

ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY GRADUATING STUDENTS - THE CASE OF SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

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Abstract

The aim of the study or the research was to assess entrepreneurial attitude of Addis Ababa University School of commerce students and associated factors that can potentially influence the students' attitude toward entrepreneurship. The research was conducted on Addis Ababa University School of commerce regular graduating students. The total population of the study was 924. In this study stratified random sampling techniques on the basis of the students' year of study and field of study area are used. Totally 105 students were taken as a total sample size for the study. The study predominantly obtained the required data from primary source by using questionnaire. Descriptive analysis method was used in order to analyze the data collected through this method. The result of this study shows that most students, their families and close friends possess good entrepreneurial attitude. Generally, this study indicates the need to use this positive attitude productively by creating good environment for students to pursue their ideas.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship, Graduating Students, University, Attitude and Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The understanding of entrepreneurship become now a day's one of crucial issues. The term explained by different scholar at different way. Richard Cantillon, a noted economist and author in the 1700s introduced the earliest definitions of entrepreneurship as an economic term describing the process of bearing the risk of buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices [20] [14]. Austrian economist Israel Kirzner stated about the entrepreneur as, the one observes the opportunity to sell something at higher price than that at which he can buy it and another economist Schumpeter saw the entrepreneur as the major agent of economic development, defined by "carrying out of new combinations", which in turn means "the competitive elimination of the old" [1]. Entrepreneurship is critical to enhancing innovativeness and to increase productivity. The entrepreneurial spirit highly related to the development of new markets, new products, new methods of production and management, the discovery of new inputs, the establishment of new businesses and even new organizational forms [5] [15] [17] [22] [23]. In almost all of the definitions there is an agreement about a kind of behavior expected from successful entrepreneurs that includes; initiative taking, the organizing and reorganizing of social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account and the acceptance of risk or failure which mainly related with starting of the new business [2] [11]. As stated by the study Agbim et al. [13], entrepreneurial attitude is a victim of influence by factors includes a person's attitude towards entrepreneurship, the beliefs of relevant groups and actors, such as family and friends and self-

efficacy. Entrepreneurship attitude is also influenced by education background. Entrepreneurial education has been recognized as one of the crucial factors that help the students to understand and cultivate entrepreneurial attitudes [20]. Ethiopia faces enormous challenge with its high levels of unemployment problem which mainly related to university and college graduates due to lack of large companies. Understanding the attitudes would greatly help to encourage entrepreneurial activity and to enhance entrepreneurial behavior in the country to alleviate of poverty by creating potential entrepreneurs [3]. Ethiopia attempts to join in the middle class countries category in 2020-2023. To achieve this goal, the role of entrepreneurs is recognized and all universities offer courses in entrepreneurship. However, there is still little understanding of the factors associated with students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship [16]. Entrepreneurship is an important engine of growth in the economy. Although, there is a great change of attitude with regard to creativity of job there is still problem especially with university graduate students. It is essential to assess entrepreneurial attitude of students to achieve the economic growth through the participation of creative work force. Accordingly the study investigated the attitude of AAU school of Commerce students in creation of new business and their family and close friends' attitude toward entrepreneurship since, students and especially university students form a significant portion of potential entrepreneurs [8].

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Entrepreneurs are the most important tool for the growth of the country because the economy cannot show improvement without the involvement of creative individuals who create business rather than seeking job from the government. The roles of university students are significant in this case. University student's attitude toward entrepreneurship should be improved in order to achieve the development strategy of any country because now a day's unemployment issue is highly related with graduate students from different private and government universities. Potential business ideas can be generated from business students since they are familiar with different direction of business concepts which addressed by the course they cover. Unemployment level and low initiation to start one's own business of graduate students is a continuing problem in Ethiopia. As cited by Golo [10] study, entrepreneurship activity in Ethiopia is seriously discouraged in the past. Entrepreneurship was considered as undesired profession; educated people used to aspire for government jobs which were the source of income, pride and security [4]. There is a high potential for starting new businesses in Ethiopia but more of graduating students waste their time looking for job opportunities. This bad entrepreneurial attitude among graduating students is the main cause for rapidly rising unemployment rate in the country. Based on the stated bad entrepreneurial attitude problems, the study tried to assess

entrepreneurial attitude among students of Addis Ababa University School of commerce students.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out the entrepreneurial attitude of business students. To address the above mentioned problem the following specific objectives are derived.

The specific objectives of the study is,

- To examine business students attitude toward entrepreneurial activities.
- To examine entrepreneurial attitude of student's family and close friends.
- To examine the environment within the campus with regard to entrepreneurship.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Students are the most important tool for economic activity since they arise from the society. Comprehensive understandings entrepreneurial attitude of students are important to reduce unemployment level of graduate students. The result of this study can be significant in various aspects. Firstly, on the basis of the study finding, it draw some conclusions and identify entrepreneurial attitude of students and their surrounding and give signal with regard to factors retard to start one's own business and help to take remedial action to minimize the unemployment level of the students after graduation. The study is also significant to me to gain deep knowledge in entrepreneurship concept.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design; the research is designed to answer the question listed. Further the study is characterized by descriptive research where entrepreneurial attitude of students investigated and data was collected through to questionnaire to obtain necessary information from sample respondents. Source of data; the data that were used for this study obtained mainly from primary sources. This necessary information or data obtained from sample respondents through questionnaire by distributing to school of commerce students. The study area and population; the study was carried out in Addis Ababa University school of commerce regular students mainly focus on third year students who are expected to participate in creation of jobs after graduation. Seven departments existed in Addis Ababa University School of commerce. These are Accounting and Finance, Administrative Service Management, Business Administration and Information System, Economics, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Management and Marketing Management. The total population of undergraduate regular students according to Addis Ababa University school commerce registrar is 924. Out of the total population 303 are first, 301 are second and 320 are third year students. Sampling Techniques; in this study the researcher selected school of commerce third year students judgmentally and stratified sampling technique applied on the existed three departments which are Accounting and Finance, Business Administration and Information System and Marketing Management of the college to gather data through questionnaires which constitute 75% of third year students each consist 78, 102, and 60 students respectively. Totally 105 were taken as a total sample size for the study. From the total sample size 35 students

from each three department was taken for the sampling purpose. Data collection techniques; for conducting effective study accurate and reliable data are very important. So, the necessary data was collected through primary source of data collection method. From primary source of data collection technique, questionnaire was used. The reason that I used this method is that the questionnaire enables to collect large amount of information from large number of population in short period of time. Data presentation, Processing and Analysis Techniques; after the collection of the necessary data, the processing and analysis of data was conducted. The questionnaire was identified manually for analysis purpose. Descriptive analysis method was used in order to analyze the data collected through questionnaires. Through this method the raw data's can be converting to understandable form by using table and parentages. After processing and analysis of the available information the findings were interpreted in detail explanation.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of related literature part tries to indicate relevant theories and papers done so far fact about regarding entrepreneurial attitude. It looks the various aspects of entrepreneurial attitude.

2.1 THE MEANING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

According to Zutshi (2009) entrepreneurship is a relatively new discipline yet to describe its boundary. Over the decades it has gone through various conceptualizations as, opportunity seeking, risk taking, new venture creation, and more recently it is discovering and creating opportunities. There have been hundreds of definitions about entrepreneur's state by different scholars. Still there is no single definition of Entrepreneurship. It all depends on the focus of the one defining it and from which perspective one looks at it. Entrepreneurship is a therefore a multidimensional concept [12]. The first formal theory of entrepreneurship was developed by Richard Cantillon in 1725. He defined entrepreneurship as Self-employed persons, and bearing the risk of buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices [20]. Some scholars associate the concept of entrepreneurship with innovation. Peter F. Drucker [18] [19] on his management book stated a business that wants to be able to innovate, wants to have a chance to succeed and prosper in a time of rapid change, and has to build entrepreneurial management into its own system. Schumpeter believed that an entrepreneur was a dynamic agent of change who transformed increasingly physical, natural and human resources into correspondingly production possibilities [21]. Entrepreneurship means much more than starting a new business. It denotes the whole process whereby individuals become aware of the opportunities that exist to empower themselves, develop ideas, and take personal responsibility and initiative [22]. In a broader sense, entrepreneurship helps young men and women develop new skills and experiences that can be applied to many other challenges in life. Entrepreneurship is therefore a key priority area with the potential to stimulate job and wealth creation in an innovative and independent way [6].

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF ATTITUDE

The word attitude comes from the Latin “aptus” meaning fitness or adaptedness and was thus defined as a subjective or mental state in preparation for action. It was thus first used by Herbert Spencer in 1862 to describe a mental concept. He pointed out that attitudes of mind determined how people arrived at correct judgments [7]. Attitudes are a psychological construct that refers to favorable or unfavorable evaluations of people, objects, places or activities. They are made up of three aspects: a cognitive component which refers how we think about something, an emotional component refers how we feel about something, and a behavioral component which indicate how we act towards something [9].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this research descriptive method of data analysis such as percentages and tabulation are used to analyze the data that gathered from questionnaire. From the general target population of 240 students 119 (49.6%) of students are females and 121 (50.4%) students are males. This indicates that there is a balance between male and female students in Addis Ababa University College of commerce. A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed among thirty five students from department of accounting, business administration and information system and marketing. Because of the students’ carelessness to fill and return the questionnaires in a proper manner Seventeen students did not return. A total of 88 students responded for the question and return the questionnaires. Thus, the response rate is 83.8%. The data that were collected from respondents using questionnaires were summarized using different techniques like tables and analyzed and interpreted by using charts and tables with detailed necessary interpretation.

3.1 ANALYSES OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Table.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	%age
Age		
<20	32	36.4%
20-21	42	47.7%
22-23	13	14.8%
24-25	1	1.1%
>25	0	0
Not answered	0	0
Total	88	100%
Students business background		
Currently self-employed	6	6.8%
Not self-employed	74	84.1%
Not answered	8	9.1%
Total	88	100%

As indicated in the summarized Table.2, the summary of family background information revealed that most of students’ families have good entrepreneurial experience and they have good attitude towards entrepreneurship and they can considered as factors that can be used as a tool to create good entrepreneurial attitude for their children.

Table.2. Family Background

Item	Respondent	
	Frequency	%age
My family and friends support my own business		
Strongly agree	21	23.9%
Agree	25	28.4%
Neutral	13	14.8%
Disagree	5	5.7%
Strongly disagree	11	12.5%
Not answered	13	14.8%
Total	88	100%
If I become an entrepreneur my family would consider it to be?		
Bad	2	2.3%
Extremely bad	2	2.3%
Moderately bad	5	5.7%
Neutral	8	9.1%
Moderately good	24	27.3%
Extremely good	31	35%
Good	14	16%
Not answered	2	2.3%
Total	88	100%
If I become an entrepreneur my close friends could consider if to be?		
Bad	3	3.4%
Extremely bad	3	3.4%
Moderately bad	2	2.3%
Neutral	9	10.2%
Moderately good	30	34.1%
Extremely good	26	29.5%
Good	12	13.6%
Not answered	3	3.4%
Total	88	100%
Item	Respondent	
	Frequency	%age
Are your parents currently employed?		
Yes	63	71.6%
No	23	26.1%
Not answered	2	2.3%
Total	88	100%

Table.3. Family background description continued

Item	Respondent	
	Frequency	%age
Have your parents ever been self-employed?		
Yes	62	70.5%
No	23	26.1%
Not answered	3	3.4%
Total	88	100%

3.1.1 Personal Factors:

In this category different questions were developed to understand students' personal attitude toward entrepreneurship.

As indicated in the Table.4 and Table.5, majority of students have good feeling for having self-owned business. In addition to this most students preferred to be their own manager rather than being the manager of existing companies. Finally, in this investigation the study tried to assess students' ability to face the status quo. The finding of this summarized Table.4 and Table.5 result indicates that majority of students are capable of challenging the status quo. Challenging the status quo and travelling with new way of life is one of the manifestations of entrepreneurs. The concept of newness associate with the introduction of a new good, the introduction of a new method of production, the opening of a new market, the conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials or half-manufactured goods, the carrying out of the new organization of any industry. Generally, from the Table.4 and Table.5, it can be concluded that majority of

Addis Ababa university school of commerce students consider an entrepreneur career as extremely good. In addition to the above discussed personal factors the summarized items stated below indicates that majority of Addis Ababa University College of commerce students likely face new routes when they travel and take risks when they make a decision.

3.1.2 Educational Factors:

In this category different questions are asked to understand students' education background and their environment. Eight questions are prepared for this purpose. These questions are divided in to two parts. The first part tried to assess the activities of the college to cultivate entrepreneurial attitude. The result discussed based on the summarized Table.6 and Table.7 indicates that majority of students are familiar with entrepreneurship education. The finding also shows that the need of improvement within the university environment to facilitate entrepreneurial activity. Finally all students assured that they are from Addis Ababa University School of commerce.

Table.4. Personal factors description

Description of personal attitude	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Answered	Total
Starting my own business sounds attract to me	52 (59.1%)	29 (33%)	5 (5.7%)	0 0	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
I can spot a good opportunity long before other can	13 (14.8%)	36 (41%)	35 (39.8%)	1 (1.1%)	0	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)
To start my own business would probably be the best way for me to take advantage of	33 (37.5%)	42 (47.7%)	10 (11.4%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
I excel at identifying opportunity	13 (14.8%)	41 (46.6%)	25 (28.4%)	4 (4.5%)	0	5 (5.7%)	88 (100%)
I am confident that I would succeed if I started my own business	33 (37.5%)	33 (37.5%)	16 (18.2%)	2 (2.3%)	1 (1.1%)	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)
I consider an entrepreneur to be a highly desirable career alternative for people	45 (51.1%)	34 (38.6%)	6 (6.8%)	3 (3.4%)	0	0	88 (100%)
It would be easy for me to start my own business	20 (22.7%)	16 (18.2%)	29 (33%)	20 (22.7%)	3 (3.4%)	0	88 (100%)
Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn in to reality	57 (64.8%)	17 (19.3%)	5 (5.7%)	4 (4.5%)	2 (2.3%)	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)
I would rather found new company than be the manager of existing one	18 (20.5%)	34 (38.6%)	21 (23.9%)	10 (11.4%)	2 (2.3%)	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)
It would be more beneficial to society to have large enterprises than small firms	23 (26.1%)	26 (29.5%)	28 (31.8%)	9 (10.2%)	2 (2.3%)	0	88 (100%)
I enjoy facing and overcoming obstacles to my ideas	26 (29.5%)	32 (36.4%)	22 (25%)	6 (6.8%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
Description of personal attitude	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not answered	Total
I love to challenge the status quo	21 (23.9%)	32 (36.4%)	26 (29.5%)	4 (4.5%)	2 (2.3%)	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)

Table.5. Personal factors description (continued)

Item	Respondent	
	Frequency	%age
Overall I consider an entrepreneur career as		
Bad	1	1.1%
Extremely bad	0	-
Moderately bad	1	1.1%
Neutral	4	4.5%
Moderately good	24	27.3%
Extremely good	40	45.5%
Good	15	17%
Not answered	3	3.4%
Total	88	100%

Table.6. Personal factors continued

Item	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Not answered	Total
When I travel I like to face new routes	3 (3.4%)	4 (4.5%)	26 (29.5%)	44 (50%)	11 (12.5%)	0 -	88 (100%)
I like to try new foods, new places and totally new experiences.	2 (2.3%)	4 (4.5%)	13 (14.8%)	41 (46.6%)	27 (30.7%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
I will take a serious of risks when I make a decision	4 (4.5%)	6 (6.8%)	27 (30.7%)	33 (37.5%)	17 (19.3%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)

Table.7. Personal factors descriptions

Item		Very Probably	Quite Probably	Quite improbably	Very improbably	Total		
Do you plan to be self-employed in the foreseeable future, after you graduate from AAU?		30 (34.1%)	42 (47.7%)	6 (6.8%)	10 (11.4%)	88 (100%)		
Estimate the probability (0-100%)	None	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	Not answered	Total
I will start my own business next year?	4 (4.5%)	13 (14.8%)	13 (14.8%)	24 (27.3%)	21 (23.9%)	12 (13.6%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)

Table.8. Educational factors descriptions

Education factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not answered	Total
In my University people who are actively encouraged to pursue their own ideas	15 (17%)	29 (33%)	35 (39.8%)	8 (9.1%)	1 (1.1%)	0 -	88 (100%)
In my university you get to meet a lots of people with good ideas for a new business	17 (19.3%)	29 (33%)	27 (30.7%)	13 (14.8%)	2 (2.3%)	0 -	88 (100%)
Entrepreneurship courses of my university prepares people well for an entrepreneur career	15 (17%)	31 (35%)	29 (33%)	8 (9.1%)	5 (5.7%)	0 -	88 (100%)
Entrepreneurship cannot be taught	1 (1.1%)	4 (4.5%)	28 (31.8%)	38 (43.2%)	14 (16%)	3 (3.4%)	88 (100%)

Table.9. Educational factors descriptions continued

Item	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
Have you ever participated in any form of entrepreneurship education?	50 (56.8%)	37 (42%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
Have you participated in entrepreneurship education of AAU? E.g. (entrepreneurship training, advanced business innovation, small management & accounting)	35 (39.8%)	52 (59.1%)	1 (1.1%)	88 (100%)
Have you participated in entrepreneurship courses from department of management or from any other department in AAU? (entrepreneurship, business plan)	55 (62.5%)	33 (37.5%)	0 -	88 (100%)
Are you from the Addis Ababa University College of Commerce	88 (100%)	0 -	0 -	88 (100%)

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study conducted mainly to assess the entrepreneurial attitudes of Addis Ababa University School of commerce students and how the overall environment in which the students live such as family, friends and educational factors support the student's attitude to having self-owned business. In this study, closed-ended questions are employed to identify the existing attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Based on the summary of the data obtained, the main conclusions and recommendations are summarized in this chapter. The study drives some conclusions based on the objective of the study and the results from the summary of the data. Majority of students' age within the university lies between 20 up to 21. This indicates that the university constitutes the youngsters who are the most important work force of the country. From the personal factors of analysis part, it can be concluded that most of the students are attracted to start their own venture, they are good at spotting opportunity, they believe that self-owned business are the best way to take advantage of, they agree with the idea that nothing is seeing the ideas turn in to reality, they like to face new route when they travel, they have a confidence that they will succeed if they start their own business and they consider an entrepreneurship a highly desirable career alternative for people. This clearly indicates that the existence of good attitude toward entrepreneurial activity. However as indicated in the summary part of the study most students preferred to have large enterprises than small firms. This kind of attitude should be improved through awareness creation program since for most countries small businesses contribute a lot for the country growth and thus, the one who desire to be an entrepreneur should recognize the importance of small business. The study also concludes that there are some factors other than attitude that retard to start self-owned business. Most of students preferred to say nothing for the item attempted to assess their response towards starting their business is easy or not for them. This implies that the existence of some difficulties which retard the students to bring their ideas in to reality. Most students prefer to be their own manager rather than operating for another company on salary basis. This kind of attitude can be a driven force to create self-owned business in addition to some other personal characteristics such as the strength to face and overcomes obstacles with regard to their ideas, capable of challenging the status quo and taking a serious of risks when making decisions. These behaviors are observed from most of the students of Addis Ababa University School of commerce students. Most students are ready to run their own

business when they finish their study. From this we can conclude that majority of students intended to be their own manager rather than to be job seekers. The question prepared to investigate education environment of students indicates that the existence of unsatisfactory environment within the university to pursue one's own idea. Majority of students preferred to stay neutral for this item. Although majority students hesitated to say nothing on the item if people are encouraged to pursue their own idea or not in their university most students agreed that they met a lot of people with good business ideas. From the finding it can be concluded that majority of students also agree with the idea that entrepreneurship can be taught. However, it seems there is still some hesitation with this idea since 33% of respondent's preferred to say nothing. From the assessment of educational factors we can also conclude that majority of students in Addis Ababa University School of commerce are familiar with entrepreneurship courses but most of them are not participated in training associated with entrepreneurship. Generally the finding of the study can be concluded that there exist positive entrepreneurial attitude among students of Addis Ababa University School of commerce students, their parents and their close friends. This may arise from their familiarity with business concepts they normally obtained from the university and the existed good entrepreneurial attitude of their parents and their close friends.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the existence of good entrepreneurial attitude among the society which is good news especially in case of our country where in the past the activity of entrepreneurship is undermined. However, still students are not sure that they will start their own business after graduation. The university should provide adequate training to students to show how to change their intention to do self-owned business in to action. Students should be encouraged to pursue their idea. Students with in the campus can have a great skill with regard to different concept and they can solve real problem of the society. Moreover the government should provide different opportunities for the youth to facilitate entrepreneurial activity.

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