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The entrepreneurial intentions of university of Botswana students

Abstract

Knowledge of the entrepreneurial intentions of young people is an important precursor to understanding how to encourage entrepreneurship in any society. This is especially the case in the human-resource rich African continent. In Botswana, the goal of boosting entrepreneurship among the youth has remained largely elusive. Clearly, this is a major problem; the continued existence of which may be linked to a tenuous understanding of some of the factors linked to entrepreneurial intention.

The study follows the tenets of applied research as it is geared towards resolving a practical societal issue. Empirical in nature, this study relied on primary data collected in a cross-sectional manner from a sample of students at the University of Botswana.

Despite the patriarchal nature of the African society, findings revealed no gender-based differences in entrepreneurial intentions of the students. Interestingly too, the study found no association between entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial abilities. The study however found a significant positive association between the value placed on entrepreneurship by society and the entrepreneurial intention of students. These findings could have important ramifications for entrepreneurial policy formulation and pro-entrepreneurship initiatives, if the goal of catalyzing the growth of entrepreneurship among youths in Botswana is to be realized.

Keywords: entrepreneurial intention, students, entrepreneurship, university, business.

JEL Classification: M1.

Introduction

Few empirical studies have examined the entrepreneurial propensity of university students as a source of future entrepreneurs (Wang & Wong, 2004, p. 163). Perhaps the situation is even more so in Africa. This has resulted in minimal efforts, for instance, in developing specific curriculum to prepare those who harbor intentions of becoming entrepreneurs after their tertiary education. The current complexion of the global socio-economic landscape suggests that national economic success particularly in Africa tends to be dictated by the extent of entrepreneurial activity in countries. In the quest for increased entrepreneurial activity, it would seem that additional verve to a country's entrepreneurship tide can be achieved by paying attention to entrepreneurial intentions and activities of students in tertiary institutions.

There is little doubt that self-employment for one, is becoming increasingly important in contemporary career choices (Gelderen, Brand, Van Pragg, Bodewes, Poutsma & van Gils, 2008, p. 540). This signals the existence of entrepreneurial intentions. Further, Kruger Jnr, Reilly and Carsrud (2000, p. 412) suggested that teachers, consultants and advisers who train budding entrepreneurs could benefit from understanding such students' motives for studying. In essence, understanding students' motives or future intentions could provide a basis upon which

universities can rely to hone and provide programs that ultimately contribute to society through entrepreneurship.

The study of entrepreneurial intentions is closely associated with the intention to be self-employed. According to Wickham (2006, p. 161) self-employment is a veritable indicator of entrepreneurship even though it is not necessarily the same as entrepreneurship. On the basis of this position, entrepreneurial intentions can arguably be considered as precursors to both self-employment and other forms of entrepreneurial venturing.

Part of the motivation for this study is derived from the work of Levesque, Shepherd and Douglas (2002, pp. 189-190) who acknowledged the importance and contributions of the self-employed, to modern society. Similarly, Blanchflower (2000, p. 472) proposed that many governments identified self-employment as a route out of poverty for its citizens because it boosts innovation, competition, increased self-reliance and job creation. Roodt's (2005, p. 18) opinion is that self-employment is one of the drivers of economic growth in transitional economies. All these underline the usefulness of entrepreneurial activities that are themselves driven by entrepreneurial intentions. As such, the impetus for this study is substantial.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 369) the single best predictor of the performance of an act by a person is a measure of his intention to perform that behavior. On these grounds that suggest that intentions precede and can predict behavior, investigating the entrepreneurial intentions of

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students can provide insights and a platform for the emergence of entrepreneurs and the growth of entrepreneurship in any community or population.

In an effort to support and grow an entrepreneurial environment, the government of Botswana formulated the SMME Policy of 1999. This policy resulted in the birth of several organizations such as the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) that work towards the development of an integrated SMME support environment in Botswana. However despite the policy-level interest and support, research on entrepreneurship in Botswana remains lacking especially as it concerns entrepreneurial intentions.

The situation persists despite the fact that discovering the prevalence of entrepreneurial intentions can have numerous benefits for researchers, policy makers, educators and indeed all stakeholders. Knowledge of a particular population's entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes would enable the development of more effective intervention strategies aimed at developing entrepreneurship. The over-arching objective of the study is to explore some of the factors that relate to entrepreneurial intentions and so the literature to be reviewed will focus on these factors. A deductive approach will then be followed to hypothesize their relationships with entrepreneurial intentions.

1. Significance of the study

Undertaking a study on the entrepreneurial intentions of students in the nation's apex institution of learning, the University of Botswana, is an important step towards contributing to the knowledge, policy-makers and program developers need to design intervention programs that would support the growth of entrepreneurship.

After all, the understanding of entrepreneurial intentions fosters the opportunity identification process and could help predict entrepreneurship growth (Krueger Jnr et al., 2000). In the light of this position, Botswana would perhaps be in a better position to fertilize the emergence of more youth entrepreneurs, from the university ranks for instance, if there is a profound appreciation of the entrepreneurial intentions of students at these institutions.

Given that the cohort of people targeted in this study – students at the university – are often touted as the 'leaders of tomorrow', the study is clearly significant. This significance is also linked to the potential of the study to reveal the relationship of certain factors to entrepreneurial intentions that

could contribute to the creation or fine-tuning of mechanisms which would foster increased interest in entrepreneurship amongst students and possible higher levels of entrepreneurial activity in the Botswana state.

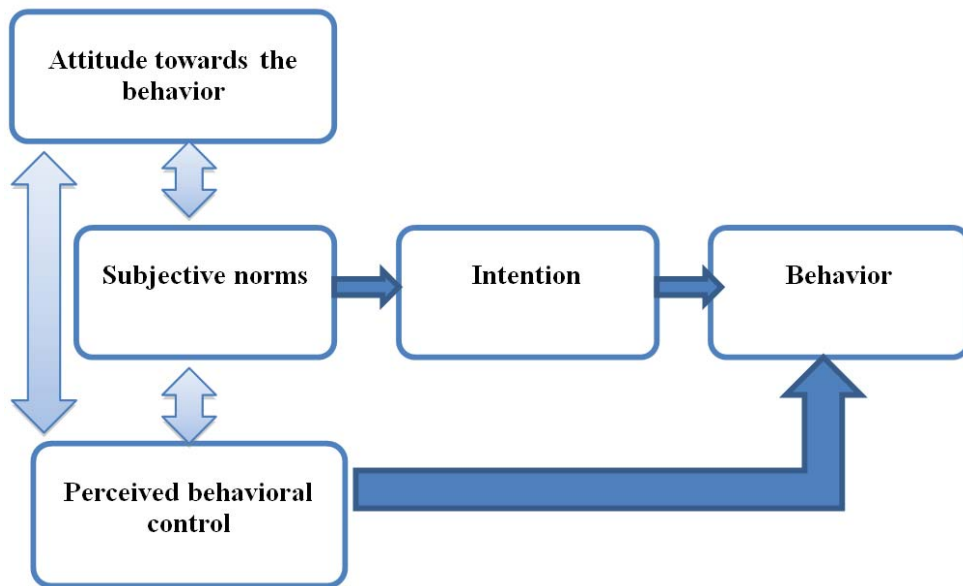
2. Literature review

Much of what is called entrepreneurial activity is intentionally planned behavior (Krueger Jnr et al., 2000, p. 413). Logically therefore, it is easy to see that intention precedes all entrepreneurial action. This is what makes the study of entrepreneurial intentions useful in the domain of entrepreneurship development. To engender understanding of the thrust of the study and create the platform for the formulation of hypotheses, the field of existing literature relevant to the study would be reviewed using the study's main constructs of interest as a framework.

2.1. Entrepreneurial intention. Intention is a state of mind directing a person's attention towards a specific action (Bird, 1988, p. 442). More specifically, Thomson (2009, p. 676) defines entrepreneurial intention as a self-acknowledged conviction that a person will set up a business venture sometime in the future. The definition points to an independent assessment of one's belief that they will establish a business venture. Krueger Jr. (2007, p. 124) suggested that behind entrepreneurial actions lie entrepreneurial intentions and behind entrepreneurial intentions lie entrepreneurial attitudes or dispositions.

This view suggests that entrepreneurial intentions are consistent with certain attitudes. Whilst there are a growing number of models explaining entrepreneurial intentions, Ajzen's Model of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991, pp. 183-188) and Shapero-Krueger Entrepreneurial Event Model (Krueger et al., 2000, pp. 418-419) are quite popular.

In the context of entrepreneurship, Ajzen's model suggests that three constructs namely attitude towards the behavior, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms interplay and contribute towards the development of entrepreneurial intentions, which ultimately could result in entrepreneurial behavior (Fig. 1). Perceived behavioral control is the perception of control over resources and opportunities. Attitude towards the behavior is the extent to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable view of the behavior and subjective norms include the perceived social pressures to behave in an expected manner. In the current study, this element is reflected as the value that society places on entrepreneurship.

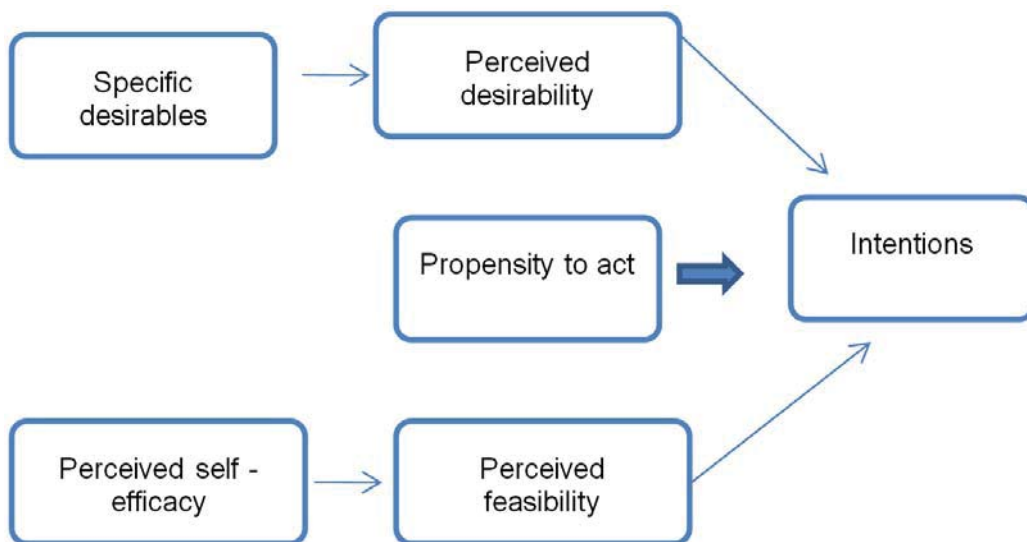


Source: Ajzen (1991, p. 182).

Fig. 1. Ajzen's Model of Planned Behavior

The Shapero-Krueger Entrepreneurial Event Model (Krueger et al., 2000, pp. 418-419) is depicted in Figure 2. The Shapero-Krueger model has five constructs and argues that intentions and resultant behavior depend on perceived desirability, propensity to act and perceived feasibility which itself is affected by perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy as explained by

Bandura (1986, p. 391) is a person's judgment to execute actions to attain a designated type of performance. In the context of the current study, this is akin to entrepreneurial ability. Shapero's belief (in Krueger et al., 2000, p. 418) is that inertia guides human behavior until something interrupts that inertia and this thought informed the inclusion of the construct 'propensity to act'.



Source: Krueger Jnr et al. (2000, p. 418).

Fig. 2. Shapero-Krueger Entrepreneurial Event Model

Krueger Jnr et al. (2000, pp. 423-425) tested both Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior and Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model and discovered that both had strong statistical support for predicting entrepreneurial behavior even though their component constructs and the levels of complexity are different. Due to the fact that the difference in the constructs of both models does not negatively

affect their predictive potentials, this study on university of Botswana students elected to focus on chosen constructs of entrepreneurial intention, perceived entrepreneurial abilities, gender and value placed on entrepreneurship by society.

This research proposes a model of entrepreneurial intentions as shown (Figure 3).

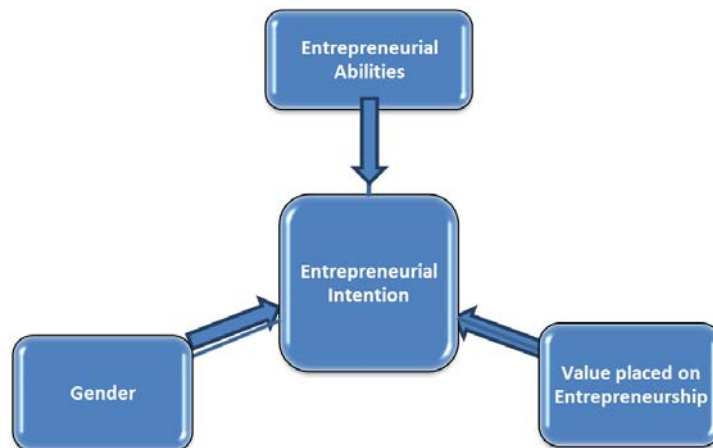


Fig. 3. Research model

2.2. Entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

A cross country research conducted by Lee, Lim and Pathak (2006, p. 351) indicates that entrepreneurial intentions of students in the US, Korea, China and Fiji were at varying levels. Veciana, Aponte and Urbano (2005, p. 172) studying the construct in Puerto Rico and Catalonia found that 92.2% and 74% of the students respectively had entrepreneurial intentions despite the students in Catalonia being in a more advanced stage of their studies. This suggests that entrepreneurial intention is not necessarily positively associated with number of years of study at the university. Nevertheless, this high prevalence of entrepreneurial intentions amongst the students should instigate a refocusing of the curriculum to support students' career orientations that lean towards entrepreneurship.

Luthje and Franke's (2003, p. 141) study on university students at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) revealed that only 3.4% of engineering students were currently self-employed during their studies and 54.6% of the students had intentions to be self-employed after graduation. In comparison to the students in Puerto Rico and Catalonia, this reflects a lower level of entrepreneurial intentions in the population. In another study of Andalusian students conducted by Linan, Rodriguez-Cohard and Rueda-Cantuche (2001, pp. 156-157), it was found that there was a low prevalence of entrepreneurial intentions among the students. Fatoki (2010) also found that entrepreneurial intentions of final year students in a South Africa University were weak.

The reasons for the different levels of entrepreneurial intentions in different settings are not exactly clear. The results however unequivocally demonstrate that entrepreneurial intentions are subject to environmental nuances which may be of a social, political or cultural nature amongst others. Given the kaleidoscope of findings, the university environment appears well-suited for studies of

entrepreneurial intentions and so this influenced the choice of students at the University of Botswana. As seen in the different research findings from different countries, results are unique and specific and therefore findings in a specific country cannot be used as a premise for estimating the state of entrepreneurial intentions in other countries.

2.3. Entrepreneurial abilities.

Entrepreneurial intentions can be understood by focusing on an individual's entrepreneurial capital, which describes the summation of an individual's attitude and entrepreneurial abilities (Douglas, 2005, p. 2). Bandura (in Wilson, Kickul & Marlino, 2007, p. 389) defines self-efficacy as an individual's perception of his/her abilities within a certain domain and whether or not it will result in a certain desired outcome. On a different note, Krueger et al. (2000, pp. 413-414) posit that personality traits or demographics are poor predictors of entrepreneurship action because they have poor validity and predictive power. They however concede that intention models offer veritable basis for understanding and predicting entrepreneurial behavior in a population.

A study of students in China, Thailand, India and Australia indicated that entrepreneurial abilities affected entrepreneurial intentions (Steffens, Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2006, pp. 9-11). This position is corroborated by Shook and Bratianu (2008, p. 1) whose study on Romanian students revealed positive relationships between entrepreneurial abilities and entrepreneurial intentions. The position of the study in the light of its findings is that those who adjudge themselves as having entrepreneurial abilities tend to nurse entrepreneurial intentions more than those who do not think that they possess entrepreneurial abilities. This may well be because entrepreneurs have certain cognitive abilities that facilitate the recognition of opportunities and the gathering of resources for the setting up of a business (Alvarez

& Busenitzb, 2001, p. 755) which might then encourage them to venture into business. The strength of the logic in this position influences the study to propose that in the case of students at the University of Botswana:

There is a difference in the entrepreneurial intentions of students with entrepreneurial abilities and those without entrepreneurial abilities.

2.4. Gender. According to Linan et al (2005, p. 13), men tend to have higher entrepreneurial intentions than women and so, often consider themselves more capable than women to initiate entrepreneurial activity. Similarly Kourilsky and Walstad (1998, p. 87) discovered that females were less confident in their entrepreneurial abilities and so were less interested in starting a business. In tandem with these results, Wilson, Kickul, Malino, Barbosa and Griffiths (2009, p. 112) found that male students displayed higher entrepreneurial intentions than female students. These findings are in harmony with those studies conducted by Wang and Wong (2004, p. 170) as well as Singh & DeNoble (2003, p. 272).

In contrast though, Davis (2009, p. 25) found that females rather than males were more likely to embark upon entrepreneurial activities. The core reasons, according to him, were the vast wage gap between male and females and the fact that females were more likely to be laid off.

Regardless of which gender these studies seem to point to as having more prevalent entrepreneurial intentions, prior studies suggest that there exist gender-based differences in levels of entrepreneurial intention in a population. It can therefore be argued that gender may be a veritable differentiator of levels of entrepreneurial intentions among students. Consequently the study of entrepreneurial intention of any population would benefit from a gender-based focus. In the light of this, this study hypothesizes that:

There is a difference between the entrepreneurial intentions of male and female students.

2.5. Value placed on entrepreneurship by society. Different societies place different levels of premium on entrepreneurship. This is dictated by the value that the society attaches to entrepreneurship. Begley and Tan (2001) demonstrated differences in the levels of interest in entrepreneurship between East-Asian and Anglo-Saxon countries and they attribute these to the differences in the socio-cultural environment in the countries.

Along similar lines Schlaegel, He and Engle (2013, p. 597) allude to the fact that some studies have provided support for the premise that national

culture affects different entrepreneurial activities, even though they contend that the impact of environmental country influences have not been ascertained on entrepreneurial intentions. For the purpose of this study, one of the many possible environmental factors that could affect entrepreneurial intention was identified. This factor is the value placed on entrepreneurship by society. In the light of a dearth of research investigating this factor, the current study could draw no inferences and therefore relied upon a logical assumption to propose that:

There is a relationship between students' entrepreneurial intention and value placed on entrepreneurship by society.

3. Methodology

The study sought to establish the existence of entrepreneurial intentions among students and examine hypothesized relationships between entrepreneurial intentions and the factors of entrepreneurial abilities, value attached to entrepreneurship by society as well as gender. To do this, the study adopted a survey approach in which the data were gathered in a cross-sectional manner. The study was a primary research and it was one of an applied nature since it is problem-oriented and directed towards solving particular intellectual puzzles with practical implications.

The study population was made up of undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Botswana. The registered students' database of the University provided a good sampling frame from which students across different degrees were drawn as respondents. Given the use of a sample in the study, the inherent risk associated with generalization of results (Zikmund, 2000) is acknowledged.

A previously developed and validated entrepreneurial intentions questionnaire by Liñán (2005) was utilized as the instrument of data collection and 79 of the returned questionnaires were considered as satisfactory and therefore analyzed in the study. Reliability analysis was done using the Alpha Cronbach method to test the instrument for internal consistency. The test returned a result of 0.915, which was acceptable.

Table 1. Reliability analysis

| Reliability statistics | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's alpha | N of items |
| 0.915 | 79 |

As part of the analysis of data, correlation analysis that seeks to estimate the strength of association between the dependent variable of entrepreneurial intention and the independent variables of entrepreneurial abilities, value placed on entrepreneurship by society and gender was also undertaken.

3.1. Findings. The distribution of the respondents according to gender is shown in Table 2. There were 31 male students and 41 female students. This accounts for 43% and 57% of the valid respondent population, respectively. The acknowledgement of gender as a variable enables some analysis on goodness of fit between the sample and the

population. It was important to establish whether or not the sample make-up with regards to gender was significantly different from the population. The proportion did not differ much and so the risk that research results would be influenced by the different gender-proportions in the sample was mitigated.

Table 2. Gender distribution

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Male | 31 | 39.2 | 43.1 |
| Female | 41 | 51.9 | 56.9 |
| Valid | 72 | 91.1 | 100 |
| Missing | 7 | 8.9 | |
| Total | 79 | 100 | |

4. Entrepreneurial intentions

70.9% of the students surveyed indicated that they nursed entrepreneurial intentions and 22.8% indicated that they did not have any plans to become entrepreneurs in the future (see Fig. 4). Further examination of the data associated with

entrepreneurial intentions revealed that the distribution of responses does not conform to a normal distribution. The distribution of responses obtained from the sample is skewed towards the existence of entrepreneurial intentions with a score of $-.692$ and an accompanying kurtosis of 0.218 (see Table 3).

Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI)

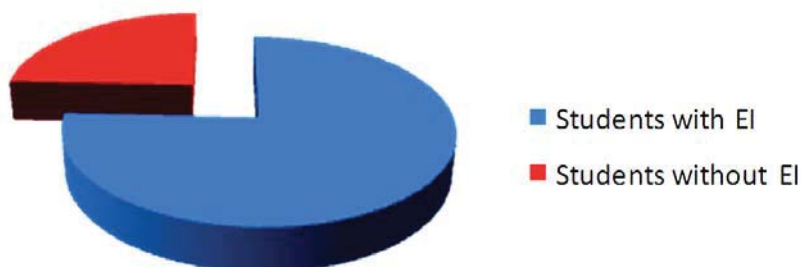


Fig. 4. Student’s entrepreneurial intentions

The results in the sample population of University of Botswana students demonstrate that 7 out of 10 students have entrepreneurial intentions. This is unarguably a substantial ratio and if most of these

intentions translate into entrepreneurial action then the Botswana economy is likely to be the better for it as increased entrepreneurial activity lends itself to productivity and economic development.

Table 3. Analysis of entrepreneurial intentions responses

| | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. dev. | Variance | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic |
| REGR factor score for analysis | 77 | -2.75755 | 1.67385 | .0178799 | 1.00418749 | 1.008 | -.692 | .218 |
| Valid N | 77 | | | | | | .274 | .541 |

5. Test of hypotheses

The study formulated three hypotheses which were tested. The hypotheses linked the dependent variable of entrepreneurial intentions to the independent variables of entrepreneurial abilities, value placed on entrepreneurship by society and gender. In this section, the hypotheses are stated in the null form in which they are tested and the results thereof are presented.

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no difference in the entrepreneurial intentions of students with entrepreneurial abilities and those without entrepreneurial abilities.

For the purpose of testing the hypothesis, the independent samples median test was utilized. The outcome of the analysis as presented in Table 4 showed a test result of 0.261. At the 95% confidence

level on a 2-sided tail test, since $p = 0.878 > 0.05$ the null hypothesis could not be rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the entrepreneurial intentions of those with entrepreneurial abilities as compared to those without entrepreneurial abilities.

Table 4. Independent samples median test results for hypothesis 1

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Total N | 77 |
| Median | .155 |
| Test Statistic | .261 |
| Degree of Freedom | 2 |
| Asymptotic Sig. (2 sided test) | .878 |

Hypothesis 2

The study was interested in determining if there were gender-induced differences related to the dependent variable of entrepreneurial intention. To this end, the null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₂: There is no difference between the entrepreneurial intentions of male and female students.

The suggested difference across male and female students as it concerns entrepreneurial intentions was tested using the Independent Samples Kruskal – Wallis test. The test whose outcomes are presented in Table 5 showed a test result of 0.059 at an asymptotic significance of 0.971, which is greater

than the 0.05 level of significance required. At the 95% confidence level on a 2-sided tail test, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. On this premise, the study therefore argues that entrepreneurial intentions are not influenced to any significant extent, by gender.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis test result for hypothesis 2

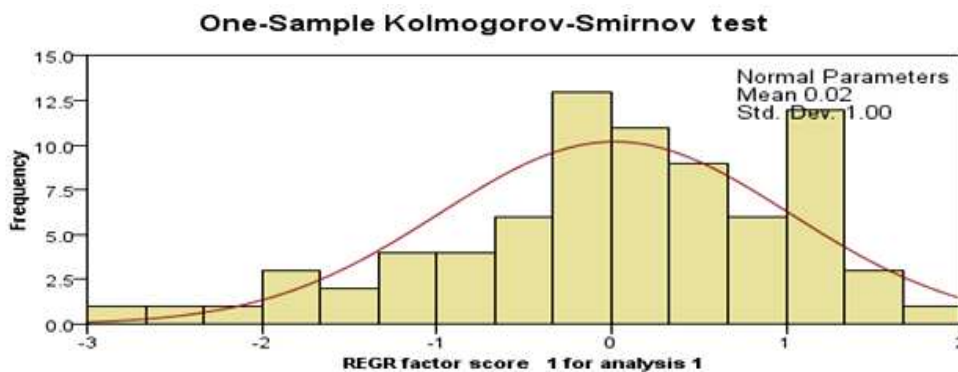
| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Total N | 77 |
| Test statistic | .059 |
| Degree of freedom | 2 |
| Asymptotic sig. (2 sided test) | .971 |

Hypothesis 3

The study sought to examine the association between the value that society places on entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial intentions of students. In this regard, the null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₃: There is no relationship between students' entrepreneurial intention and value placed on entrepreneurship by society.

The study attempted to ascertain normality using the one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test (Fig. 5) on the dependent and independent variables in the hypothesis following a factor analysis that confirmed them as distinct factors. The results showed that entrepreneurial intentions responses displayed a distribution akin to a normal one.



| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Total N | 77 |
| Absolute | .087 |
| Most Extreme Differences | |
| Positive | .059 |
| Negative | -.087 |
| Test Statistic | .768 |
| Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test) | .598 |

Fig. 5. Test of normality for entrepreneurial intentions

The same test conducted on the factor of value placed by society on entrepreneurship (Figure 6)

also showed that responses obtained trace a distribution that is similar to a normal one.

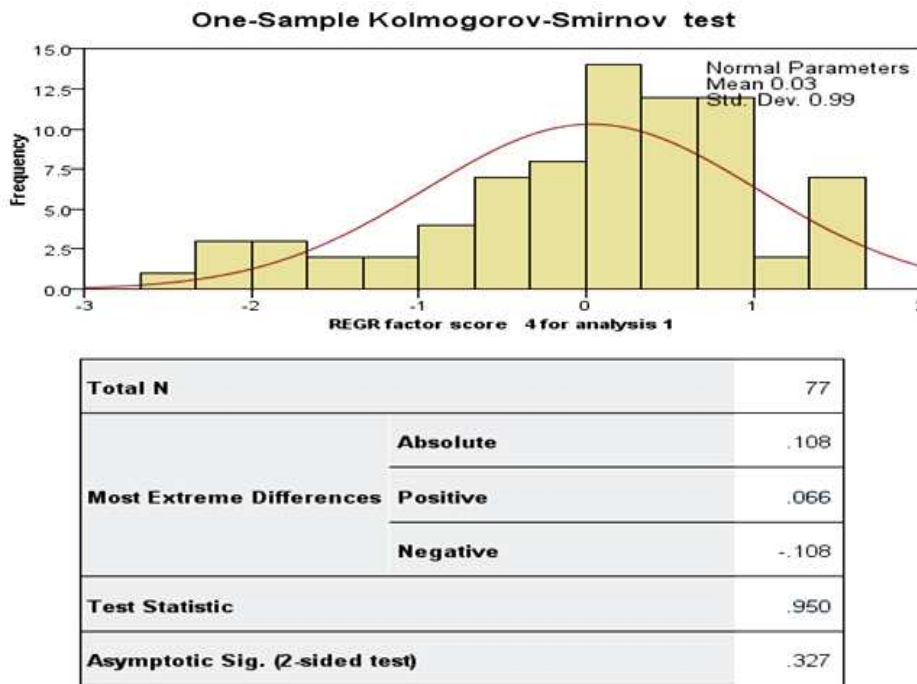


Fig. 6. Test for normality for value society places on entrepreneurship

Subsequent to the establishment of normality, it became acceptable that both parametric or non-parametric correlation tests could be used to test hypothesis 3. The Pearson correlation test results presented in Table 6 shows that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and the value that society places on entrepreneurship.

Table 6. Pearson correlation result for hypothesis 3

| | Mean | Std. deviation | N |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| REGR factor score | .0178799 | 1.00418749 | 77 |
| REGR factor score | .0306908 | .99302072 | 77 |
| | | REGR factor score | REGR factor score |
| REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1 | Pearson correlation | 1 | .389** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 77 | 77 |
| REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1 | Pearson correlation | .389** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 77 | 77 |

The Pearson correlation score is 0.389 at an asymptotic significance of 0.01 which is below the pre-set 0.05 level of significance. On this premise, the null hypothesis is rejected. The study therefore argues that entrepreneurial intention is positively though tenuously correlated with the value that society places on entrepreneurship.

Discussion and conclusion

In this study, it was found that there was no difference between the entrepreneurial intentions of those with entrepreneurial abilities and those without entrepreneurial abilities. Therefore as

suggested by Krueger Jnr et al. (2000, pp. 428-429) it is instructive to encourage entrepreneurial intentions by broadly promoting its desirability and feasibility instead of specifically focusing on students with entrepreneurial abilities. Furthermore, it can be deduced from the results of this study that entrepreneurial intention though a precursor of actual behavior does not necessarily need to be inspired by the presence of abilities needed to realize that intention. The implication of which is that the existence of entrepreneurial intentions could provide a fertile ground for the development of the abilities necessary to realize the intent.

This underlines the importance of desire, of motivation, of will and indeed need for achievement in the equation of emergence of young entrepreneurs in an economy like Botswana's. Policy-makers, organs of state and organizations interested in the development of entrepreneurship among the youth in Botswana should first invest in the growth of entrepreneurial intention through activities aimed at making entrepreneurship more attractive to students. This is likely to increase the desire and intent among students that could consequently drive the development of the necessary abilities or skills, which in turn would culminate in entrepreneurial action.

Contrary to the findings in some studies that suggested gender-induced differences in the entrepreneurial intentions of a chosen population, this study, despite the prevalent patriarchal culture in Africa, revealed that gender was largely unrelated to entrepreneurial intention. On this score,

interventions to encourage the entrepreneurial actions by students do not need to be over-colored by specific gender considerations. This is an important finding as it exposes the fact that female students, very much like their male counterparts nurse entrepreneurial intentions and must be considered capable of entrepreneurial venturing. The finding punctures the prevalent myth in Africa that most females see housewife roles or stable employment for themselves in the future rather than taking on the uncertainties associated with entrepreneurial endeavors. In the light of this finding, it behoves those who are interested in developing entrepreneurship among students in Botswana to ensure that they focus on females just as much as they focus on males.

In this study, it was found that entrepreneurial intention was positively correlated with the value that society places on entrepreneurship even though the strength of association was weak. This suggests that entrepreneurial intention would be high in societies that place substantial premium on entrepreneurial endeavors. Country-level support targeting the development of a culture that appreciates entrepreneurship and amplifies the important role that they play in the economy of Botswana should be considered. The issue of youth unemployment with its collateral negative effects on society can be combined with the job creation role played by emerging entrepreneurs to demonstrate to society the importance of entrepreneurship. If this is achieved, there will be more premium placed on entrepreneurship because of the awareness of the critical role it plays in socioeconomic development and this will provide more impetus for students to progress into entrepreneurial venturing.

This view is supported by Coduras, Urbano, Rojas and Martinez (2008, p. 401) who argue that a university's support of entrepreneurship increases the levels of entrepreneurship amongst its students. A collateral argument would be that if the support for entrepreneurship increases, the value placed on entrepreneurship would also likely increase and this would result in higher levels of entrepreneurial intentions that could translate into entrepreneurial action.

Benedict et al. (2008, pp. 281-284) discovered that government programs targeted at nurturing entrepreneurship had incorrectly focused attention on the unemployed and had failed to prepare

students or people with entrepreneurial intentions for venture creation. This may be attributed to a poor understanding of the situation. Indeed, a lot of the entrepreneurship development initiatives in Botswana are founded on the erroneous belief that entrepreneurship is a resort for the unemployed. An understanding of student's intentions and attitudes towards entrepreneurship are certainly important and should be considered by those that steer the entrepreneurship-enabling environment in Botswana.

Although the Botswana government claims to invest in the development of entrepreneurship, this is being done without due recourse to the entrepreneurial intentions of the different segments of the population (such as university students) as these are still largely unknown. It may well be that this is part of the reason why some of these well-meaning interventions have not proven to be as efficacious as they should be. To be sure, knowledge of existing entrepreneurial intentions and an understanding of the factors that drive entrepreneurial venturing will aid the development of better entrepreneurship training programs by informing how they will be structured and what content should be delivered (Sriram, Mersha & Herron, 2007, pp. 235-251).

Future studies

This study investigated the issue of entrepreneurial intentions amongst undergraduate students at the University of Botswana. Whilst the study tested hypothesized relationships, the results obtained encourage further study into the nature of entrepreneurial intentions country-wide. The use of a student body as a proxy to ascertain entrepreneurial intentions in the society has been used in other researches worldwide and can also be used in Botswana.

Measuring intention may provide a useful predictor to actual behavior but actual conversion rates from intention to actual behaviors remain unknown. For instance, Olson & Bossermann (2004, p. 55) found that most people with the potential to become entrepreneurs do not necessarily transit into action. Following this lead, it might be interesting to explore the strength of the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial venturing in Botswana. Since the value of studying intentions is based on the prediction of future actions, studies of intentions like the current one would benefit more from a longitudinal as opposed to a cross-sectional approach.

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