

Entrepreneurial Abilities of Technical Graduates and their Self-Employability in Tanzania

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is imperative for economic development and new economic strategies for fostering and generating jobs creating entrepreneurs. This paper therefore assesses the influence of entrepreneurial abilities on self-employment among technical graduates in Tanzania. It specifically identifies the entrepreneurial skills acquired by technical graduates from technical institutions and examined the influence of identified entrepreneurial skills on self-employment among the technical graduates in Tanzania. This study was approached quantitatively based on explanatory survey design. Data were collected using questionnaire from 350 technical graduates sampled using stratified simple random technique. The collected data were analysed using Multiple Linear Regressions. The findings show that to a great extent graduates from colleges and universities acquire technical entrepreneurial skills; business management and to a small extent personal entrepreneurial skills. The findings show further that business management was ranked highly as the leading entrepreneurial skill for self-employment among technical graduates. All three entrepreneurial skills were found to have positive and significant influence on self-employment among technical graduates in Tanzania. The study recommends that colleges, institutes and universities should emphatically inculcate all the entrepreneurial skills to students as they have significant contributions to graduates self-employment.

Key Words: Entrepreneurial Skills, Self-employment, TET, Technical Graduates

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1. Introduction

Young people's situation and future prospects are of vital concern to all nations as many people face high unemployment or joblessness (Ndyali, 2016). *Graduates employability* has become a thorny issue in the economies of developing countries such as Tanzania (Anderson, 2017). Indeed, young job-seekers from around the world endure high unemployment, extended unemployment periods and deteriorating job quality (Mourshed et al., 2013).

Globally, graduate employability is a concept that is becoming increasingly popular in the higher education sector; with the underlying assumption that graduates need attributes other than skills needed in the subject-specific disciplines (Shivoro, Shalyefu & Kadhila, 2018). The situation of Tanzania's graduates in the labour market today seems disappointing with many of these graduates failing to gain employment or ending up working in poor conditions in the informal sector (Youth Unemployment Rate, World Bank, 2014). One of the reasons for such a trend is that, many graduates leave the university without the requisite skills or competences needed in the today's economy (Ndyali, 2016). There is a lack of qualified technical and vocational, innovative, entrepreneurship and job skills among graduates.

Employability is a challenge for graduates from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) due to their failure to meet the current labour market expectations. Furthermore, these HEIs have been blamed for producing graduates who fail to meet employment demands in the labour market (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016). Additionally, graduate employment patterns have changed worldwide as the labour market is inundated with graduates with similar qualifications competing for graduate jobs (Tran, 2016). The organisations and companies are currently shrinking their workforce due to unpredictable and inconsistent economies and this makes the labour market becoming competitive and flexible (Shivoro, et al., 2018).

One of the solutions devised in reducing unemployment among the graduates is imparting them with entrepreneurial skills before they graduate. Accordingly, different HEIs have already initiated some measures towards contributing to the production of enterprising graduates through the introduction

of entrepreneurship courses (Olomi & Sabokwigina, 2010). According to these researchers, entrepreneurship education is imperative for economic development and new economic strategies for fostering and generating job creating entrepreneurs. In fact, the benefits of entrepreneurship education are not limited to boosting start-ups, innovative ventures and new jobs but entrepreneurship is a competence for all, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake.

Among the HEIs committed to impart entrepreneurial skills to graduates is Technical Education and Training (TET) institutions. The TET is commonly referred to as technical institutions in the context of this paper and as also usually referred to by the National Council of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Tanzania (NACTVET). As Munishi (2016) observes, many African countries including Tanzania have made significant efforts to promote Technical Education and Training (TET) with the aim of enhancing graduates' employable skills and boosting economies. Elsewhere, Dasmani (2011) stresses that one of the salient features of TVET is its alignment towards equipping graduates with employable skills through Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET).

According to Murgor (2017), even young people with TET training face difficulties in securing employment, mainly due to mismatches between skills possessed by candidates and the demands of jobs. Murgor (ibid) observes further that TET graduates across the world are often accused of lacking employable and entrepreneurial skills. It is therefore very important to re-examine the entrepreneurial skills among technical graduates in relation to employment particularly self-employment.

Technical institutions are blamed by employers for failure of preparing competent and employable graduates. At the same time, the organizations and companies are blamed for shrinking their workforce due to unpredictable and inconsistent economies. Give this trend, who is to blame? Technical institutions, graduates or employers? This paper therefore intends to assess the influence of entrepreneurial skills on self-employability of graduates. Technical institutions in many countries including Tanzania have made significant efforts

in promoting TET with an aim of enhancing graduates' employable skills and boost economies.

Specifically, the paper intends to identify entrepreneurial skills acquired by technical graduates in technical institutions and rank entrepreneurial skills acquired by the technical graduates at technical institutions and examine the influence of ranked entrepreneurial skills on self-employment among technical graduates in Tanzania. This study hypothesized that, the entrepreneurial skills have positive and significant influence on self-employment among technical graduates in Tanzania.

2. Theories of Entrepreneurship

Schumpeter's theory views the process of production as resulting from a combination of material and immaterial forces. The material productive forces are factors of production, which include land, capital and labour, while the immaterial productive forces are technical and social organization factors (Karol, 2013; Shekhar, 2018). The theory points out that the entrepreneurial behaviour and innovations are paramount in profit making hence leading to development and employment creation. Under this theory, it is argued that entrepreneurial skills are very important for increased productivity.

The theory of planned behaviour elaborates the prediction of an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour at a specific time and place. The determinant of behaviour is a person's intention to carry out that behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). The theory intends to explain the behaviours of which people have the ability to exert self-control. The entrepreneurial is among the behaviours of an individual to have self - control including self-employment. Both theories consider entrepreneurial skills as important in productivity and employment creation for an individual and a society.

3.0 Methodology

This study was carried out quantitatively. The quantitative approach was used because the study's main objective had causal-effect relationship. This nature of the study objective requires a quantitative approach, as it is usually

supported by quantitative data. The study approach enabled the researcher to understand the research problem by examining the relationship between dependent and independent variables namely entrepreneurial skills and self-employment respectively.

The study used explanatory cross-sectional survey design. The design was deemed appropriate as it assisted in studying every technical graduate as a unit of analysis covering a large geographical area (i.e. four cities in Tanzania). The design also provided a quick, efficient and accurate means of assessing information about the study population. The “what” questions of the study also required the survey design to be used.

The data were collected from Mbeya city, Dar es Salaam city, Mwanza city and Arusha city in Tanzania. The cities were chosen because of being big cities in Tanzania absorbing a large number of graduates. They are the cities with several zonal headquarters of the public and private sectors. They are full of businesses and several entrepreneurial activities compare to other cities in Tanzania. Several TET are also located in these cities.

Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to sample 500 technical graduates. The questionnaires designed in English were distributed to 500 technical graduates of which 350 questionnaires were returned and found useful for data analysis. The response rate was 70 per cent. The calculation of this sample size is based on the nature of data analysis that is, MLR. The sample size requirements for MLR is calculated using the formula “ $N > 50 + 8m$ (where m = number of independent variables” by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p. 117). After calculation, it was noted that, the study has not violated the sample size assumption that is, $N > 50 + 8(3) = 74$. It must be noted that, this study had three predictor variables and 350 cases which is more than 74 obtained.

Table 1: Sample Size

BM	Proposed Sample Size	Surveyed Sample Size	Percentage
Mbeya	130	87	25.0
Dar es Salaam	140	90	26.0
Mwanza	115	85	24.0
Arusha	115	88	25.0
Total	500	350	100.0

The collected data were mainly analysed using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) though some descriptive statistics were performed before running the model. The regression was used to test the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and self-employment among the technical graduates in Tanzania. This was the best technique for analysis because of having more than one predictors and one continuous dependent variable. The predictors were entrepreneurial skills while continuous dependent variable was self-employment. Specifically, the entrepreneurial skills included technical, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y -Criterion (i.e. self-employment)

α -constant (intercept)

β_{1-3} -Regression Coefficients

X_{1-3} -Predictors (technical, business management and personal skills)

This study has two principal variables: predictors and criterion variables. The predictors include entrepreneurial skills while criterion variable is self-employment. The entrepreneurial skills include technical skills, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills. Technical skills were a non-metric variable measured using six items. These measurements are according to the European Union (EU) Skills Panorama (2014) Entrepreneurial Skills Analytical Highlight. The six items include communication, environment

monitoring, problem solving, technology implementation and use, interpersonal, and organisational skills. The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was used to measure the statement items of technical skills in the surveyed cities.

Business management skills were a non-metric variable measured using twelve items. These measurements are according to the EU Skills Panorama (2014). The twelve items are planning and goal setting, decision making, human resources management, marketing, finance, accounting, customer relations, quality control, negotiation, business launch, growth management, and compliance with regulations skills. The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was used to measure the statement items of business skills in the surveyed cities.

The personal entrepreneurial skill was a non-metric variable measured using eight items. These measurements are according to the EU Skills Panorama (2014). The eight items are self-control and discipline, risk management, innovation, persistence, leadership, change management, network building, and strategic thinking. The 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was used to measure the statement items of the personal entrepreneurial skill in the surveyed cities.

Self-employment is one of the types of employment which graduates engage in after graduation. This paper adapts the measurement indicators of self-employment used by Zwan et al., (2013). These scholars differentiated three kinds of individuals: self-employed, paid-employed and non-employed ones. The self-employed individuals are the graduates in the category of shops owners, owner-managers of companies, professionals (e.g. lawyers, accountants, medical practitioners, architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, laboratory technicians, etc.). The graduates in paid employment include white-collar workers and blue-collar workers. On the other hand, non-employed graduates are individuals without professional activity who could be seeking for a job, or looking after the home. The value of 0 is assigned to non-employed graduates, 1 to self-employed graduates and 2 to employed graduates.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

This section addresses the results obtained after performing data analysis using descriptive statistics and MLR. It comprises of Descriptive Results, Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired when in the technical institutions, and Ranking of Acquired Entrepreneurial Skills for Self-Employment and influence of Entrepreneurial Skills on Self-employment.

Both sexes of students are currently notable in the technical institutions in Tanzania. Among the Technical graduates surveyed, 60.0 per cent were males and 40.0 per cent were females (Table 2). The majority of the surveyed technical graduates were males. This implies that, the males are still leading in technical institutions compared to females as for the .

As for the variable age, the ages ranged from 21 to 40 and above years. The surveyed results of indicate that, 19.0 per cent of the graduates were between 21-24 years of age, 39.0 per cent between 25-29 years, 28.0 per cent between 30-34 years, 10.0 per cent between 35-39 years and 4.0 per cent of the graduates were 40 years and above (Table 2). The majority of the surveyed Technical graduates were therefore at the age of between 25 and 29 years.

Marital status was one of the personal information explored among the surveyed technical graduates in this study. The results show that, 59.0 per cent of the surveyed technical graduates were single, 17.0 per cent were married, 14.0 per cent were divorced and 11.0 per cent were widows (Table 2). The findings imply that the majority of the technical graduates who graduated from 2011 to 2015 were single in Tanzania.

Since the area of this study was big cities in Tanzania, the technical graduates were asked to identify the particular city they are living. the findings revealed that 17.0 per cent of the graduates lived in Arusha, 36.0 per cent lived in Dar es Salaam, 28.0 per cent lived Mbeya and 19.0 per cent lived in Mwanza. The majority of the surveyed technical graduates were therefore living in Dar es Salaam.

The lowest education level considered in this study is the certificate level while the highest level is postgraduate in either science or engineering. The results in Table 2 established that, 15.0 per cent of the surveyed Technical graduates had certificates, 32.0 per cent had an ordinary diploma, 36.0 per cent had a bachelor degree, and 17.0 per cent had postgraduate degree. The majority of the technical graduates in the surveyed institutions had a bachelor degree.

The surveyed technical graduates are graduating from various education institutions. It was therefore very essential to identify the education institution the respondents graduated from. The results indicate that, 31.0 per cent graduated from Arusha Technical College (ATC), 32.0 per cent graduated from Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT), and 37.0 per cent graduated from Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST). Thus, the majority of the surveyed technical graduates graduated from MUST though the difference is minimal.

The study intended to survey technical graduates since 2010 to 2015. Identifying years of graduation was very paramount. Thus, the results indicate that 25.0 per cent graduated in 2010, 28.0 per cent graduated in 2011, 24.0 per cent graduated in 2013, 12.0 per cent graduated in 2014 and 11.0 per cent graduated in 2015. The majority of the surveyed technical graduates graduated in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the study

Personal Information	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Sex	1. Male	211	60.0
	2. Female	139	40.0
	Total	350	100.0
Age	1. 21-24 years	65	19.0
	2. 25-29 years	136	39.0
	3. 30-34 years	99	28.0
	4. 35-39 years	35	10.0
	5. 40 and above years	15	4.0
	Total	350	100.0
Marital Status	1. Single	206	59.0
	2. Married	59	17.0
	3. Divorced	48	14.0
	4. Widow	37	11.0
	Total	350	100.0
Residential Area	1. Arusha	60	17.0
	2. Dar es Salaam	126	36.0
	3. Mbeya	97	28.0
	4. Mwanza	67	19.0
	Total	350	100.0
Employment Status	1. No employment	199	57.0
	2. Self-employment	80	23.0
	3. Paid employment	71	20.0
	Total	350	100.0
Education Level	1. Certificate	51	15.0
	2. Ordinary Diploma	112	32.0
	3. Bachelor Degree	127	36.0
	4. Postgraduate	60	17.0
	Total	350	100.0
Institution Graduated	1. ATC	109	31.0
	2. DIT	112	32.0
	3. MUST	129	37.0
	Total	350	100.0
Year of Graduation	1. 2010	87	25.0
	2. 2011	99	28.0
	3. 2013	83	24.0
	4. 2014	41	12.0
	5. 2015	40	11.0
	Total	350	100.0

3.2 Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired by Graduates from Technical Institutions

This section specifically identifies the entrepreneurial skills acquired by technical graduates from the colleges or universities. It addresses the extent in which entrepreneurial skills such as technical, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills are acquired by the graduates when pursuing their academic programmes at the technical institutions.

The findings in Table 3 indicate that, the Technical skills are acquired as follows 6 per cent indicate in very small extent by, 8 per cent in small extent, 43 per cent in large extent, 31 in in a very large extent and 12 per cent of the respondents were neutral in the acquisition of the mentioned skills. The majority of the graduates acquired Technical Skills in large extent.

Furthermore, the technical graduates acquired Business Management Skills as follows 28 per cent in very small extent, 35 per cent in small extent 14 per cent in large extent, and 12 per cent in very large extent and 11 per cent of the graduates were neutral on the acquisition of Business Management Skills when in the college or university (Table 3). The majority of the graduates acquired Business Management Skills in small extent when in the technical institutions.

Moreover, the technical graduates acquired Personal Entrepreneurial Skills as follows 44 per cent in very small extent, 28 per cent in small extent, 11 per cent in large extent y 8 per cent in very large extent and 9 per cent of the graduates were neutral on the acquisition of Business Management Skills when in the college or university (Table 3). The majority of the graduates acquired Personal Entrepreneurial Skills in very small extent when in the technical institutions.

Table 3: Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired by the Graduates from Technical Institutions

Scale	Technical Skills		Business Management Skills		Personal Skills	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very Small Extent	21	06.0	99	28.0	153	44.0
Small Extent	27	08.0	124	35.0	97	28.0
Neutral	43	12.0	37	11.0	33	09.0
Large Extent	150	43.0	49	14.0	38	11.0
Very Large Extent	109	31.0	41	12.0	29	08.0
Total	350	100.0	350	100.0	350	100.0

3.3 Ranking of Acquired Entrepreneurial Skills for Self-Employment in Tanzania

This section deals with the ranking of the entrepreneurial skills acquired by the TVET Technical graduates when in the college or university. This implies that indicating which entrepreneurial skills is considered as the most important by the graduates in influencing self-employment among the three namely, technical, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills. The findings are presented in Table 4.

The findings indicate that 51 per cent of the surveyed technical graduates ranked Technical Entrepreneurial Skills the third, 37 per cent ranked it the second and 12 per cent ranked it the first in influencing self-employment among graduates. The majority of the surveyed graduates ranked Technical Entrepreneurial Skills as the third in influencing self-employment among graduates in Tanzania.

In addition, the findings indicate that 11 per cent of the surveyed technical graduates ranked Business Management Skills the third, 34 per cent ranked it the second and 55 per cent ranked it the first in influencing self-employment among graduates. The majority of the surveyed technical graduates ranked

Business Management Skills the first in influencing self-employment among graduates in Tanzania.

Likewise, the findings indicate that 43 per cent of the surveyed technical graduates ranked Entrepreneurial Personal Skills the third, 23 per cent ranked it the second, and 29 per cent ranked it the first in influencing self-employment among graduates. The majority of the surveyed technical graduates ranked Personal Entrepreneurial Skills the third in influencing self-employment among graduates in Tanzania.

Table 4: Ranking of Acquired Entrepreneurial Skills for Self-Employment in Tanzania

Scale Ranking	Technical Skills		Business Management Skills		Personal Skills	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Third (Low)	177	51.0	37	11.0	150	43.0
Second (Moderate)	130	37.0	120	34.0	97	23.0
First (High)	43	12.0	193	55.0	103	29.0
Total	350	100.0	350	100.0	350	100.0

3.4 Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills on Self-employment

A Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) was performed to predict self-employment based on entrepreneurial skills among technical graduates in Tanzania. Preliminarily, some underpinning analyses were done in avoiding violation of the MLR assumptions. The assumptions addressed were sample size, independence of residuals/relations, outliers, multicollinearity, normality, linearity and Homoscedasticity.

The study used Adjusted R Square in assessing how much of the variance in self-employment (dependent variable) was explained by the model with the entrepreneurial skills (independent variable). The value obtained was .410 which means the model explained 41 per cent of the variance in self-employment (see Table 3).

In testing how well the regression model fitted the data, it was found that the computed F statistics was 33.132 with an observed significance level of 0.000. The models reached the statistical significance which was $p < 0.01$ (see Table 3). The entrepreneurial skills were expected to have a positive relationship with self-employment among the surveyed technical graduates in Tanzania. The regression analysis results are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills on Self Employment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.101			2.195	.029		
Business Management Skills	.560	.0429	.628	12.897	<.001	.956	1.045
Technical Skills	.079	.034	.109	2.319	.021	.997	1.003
Personal Entrepreneurial Skills	.076	.039	.106	2.212	.028	.968	1.034
Multiple R	.642 ^a						
R Square	.413						

The results indicate that, business management skills had a statistically significant and positive relationship with self-employment (Beta=.101, $t=2.195$, $p < 0.001$). These results imply that, the more the technical graduates acquire business management skills, the more they get self-employed.

Furthermore, technical skills had a statistically significant and positive relationship with the self-employment among the surveyed technical graduates in Tanzania (Beta=.079, $t=2.319$, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that, the more the technical graduates acquire technical skills, the more they get self-employed.

Likewise, personal entrepreneurial skills had a significant relationship with self-employment among technical graduates in Tanzania (Beta=.076, $t=2.212$, $p > 0.05$). These results entail that, the more the technical graduates acquire

personal entrepreneurial skills, the more they get self-employed. These results are supported by the results in a study by Mwidege et al. (2014) and Tegegn et al. (2016) who revealed that, self-employment of graduates is attributed to entrepreneurial skills attained at the University. however this was linked to the mother's occupation and access to financial sources among the graduates.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

4.1 Conclusion

The majority of the surveyed technical graduates acquired Technical Entrepreneurial Skills to a large extent, Business Management Skills to a small extent and Personal Entrepreneurial Skills to a very small extent when pursuing their academic programmes in the technical institutions.

Generally, the results of this study indicate that, the studied entrepreneurial skills were ranked differently with prioritization regarding self-employment by the surveyed technical graduates. Business Management Skills was ranked the firstly (highly) as the entrepreneurial skills that influenced self-employment among the technical graduates in Tanzania. This means Business Management Skills highly effective in influencing self-employment among graduates compare to technical and personal entrepreneurial skills in Tanzania.

Similar results are reported in a study by (Kalufya and Mwakajinga, 2016) who found a significant prioritization of employability skills among the studied final year students. One of the skills covered in the study is entrepreneurial skills.

The differences in ranking of entrepreneurial skills are also noted in a study by Murgor (2017) showing that the entrepreneurial skills were ranked from high to low regarding their influence on self-employment. For example, time management was ranked the highest in influencing self-employment while adaptability was ranked the lowest.

Generally, all the above three entrepreneurial skills were found to have positive and significant influence on self-employment among the technical graduates in Tanzania. These results are consistent with the results in a study by Ogunbanjo et al. (2017) who maintain that, entrepreneurship education

is a good policy and it has a positive effect on self-employment initiatives. Similarly, Zwan et al. (2013) found that the tested indicators of entrepreneurial learning were positively related to being self-employed.

Elsewhere, Ekpe et al. (2012) found that entrepreneurial skills gained through several entrepreneurship development programmes (i.e. entrepreneurship courses and departments from universities) facilitated self-employment and employment generation among graduates from various universities.

4.2 Recommendations

The findings from this study show that business management, technical and personal entrepreneurial skills are the skills needed for self-employment. It is therefore recommended that, this skill should be prioritised in the TET training for increasing self-employment opportunities among graduates.

Furthermore, the graduates from technical institutions should take more time to practice the skills attained during training by being attached to business entities soon after graduation for the inculcating the spirit of self-employment among themselves.

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