outcomes); how entrepreneurship is taught and how you think it could be improved (representing entrepreneurial learning); and how do you see EE developing in the future. Interview transcripts were analysed by category of questions, looking for patterns and recurring themes using keywords underpinning both positive and negative perceptions with conceptual links (Strauss, 1987).

Phase III adopted a cooperative enquiry approach (Heron, 1996) bringing together a small group of participants in a two-day workshop to gain a deeper understanding of EE, identify gaps in existing system and draw recommendations for future EE. Preliminary findings from the benchmarking and semi-structured interviews informed the workshop as a means to animate and engage without precluding the emergence of new views and understandings. Narratives were consistently recorded to update and further refine the tools used for workshop activities. Where possible, phrases and comments that emerged were unchanged and anonymity protected in order to establish the shared understanding of the terms underpinning this study. The aim was to invite stakeholders to co-create meaning around concepts of entrepreneurship, EE and entrepreneurial learning and offer their own words and comments on their experiences, beliefs and future recommendations (Dalton, 1964).

The workshop design was participatory with "card sort" techniques and the development of "rich pictures" helping to summarise and crystallise understandings (Reason, 1988; Heron, 1996). In total, 25 indicators drawn from the literature (Gibb, 2002) and 32 emerging from semi-structured interviews were presented and discussed to enable participants to define the skills, attributes and behaviours of a "successful entrepreneur". In total, 49 measurement indicators emerging from earlier research phases were used to inform stakeholders' shared expectations from EE learning outcomes. What emerged from the workshop activities was a vision of EE to better formulate recommendations for a strong foundation, built on consensus, from which to influence policy development in the sphere of EE.

Sampling

The population consisted of five main groups of stakeholders comprising: HEIs and affiliates; SMEs owner/managers including in the informal sector; graduates and youth unemployed; public sector agencies promoting enterprise; and large private sector employers. Due to resource constraints, the sampling frame was limited to the capital cities of Nairobi and Dar es Salam. Potential participants were identified from contacts developed during the desk review and through recommendations. Proportionality and gender balance were observed where possible.

Purposive sampling ensured appropriate representation of each group (Marshall, 1996). HEIs were selected based on their popularity and were represented by head of department

Table I.
Summary of sample distribution for semi-structured interviews and workshop

Categories	Interviewees Kenya	Interviewees Tanzania	Workshop
HEIs and affiliates	6	5	6
Large employers/private sector businesses	3	3	3
Micro and small- and medium-sized enterprises	7	4	7
Institutions	2	4	2
Graduates/youth unemployed	5	6	5
Total	23	22	23

or director of incubation centre where appropriate. SMEs were selected in large industrial estates and commercial parks, ensuring that both informal and formal businesses took part. To avoid biased responses graduates and the young unemployed were randomly selected from student lists and contact arranged with the university registrar for interviewing. In Kenya, two out of five participants in this category were seeking work in the largest park of Kariu Mbangui located in the outskirts of Nairobi where the informal sector flourishes. In Tanzania, this category came solely from the University of Dar es Salam. Two had signed up to the incubator for potential start-up and four were looking for work mainly in the public sector. In the category of institutions supporting the development of the private sector, Tanzania had a larger number (4) than Kenya (2) reflecting the recent emphasis on private sector development. All participants were interviewed in their premises, with the exception of graduates and youth unemployed.

In total, 23 delegates took part in a two-day workshop in Nairobi, 13 came from Kenya and 10 from Tanzania. Among the seven representing micro SMEs three were young graduates who have started a business in the past 18 months. Of the five female participants, two came from HEIs, one represented the private sector national development agency, and two were SMEs of which one was a start-up. Table I summarises the sample.

Analysis and results

Desk review

The mapping of all HEIs delivering EE in both countries showed a broad alignment with learning outcomes (Gibb, 2002). Of the 52 HEIs in Kenya, 12 offer EE with eight running an incubator. Of the 30 HEIs in Tanzania, six offered EE with the University of Dar es Salam running an incubator. As shown in Table II, section 1, there were similarities in the prospectus although in Kenya an emphasis was on venture creation. Business ownership and employment within SMEs received a lower priority in career and motivation. Two issues emerge. First, the implicit argument that ownership is not important to entrepreneurship is emphasised by the notion that entrepreneurs are associated to large and growing businesses (Gibb, 2002; Vangelis *et al.*, 2007). Second, the dichotomy between entrepreneurial competencies and values as highlighted above indicates the lack of a conceptual frame of teaching and learning (Gibb, 2002).

Interestingly, one university faculty in Tanzania specialised in technology and science and another in Kenya specialised in agriculture economy had some elements of “entrepreneurship” in their curriculum at different levels of study. In both cases, they offered a blend of classroom teaching on generic business management and industry interaction to pilot creative solutions emerging from labs and workshops before commercialisation. These two institutions took part in the subsequent phases and their respective experience has enriched the findings.

Findings from semi-structured interviews

The template (Gibb, 2005) provided the starting point for participants’ understanding of learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes. In general, participants in Kenya and Tanzania had a good understanding of what makes an entrepreneur as results in Table II (section 2) illustrate. Specific attributes more characteristic of the difficult environment were cited (Hiemstra *et al.*, 2006) and comments on learning outcomes were goal-specific (Ogbo, 2012; Hawaas, 2010). The term “opportunity” marked a distinct divergence between three main groups. For graduates and unemployed youth it was interpreted in terms of the entrepreneur as an “opportunity seeker” (Shane, 2003) while most SMEs used the term to mean “harnessing resources” (Sarasvathy, 2001). HEIs educators perceived “entrepreneur” in the context of

	Concepts	Results	Additional findings
2.1. Phase I: benchmarking	Gibb's template	Template confirmed with additional inputs "innovation", "exploiting opportunity", "taking initiative" and "building relationships"	Additional input from Kenya "creating a business venture", "dealing with uncertainty" and "developing the business"
2.2. Phase II: semi-structured interview	Concept	Measurement	Additional findings linked to context
Understanding EE	What makes an entrepreneur	Gibb's template confirmed	"daring", "proactive", "planner", "learn from doing and assess one's own performance"
Entrepreneurial learning	Learning outcomes		"market share", "diversification", "vertical integration", "employment"
	Social context	Limited support from family and close friends	HEIs must extend the network of support
	Mentoring	Peer support Inclusive learning	Mentoring for educators Informal sector to contribute Gender – women learning from other women
	Building relationships/networking	Graduates/unemployed and start-ups SMEs Large operators and private sector development agencies	Process of influencing others Fundamental to entrepreneurial learning Evolving process of adaption to change
	HEIs	Industry engagement	Apprenticeship opportunities, local role models included in the learning process and content
2.3. Phase III: workshop		Experiential learning	Enhanced with ICT as an enabler, multi-level learning involving many senses
		Technical vocational education	EE should start at secondary education level
		Measurement	At HEL, it is too late to change mind-sets
			Additional findings
	What makes an entrepreneur	Phase I and II confirmed Consensus on "value creator"	"opportunity recognition and exploitation", "hard work", "self-confidence", "social networking", "flexibility and adaptability", and "commitment to lifelong learning"
Entrepreneurship education	Ethical issues		"trust", "integrity", "social impact" and "sustainability"
		Semi-structured interview results confirmed	Importance of leadership Employment expectations not important HEI reputation not important Training for educators
	Vision of entrepreneurship education	Social context perspective	Targeting value creation activities supportive of individual and community capabilities; Use of technology and local languages; Role modelling for social integration

Table II.
Results summary

"necessity-entrepreneurs" where day-to-day survival is perceived as "gambling". Such differences in perceptions among key stakeholders define the challenges in designing a curriculum that addresses national policy objectives.

Entrepreneurial learning – the social context. As shown in Table II, Section 2, narratives from interviewees captured their perceptions of social context and supportive relationships.

There was a shared perception that entrepreneurs operate in adverse environments where family and friends are not necessarily supportive. It underlines the need for a wider network of support structure (Martinez and Aldrich, 2011; Zhang and Hamilton, 2010). One respondent added: “we must strengthen the network of support in education”. Understanding entrepreneurship as a social process underpins the role of individuals involved in that process to form part of the learning process (O’Connorr, 2013).

Further comments include the relevance of mentoring and peer support in entrepreneurial learning (Collinset *et al.*, 2014; Dhilwayo, 2008). As one SME owner put it: “I have mentored 2 PhD graduates and 1 Chartered Accountant in setting up their own business”. Others spoke of their experience as mentees: “Yes, having received mentoring and coaching support, you easily recognise the need from the other side and you are compelled to help”. The role of the social environment extended to include the need to mentor educators (Gibb, 2011). One HEI respondent at a business incubation centre commented: “Yes, include the trainers especially in the understanding of key concepts such as opportunity recognition and the meaning of trust, wealth”.

SMEs operating informally in very tough conditions argued for an inclusive entrepreneurial learning (Boud *et al.*, 2001), as the following comment illustrates: “Most businesses start informally, some are entrepreneurs; give them skills to improve their processes; my mentor is a competitor because we operate in the same industry but together we design our strategy to face the challenges of globalisation. We can teach young people how to fight and survive”. This comment eloquently illustrates an accurate understanding of formality, as the literature suggests (Sutter *et al.*, 2017). The argument about gender further emphasised the relevance of contextualised learning (Löbler, 2006) as a female entrepreneur stated: “women will understand better if using examples of other women in similar context to diversify their business and add value”.

Some divergence in opinion between graduates and unemployed youth and business operators emerged whereby the former perceived networking and relationships building as a process of influencing reserved to successful people and the later as fundamental to entrepreneurial learning. Large operators from the private sector perceived networking as part of an evolving process of adaptation with issues such as sustainable business solutions and maximising potential at the core (Kreiser, 2011).

Extending the social context to the role of educators. The lack of connectivity between the education system and the learning context was discussed. As one SME owner/manager argued “how could you teach entrepreneurship when you cannot name a single entrepreneur in the country”? This indicates the limitations of HEIs in developing a conceptual frame of learning (Gibb, 2011). Some respondents pointed to the lack of apprenticeship opportunities depriving educators, learners and industry from engaging actively in entrepreneurial learning (Neergard *et al.*, 2012).

Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and mentoring by entrepreneurs were encouraged with ICT as an enhancer. One large operator commented on blended learning approaches: “Yes, definitely, learning outcomes are enhanced when learning experience involves more senses (see, hear, touch etc.)”. In Tanzania, there was an indication that more technical and vocational colleges as opposed to universities could best address the needs of entrepreneurial learning through a collaborative system involving experiential learning. A young unemployed graduate commented: “start teaching entrepreneurship in secondary school, because by the time learners reach university, it is too late”.

The workshop activities and main findings

The workshop entailed three stages of activities designed to develop an agreed platform for EE in the two countries. The initial stage aimed to establish participants’ understanding

of an “Entrepreneur” in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes. What did an entrepreneur look like? How would they represent one and how would they recognise one? The second stage of the workshop aimed to establish what success looked like in terms of values. What would an entrepreneur aspire to achieve? The third stage endeavoured to build a vision of EE.

On Day 1, preliminary findings from earlier phases were presented to each country group of delegates to validate or to enhance, by challenging one another, and exploring understandings and meanings until a consensus was reached. Insights from experience were encouraged and the level of engagement was adequate to affirm that the debate and discussions were inclusive and indeed participatory. Thereafter, participants were grouped by stakeholder category across both countries in order to consider and identify elements of their “ideal” EE system.

The results showed a number of indicators to be important across both countries, as shown in Table II, section 3. Entrepreneurs were not perceived to be driven by profit; money was not their primary driver. They did not need to have studied the subject at university, nor did they have to be able to write a business plan or be an expert in financial management. Ethical issues (Neck and Green, 2011) caused some debate but consensually, “value creation” was the main characteristic that sets apart entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs.

The results also included the development of leadership, networking and social skills (Chell, 2013). Business skills scored variably but young and mature entrepreneurs shared the view that employment expectations and the reputation of HEIs should not be important for EE. Inconsistencies among HEIs in understanding key concepts such as opportunity re-emphasised the need to train educators who rather acknowledged their limitations in teaching entrepreneurship (Krueger, 2007). It also re-emphasised the need for a strong conceptual frame underpinning EE.

Day 2 covered the development of EE vision and the necessary partnership and policy enablers to enact it. The commitment to excellence and competitiveness characterised the Kenyan vision (World Bank, 2014a). As one delegate summarised it “value, quality and efficient production processes must be the aim – adding if Israel can grow oranges better than Kenya there is something wrong”. EE must focus on value creation and opportunity identification alongside the important ethical values that businesses need in a market system (Morris *et al.*, 2012). Tanzanian participants envisioned an entrepreneurial society embedding entrepreneurial learning in everyday life with links to rural economies and learning approaches supportive of SMEs and venture creation (Neergard *et al.*, 2012).

In both countries the vision reiterated the relevance of contextual learning; targeting value creation activities supportive of individual and community capabilities, such as food production, horticulture, catering and hospitality; using technology to disseminate learning objects *in situ* and in local languages if needed. Interesting observations also included role models fostering social integration across ethnic groups. Such initiatives could bring EE in line with national policy framework.

Discussion

The study’s main findings as summarised in Table II confirm the social nature of entrepreneurship as underpinned by literature and broaden the concept to encompass social perceptions of an entrepreneur and most importantly of entrepreneurial learning. The findings support the achievement of Objective 1 of the study. First, perceptions of the entrepreneur as a value creator are supported by the shared contention that entrepreneurs can be trained to become experts in what they choose to do (Fretschner and Weber, 2013; Krueger, 2007). What seems to give relevance to learning outcomes is the contextual understanding of such learning outcomes.

Second, the perception of entrepreneurial learning embraces a holistic approach to learning in settings where the learner can make sense of what is going on (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2002; Lackeus and Williams Middleton, 2015, 2011b; Krueger, 2007). Equally, the perceived lack of connectivity between HEIs and industry indicates the need to extend the learning environment (Martinez and Aldrich, 2011). The study context supports the multi-functional aspect of entrepreneurship with multiple stakeholders influencing the learning process, and acknowledges the contextual relevance of peer learning within the informal sector.

Third, stakeholders' perceptions of flexible learning approaches can develop both cognitive and conative learning processes (Kolb, 1984). Mentoring and coaching through supportive networks underpinning ethical values acknowledge the argument that entrepreneurial success requires learning approaches where skills development is multi-layered (Nabi *et al.*, 2016; Polanyi, 1966; Boyatzis *et al.*, 2002). The use of learning objects, possibly in local language, could address the development of competencies oriented towards local needs (Michelmores and Rowley, 2010). This pedagogical approach can best deliver a vision of EE consistent with national policies and individual learners' aspirations (O'Connor, 2013). As illustrated in the conceptual model (Figure 1), the curriculum could draw on contextual realities while respecting international standards of measuring learning outcomes.

Finally, the perceived competency gaps amongst entrepreneurs reinforce the need for lifelong learning and targeted EE. This need is more acute in the informal sector where appropriate policies could enable entrepreneurship to flourish at national level. For entrepreneurs operating informally, such self-knowledge provides a valuable starting point of relational understanding and indicates a potential for effective entrepreneurial learning (Polanyi, 1966). The findings support the conceptual model of entrepreneurial learning illustrated in Figure 1, developed in support of Objective 2 of the study.

Conclusions

This study set out to examine, first, how EE is perceived broadly and in relation to contexts such as Kenya and Tanzania. It revealed that although the case for EE is a dominant topic among practitioners and policy-makers, an understanding of what makes an entrepreneur entail a contextual dimension that learners and stakeholders can relate to. Second, a conceptual model presented in Figure 1 underpins the multi-layered nature of entrepreneurial learning and illustrates the need for new pedagogical approaches to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set (Gibb, 2002, 2011). Equally, stakeholders' engagement with the learning context enhances learning outcomes. It is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for HEIs therefore, to overcome the current limitations of behavioural pedagogic approaches and evolve processes that genuinely unleash entrepreneurial outcomes through appropriate provision of entrepreneurial learning from which entrepreneurs can benefit most (Gibb, 2002; Löbler, 2006). Third, and linking to Objective 3 of the study, the main findings support a model of EE where policies and curricula are aligned and learning can occur alongside the development of shared understandings of social structures and outcomes (O'Connor, 2013). This model could be tested and refined in other countries with similar characteristics of high unemployment and a predominant informal sector.

HEIs in Kenya and Tanzania may overcome barriers to a constructivist pedagogy through active engagement with various stakeholders. While aiming to achieve similar outcomes as confirmed in Objective 1, the distinctive features in each country as identified in role models, learning objects and the use of local languages, for example, will enhance EE as a social process. There is a sense of urgency for inclusive learning approaches, whereby learners can make sense of the world around them and develop capabilities to respond to challenges individually and as a community (DeJaeghere and Baxter, 2014). The very

essence of entrepreneurship and its link to growth and employment is questionable in such contexts of high unemployment (O'Connor, 2013). The informal sector which, to a great extent, represents the bedrock of entrepreneurship in less developed countries can contribute to EE (Webb *et al.*, 2013).

While educators' training has received considerable interest, the gaps between educators and stakeholders, particularly SMEs persist. At institutional level, proactive external engagement can help develop a contextually relevant syllabus, working with industry and communities more closely to provide mentoring, coaching and experiential learning opportunities that bring reality to EE. At national levels, a curriculum review could harmonise pedagogical approaches and syllabus content targeted at EE for job creation in growth industries as well as start-ups. Experiential and action learning may start at different points in the learning process to meet specific learning gaps. This change process may contribute significantly to the transformation that is required to educational approaches in designing a contextually driven curriculum that meet international standards.

The study presents some limitations in examining personal motivation and the entrepreneurial orientation of learners. While acknowledging the tentative nature of the study conclusions, this study highlights the potential to move forward the agenda in EE and opens a new debate on pedagogical approaches appropriate for entrepreneurial learning and effective policies applicable to the public and private sector. Further research could shed more light on entrepreneurial learning for capabilities among SMEs, and the development of entrepreneurial competencies in the informal sector. Further study could contribute to validating the conceptual model using large survey data. Nonetheless, this study has contributed to the understanding of the nature and purpose of EE where stakeholders' participation can enhance the learning process and its outcomes.

Note

1. By constitution, Tanzania is still a socialist country.

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Further reading

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