



IAE Journal of Research and Development (IJORED)

Vol. 1, Issue 1 August 2025, pp. 163-182,

eISSN: 3088-5515, pISSN: 3088-5523,

Published by IAE.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61408/ijored2025v01i01.09>

Entrepreneurship Inevitable Best Practice among Graduates from Higher Learning Institutions in the Tanzanian Context: Empirical Evidence at the Institute of Adult Education

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Abstract

This study intends to assess the essence of entrepreneurial skills as a quick choice, ready-made opportunity, intervention approach and promising alternative pathway towards decent and prosperous life to optimistic graduates from the Institute of Adult Education (IAE). The study adopts mixed methods research approach employing the explanatory and descriptive methods. Research design under this study was both explanatory and descriptive in nature. The population of the study deploys simple random and purposive sampling techniques to engage a total number of 125 participants. Questionnaire and interview methods are used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the most credible, reliable and guaranteed sources. The study applies Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS) technique to analyse quantitative data whilst thematic analysis technique is used to descriptively analyse qualitative data. Research findings indicate that LAE graduates' propensity to embrace entrepreneurship is the only subsequent "best practice" of the day immediately upon completion of their studies. Entrepreneurship is so far proved concretely right to be an option for one's decent life. As revealed from study findings and observations, the LAE graduates and the rest of other local people in the community are encouraged to change their respective mindset towards embarking on entrepreneurial business venture undertakings. In the final

stance, the study comes up with recommendations by suggesting a number of appropriate measures and strategies on how best to combat unemployment challenges facing most IAE graduates after completion of their studies.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, unemployment, graduates' employability, business ventures*

Introduction

As per the National Employment Policy (URT, 2008), unemployment challenge has significantly been among the most burning issues in the country. It poses hurdles to most graduates from higher learning institutions in the country to enjoy successful fruits of their long struggle after school life. Laments, complaints and outcries from most graduates have become the order of the day. Unemployment has adversely continued to aggravate the situation hence causing most graduates to starve from time to time (Hamid, et al, 2008). The untold story of unemployment to most IAE graduates has persistently not been an exception (Hamilton, et al, 2024). This is quite contrary to their earlier expectations that after completing their studies, they could subsequently enjoy quick fruits derived from well-paid white colour jobs in the formal sector (Nangale, 2012). But unfortunately, the reality has become quite contrary (Wahab, 2004; Levine & Zervos, 2023). In the most recent years, there have been different theories and empirical evidence over the essence of entrepreneurship to graduates from higher learning institutions. Individual IAE graduates' propensity to get engaged in entrepreneurship ventures and enjoy full time entrepreneurship (self-employment) opportunities had to replace graduates' attitude towards paid jobs in the formal employment (Wennberg, et al, 2020; Kabir, Haque & Sarwar, 2021). According to the executive report issued by the Central bank of Tanzania (BoT) in 2012, it was indicated that, the traditional career paths as well as career development of a stable job with steady hours, regular pay and genuine pension as terminal benefits (that is, "*a job for life and life after job*") are no longer an option for many people (graduates inclusive)

nowadays. Chances to secure such jobs or win paid positions are still too minimal to them to access (Wincent, et al, 2021). Even if, someone can manage to secure a well-paid job somewhere else, still the motive behind getting involved in matters related to entrepreneurship is also entirely indispensable and evident, as well. Instead, there had to be advocacy for a deliberate paradigm shift from paid jobs in the formal sector to self-reliant employment opportunities available in the private sector. Hence, most of graduates have been encouraged to engage themselves in various (either full or quasi) entrepreneurship activities. They could establish business ventures, firms and enterprises of any size instead of waiting to be employed elsewhere in the formal sector. As asserted from Semboja's research (2020), it is also reported that, at least over 50 per cent of emerging entrepreneurs in the process of starting a new venture, are simultaneously engaging in wage-employment (Roxas, 2021). Statistics on quasi entrepreneurship, notwithstanding, is not widely available in many countries (Thurik, et al, 2020). However, it is comparatively estimated that, people who are working while engaging in entrepreneurial ventures is 16% in German, 23% in France and 35% in the Netherlands, respectively (Shane, 2003). This indicates the fact that, the number of people who often indulge in business while working stands at 91% in the most of middle-income earning countries, 81% in high-income earning and 77% in low-income earning nations (Solesvik, 2020 & Elina, et al, 2000). The latter, typically represents a large number of quasi entrepreneurship in the individual country's economy (Lawrence, 2022). Distinct categories of entrepreneurship have been exceedingly studied in Tanzanian context (Anatory, 2022). The overall objective of this study was to assess the essence of entrepreneurship among graduates from higher learning institutions towards pursuing decent life. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the IAE graduates' propensity in embracing entrepreneurship as the "best practice" after schooling; explore the magnitude of unemployment challenge among the IAE graduates and lastly propose appropriate measures and strategies on how best the IAE graduates can utilize fully existing entrepreneurship opportunities to be able to address

unemployment challenge facing them upon completion of their respective studies (Santarelli & Vivarelli, 2023).

Literature Review

Under this caption, a review of various literatures related to the problem under study has been thoroughly done in line with presenting theoretical guide underpinnings, empirical evidence as well as any noticeable research knowledge gaps revealed out of previous studies on the same subject matter.

Theoretical Framework

To the majority of the elites, studying at a higher learning institution is a motivation and motive behind seeking a well-paid job upon completion of studies (Hamilton & Harper, 2024). To most of them, subsequent engagement in entrepreneurial activities is something strange because they have not been well prepared for that direction before (Shane, 2023). They take it for granted that, entrepreneurship is a new concept towards their fulfilling their respective dreams out of own innovations, creativity and initiatives (Petrover, 2020) and (Petrover, 2021). For many years now, most graduates are unfortunately overtaken by feelings and personal drives of seeking opportunities to secure well paid colour jobs (URT, 2008). They believe in the fact that perhaps through it, they can manage to win social recognition and prestige in their endeavours to maintain status quo in the community (Kabir, Haque & Sarwar, 2021). Due to that state of affairs therefore, their immediate dreams to engage in either quasi entrepreneurship or full-time entrepreneurship undertakings are halted by lack of confidence and experience or expertise, among other factors, inter alia (Patrick, 2020). These Wagner's theoretical underpinnings are principally viewed as a long-term phenomenon, generally anticipated to prevail particularly during the industrialization phase of any revamped national economy through which Tanzania is also currently undergoing (Mohar, et al 2021).

Empirical Literature Review

In the middle-income earning country like Tanzania, industrialization policy and vibrant economic strategies are now given greater impetus towards high socio-economic prosperity (Semboja, 2020). As per capita income of the country increases, virtual significance of the private sector grows, prospers and expands at a faster pace (Parker & Van Praag, 2021). As the private sector expands, entrepreneurship undertakings crop up (Roxas, 2021). BoT observation in the executive report (2012) indicates that, “Tanzania is among the most prominent countries in the world having population with the highest level of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship so far, with three quarters of working-age adults who do consider entrepreneurship as a much better career choice (Raffa, et al, 2020). About 77% out of them believe that entrepreneurs are admired in their societies (Anatory, 2022; Gregorio, et al, 2023; and Lawrence, 2023). A good number of social media platforms, blogs and magazines are covered by topics and posts inspiring graduates from higher learning institutions to engage themselves in entrepreneurial ventures (Raffa & Milovac & Myhre & Piazza, 2020). Nevertheless, some graduates have a tendency of posing a question whether there is anyone among them who can become rich through such business ventures (Petrover, 2011). To them, a critical challenge arising is how best they can secure paid jobs meanwhile engaging in business ventures (Mohar, et al, 2021). Entrepreneurs may engage in different forms of business ventures, but they can choose different modes of entry and various approaches to business management or exit from doing business any longer (Thurik, et al 2020). Positively associated with launching new business ventures, there are different attributing factors namely level of education attained, managerial experience, competence, confidence, wealth, capital requirements, risks associated with new venture start up business or takeover, entrepreneurial individual or family background and living in urban (Kabir, Haque & Sarwar, 2021). In previous studies conducted by Maliva (2019); Shane (2023) and Solesvik (2020), on how and why most

entrepreneurs prefer to combine paid jobs with self-employment through undertaking entrepreneurship, they highly appreciated the role played by new technology. They altogether contended the fact that the invention of modern sophisticated technology has continued to attract people to maintain both paid jobs and entrepreneurship at the same time, because it is quite easy for them to balance time in both cases (Kathleen & Phillis, 2022). As such, the IAE graduates with all such pre-requisite qualities are intrinsically inspired to enter a competitive labour market as new business entrepreneurs to be. Those categories of graduates are consequently capable to develop new strategies to cope up with any possible emerging challenges deep-rooted or intrigued in business operations for so long (Parker & Van, 2021). Quasi entrepreneurs, being quite new and unique to business, happened to have developed special strategies of dealing with their own business without any impinging hurdles (Solesvik (2020).

Knowledge Gap

Throughout the literature review process, it was noted that different theories and ideas were captured, incorporated and realized accordingly from several authors showing the essence for entrepreneurship. However, in this respect, the study was mostly interested to bridge the gap seems to have been left behind. In previous literature endeavours, for instance, the fact on how best entrepreneurship undertakings can adequately help in addressing unemployment challenges was not fully covered (Bonnet, De Lema & Van Auken, 2021). The escalating rate of unemployment among IAE graduates kept on the same pace. Entrepreneurship undertakings among IAE graduates could significantly contribute to the utmost struggle for national socio-economic development initiatives. This is what formed the concrete foundation for undertaking this particular study (Semboja, 2020).

Methodology

Population for this study focused on target graduates from higher learning institutions. Taking the Institute of Adult Education as a case study, the study engaged 105 IAE graduates, 7 business stakeholders, 2 government officials, 4 IAE academic members of staff both tutors and lecturers, and 2 community members. The random sample selection of target respondents especially graduates, business stakeholders and community members, was based on the fact that, these participants were in a good position to provide not only valid data but also most credible and reliable information. Purposive sampling technique was used to gather in-depth information from government officials.

Research Design

In carrying out this study, the type of research design used consisted of descriptive and explanatory approaches to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from target respondents and informants. The research approach of the study was mixed in nature whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected (Creswell, 2005). Quantitative (scale and survey) and qualitative (focus group interview) data collection techniques were used in this study. Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which the researcher administers a survey process to a sample of respondents to gather quantitative data. Focus group interview was applied in order to collect qualitative data describing the attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics of the selected population under study.

Data Collection

Data were collected from 125 different respondents by using questionnaire and interview techniques. Questionnaires were fairly distributed among IAE graduates. Self-administered questionnaires were deployed to collect the required data from 105 target graduates themselves, that is graduates from the Institute of Adult Education

($N=105$). Out of them, all 105 questionnaires were duly filled in, completed and returned hence giving 100% return rate. Structured interview guide and unstructured interview method were applied to gather important data from other key respondents and informants. Study participants in the latter category comprised of the focus group involving the IAE lecturers, government officials, business stakeholders and the rest of other community members around ($N=15$).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data for the study were statistically analysed by using SPSS Version 20.0 Software package whilst the qualitative data were descriptively analysed using thematic analysis technique. Both quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted and analysed into themes and significantly presented in a logical sequence. Given the software package, quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics—frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation in order to be able to answer emerging research questions. From the questionnaires, Likert scales were used. The scale consisted of five items. Each item was scored with a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from “*strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5*”. The validity and reliability coefficient of the survey was found to be 0.88 in this study, indicating the fact that the survey is a guaranteed data collection technique.

Ethical Considerations

In undertaking this particular study, some key ethical considerations as well as moral issues were strictly observed including individual participants’ informed consent, privacy, data accuracy, observing high-level top secrecy and confidentiality, use of decent and polite language to participants, appropriate use of tools/instruments or techniques/methods, sticking to the objectivity, uniqueness, respect to participants’ diversity, logical flow of ideas, intellectual property and non-exclusive copyright criteria, data integrity and academic honesty (by

presenting collected and true or factual data truthfully), refraining from practices of plagiarism and falsification, just to mention a few.

Findings

Examining Graduates' propensity to embrace entrepreneurship as the "best practice" after leaving higher Learning institutions

From the first specific objective of the study, the respondents among graduates from the Institute of Adult Education had varied responses out of questionnaires provided to them. Respondents had to examine graduates' propensity in embracing entrepreneurship as the "best practice" after leaving higher learning institutions. The information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: IAE Graduates' Propensity in Embracing Entrepreneurship as the "Best Practice Entrepreneurs" (N=105)

Participant's Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	88	83.8
Agree	7	6.7
Neutral	1	0.9
Disagree	6	5.7
Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
Total	105	100

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 indicates that 88 respondents approximately equal to 83.8% strongly agreed with the fact that IAE graduates' propensity in embracing entrepreneurship as the "best practice" after schooling is the only option possible in determining their future fate. However, 7 respondents about 6.7% agree on that aspect. But 1 respondent (0.9%) remained undecided with the argument. Also, 6 respondents (5.7%) disagreed with the argument with the hope that perhaps there are still other possible options on the ground. Notwithstanding, 3 respondents (2.9%) strongly disagreed

that entrepreneurship can hardly strike the rock into pieces to let any graduates pass through towards decent life. Study findings therefore, concretely prove that entrepreneurship is the right option. As also published online by Taylor & Francis (2019) in the article on the theme “unravelling the concept of employability bringing together research on employability in higher education and the workplace” the same findings are revealed to be in favour of the support with the argument that graduates’ propensity to embrace entrepreneurship as the “best practice” in striving to resolve the matter is significantly right.

Exploring the magnitude of unemployment challenge among graduates from higher learning institutions

The second specific objective of the study is on exploring the magnitude of unemployment challenge among graduates from the IAE. The information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Magnitude of unemployment challenge facing graduates from higher learning institutions

Graduates’ Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	96	91.5
Agree	8	7.6
Neutral	1	0.9
Disagree	None	0
Strongly Disagree	None	0
Total	105	100

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 indicates that 96 (91.5%) of all 105 IAE graduates approached, strongly asserted that the magnitude of unemployment threat is of the highest degree; while 8 (7.6%) respondents agreed with the argument put forward. But only 1 (0.9%) respondent remained equivocally indecisive. None of the IAE graduates disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the

whole trend of affairs. However, apart from fresh graduates, the rest of all other 15 participants who were interviewed consistently kept dumb throughout the whole dialogue process. Despite the high magnitude of unemployment among IAE graduates upon completion of their studies, it is revealed that entrepreneurship still continues to remain the only morning call option (Nwankwo & Gbadamosi, 2021). Most of the IAE graduates in particular but all other graduates from higher learning institutions, in general, nowadays, are ought to change the mindset towards entrepreneurial undertakings (Jadoon, et al, 2010). According to the Integrated Labor Force Survey (ILFS, (2006), a survey conducted to collect data on the Tanzanian labour market prospects for instance, 66.8% of graduates are employed in both formal and informal employment sectors. The statistics show that among the active graduates, 48.1% are male and 51.9% are female while 33.1% of active graduates live in urban area and 66.9% live in rural remote areas. As revealed from the study therefore, findings and observations are generally acceptable in line with the alternative option as proposed straightforward.

Proposing appropriate measures and strategies for addressing unemployment challenge among graduates upon completion of their respective studies

Findings on the third specific objective of the study aimed to propose appropriate measures and strategies on how best to combat unemployment challenges among graduates upon completion of their studies. The proposition hinges on the essence of entrepreneurial business ventures as the only best practice to most of the IAE graduates. Multiple appropriate measures and strategies are suggested by different participants in the study including 105 IAE graduates, 2 government officials, 7 business stakeholders, 4 IAE academic members of staff both tutors and lecturers, and the rest of other 2 members of the community directly engaged in the study. Indeed, they propose appropriate measures and strategies as Table 3 highlights varied suggestions and solutions as Plan A, Plan B, Plan C and so forth but all encapsulated into indefinite multi-

disciplinary approach as the best options for resolving unemployment challenges facing most of the IAE graduates in Tanzanian context.

Table 3: Appropriate measures and strategies for unemployment challenge facing graduates from higher learning institutions (N=125)

Proposed Appropriate Measures and Strategies by Study Participants on How Best to address Unemployment Challenges in Tanzanian Context	Response Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Embarking on policy reforms and institutional arrangement support by the government (state and non-state agencies)	6	4.8
Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum, starting from a young age, to promote an entrepreneurial mindset into minds of students	10*	8
Encouraging entrepreneurship business ventures	15*	12
Reforming educational curriculum to include such practical skills like vocational training and entrepreneurship education to the youth	6	4.8
Nurturing public-private partnerships (PPPs), linkages, networks & collaborations between the public and private sectors in order to able to address unemployment paradox and other related challenges in the country	5	4
Establishing small and medium business enterprises (SMEs)	12*	9.6
Joining with locally manufacturing industries at a local level	5	4
Government massively subsidizing private sector in its all-daily operations	9*	7.2
Assurance on availability of local markets (free entry and free exit)	8	6.4
Creating a more conducive business environment to the youth for the youth to stimulate small-scale economic growth on how best to grow rich quickly	12*	9.6
Focusing on heavy investments in such sensitive and highly paying areas like agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism industry attractions, foreign direct investments (FDIs), modern technology and technological transfers	7	5.6
Simplifying the process of starting-up to reduce barriers to entrepreneurship undertakings and mitigate risks to local entrepreneurs	10*	8
Encouraging diversification of the national economy beyond traditional sectors to create new job opportunities available around	6	4.8
Promoting flexible work arrangements like remote work and telecommuting to expand job opportunities as much as possible	8	6.4
Guaranteeing a robust legal framework that protects workers' rights and safeguarding fair labour practices	6	4.8
Total	125	100

* Multiple responses

Source: Field Data (2025)

From Table 3, study findings, observations, facts and results the direct contribution of the entrepreneurship sector's development in addressing unemployment challenges among graduates towards practical realization of their future fate (Parker & Van, 2021). It was further revealed that IAE graduates can also indulge in harnessing, exploiting and utilizing fully any possible existing entrepreneurship opportunities and resources available at their own disposal Wennberg (2010) and Wincent (2015). In trying to combat unemployment challenges as also similarly portrayed in other previous researches, theories and journal publications, entrepreneurship undertakings have become the only option to embrace among graduates. As Anatory (2023) observed, unemployment challenges can be adequately addressed and curbed by encouraging target graduates to focus on establishing different entrepreneurial ventures at different levels immediately completion of their studies. The findings have remarkably become meaningful, relevant, realistic and significant to infer on policy implications in previous studies but even in contemporary time, too.

Discussion

Addressing unemployment challenges in Tanzania really requires a multi-pronged approach focused on education, especially entrepreneurship skills, and strategic investments in key sectors. Enhancing vocational training, promoting entrepreneurship education through mentorship and financial support, and creating job opportunities in sectors like business, agriculture, technology, mining and renewable energy are crucial (Msambichaka & Moshi, 1994). However, unluckily enough, the current educational system, has exceptionally continued to fail in aligning with the essence of the labour market demands. As Semboja (2020) subsequently strived to emphasize over the wide-ranging national agenda on addressing unemployment fracas, all social, cultural, economic and demographic factors are to be explicitly explained so as to accelerate progress. As such, it be should be given sufficient impetus. According to Semboja (2020),

over the years, some graduates seem to have been left helpless, jobless and frustrated. Most of graduates have continued to be pushed out from the labour market because of various factors including not having enough business knowledge, skills, merits, experience, capability, rigors, competence and proof for work and largely scarcity of spaces in the labour market available (Rahman, et al, 2021). From study findings, it was reckoned on the fact that entrepreneurship skills can significantly play a crucial role in addressing youth unemployment experience in Tanzanian context (Msambichaka, et al, 1994). To address this crucial issue pertaining to unemployment challenges, as suggested through study findings therefore, it is essential to reform educational curricula to include practical vocational skills training and entrepreneurship education components (BoT, 2012). By implementing these measures, Tanzania can create a more promising, dynamic and inclusive labour market, empowering its youth or citizens in general and fostering sustainable socio-economic growth in its entirety (Haller, 2022; Solesvik, 2020). The economic policy implication of the empirical findings and observations from the study, is urged to continue putting sufficient light to entrepreneurship education and related entrepreneurial skills. It further recommends consistent government's eye over the focus on those sensitive matters related to opportunities and prospects only prevalent in the private sector (Jadoon, et al, 2010).

Conclusion

The study initially aimed at assessing the essence of entrepreneurship among graduates from higher learning institutions towards pursuing more prosperous and decent life. As it was revealed from the study, the government has so far done away with its central role of hiring new manpower amidst graduates from different higher learning institutions in the country. To this effect, direct employment opportunities in the formal sector for fresh graduates can no longer be pronounced as a big deal so far. Entrepreneurship business ventures available in the private sector

undertakings have consequently proved to be the only option to suit for the purpose of absorbing most of graduates. As such, entrepreneurship skills something proved significant to be imparted to most of target graduates. Graduates therefore, are obliged to put themselves at the entrepreneurship helm of their own future.

Recommendations

i) Policy Implications of the Study

Government policy makers are requested to formulate policies that can support creativity and innovations of fresh graduates. Target graduates are future business practitioners. They can be successfully accommodated into private sector because of possible opportunities and prospects available in it. Thus, graduates can easily engage themselves in even small-scale businesses and implement all related entrepreneurship undertakings inherent in the private sector.

ii) Administrative Implications of the Study for Practitioners

Business stakeholders are appealing to the government, its state and non-state agencies to continue creating more conducive and enabling environment for different graduates. Fresh entrepreneurs are to be empowered to operate as much effectively and efficiently as possible. This is so because to any bold, creative, innovative, competent and daring graduate from higher learning institution, entrepreneurship business suffices to cater for the need.

iii) Recommendations for Further Studies

Perhaps the study might have skipped by chance any sensitive stuff of knowledge area comprehensively or exhaustively uncovered. Such a gap therefore needs to be filled in order to make sure that all related challenges facing entrepreneurial sector in the country are adequately addressed. Thus, other interested researchers, authors, publishers, business stakeholders and entrepreneurship actors or practitioners are mostly

encouraged to pursue further comparative and extensive studies on a similar theme to criticize mine. It is therefore hereby recommended that, they are really invited to embark on further studies in order to come up with counter-arguments to be able to add more value to the existing scope of knowledge to the verdict of this particular study.

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