

# Strategies for Enhancing Mentorship in Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students of Kwame Nkrumah University, Kabwe-Zambia

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies for enhancing mentorship in entrepreneurship for undergraduate students of tertiary education institutions, at Kwame Nkrumah University. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to find out how students of Kwame Nkrumah University are being mentored in entrepreneurship and to establish strategies of enhancing mentorship of students in entrepreneurship at the University. This case study was anchored on pragmatism as its research paradigm; it used a mixed method approach and employed the concurrent triangulation design. The study used simple random sampling on students, random sampling for Lecturers and purposive sampling for Administrators. Data collection instruments were questionnaires and interview guides and analysed data was eventually presented in form of frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts. The study's findings were that majority of students of Kwame Nkrumah University are aware of the importance of mentorship in entrepreneurship and are willing to acquire entrepreneurial skills, only a minority of students who belong to the category of business studies formally have access to the said mentorship and that this mentorship is merely theoretical. University management's emphasis on the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and values is below average. In view of enhancing mentorship of students in entrepreneurship at the university and in other similar institutions of tertiary education, the study has established a number of strategies and it has subsequently made key recommendations such as making the mentorship inclusive via curriculum revision and devising educational plans and policies and creating a resource bay.

**Key Words:** Mentorship, Entrepreneurship and Educational Administration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since Zambia's independence in 1964, the Ministry in charge of Education has undertaken a number of major education policy reforms in its quest to improve the quality of education for learners at different levels (Mulenga-Hagane, Daka & Kanchebele-Sinyangwe, 2020). Some of these reforms were: The Educational Reform of 1977, 1968 Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) policy, Educating our Future of 1996, the

curriculum review of 2000 and the Zambia Educational Curriculum Framework Review (ZECFR, 2013). These reforms have significantly shaped the Zambian educational curriculum and they may receive much credit for a number of scored developments today. With this in view, the TEVET policy of 1968 bears the origin of the element of entrepreneurship in Zambia's education curriculum. In 1994, the government began to review the post-independence TEVET policy. Moreover, the year 1996 saw the adoption of the new TEVET policy which incorporated and mainstreamed entrepreneurship. This new policy aimed at providing a national system of TEVET that would meet the demands of opportunities in the economy through an attempt to balance the supply of skilled labor at all levels with the demands of the economy, to act as a vehicle for improved productivity and income generation and to be an instrument for the minimization of inequalities among the people (ZECFR, 2013). Consequently, there is a development of two career streams, which are: academic and vocational in Zambia's secondary education leading to the Trades Training.

Most students intend to enter employment after completion of their tertiary education. It is either they go into formal or informal employment. Students' mentorship in entrepreneurship relates to the acquisition of relevant skills, knowledge which enable them to make meaningful contributions to the sustainable development of the country. Their resultant qualifications may or may not help them in this but the skills they have (Daka, 2018). The dynamism of our contemporary social demands requires entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship entails creativity and innovation. Entrepreneurial skills will enable graduates who do not manage to get formal employment upon completing their tertiary education to be innovative enough and create jobs for themselves and for others. According to the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ, 2017), the inability of the recent economic growth to significantly impact on poverty reduction is largely as a result of low employment creation. Growth in the economy can reduce poverty rapidly if the

employment potential it creates enables poor people raise their income, either through increased employment or through higher returns to labor. However, statistics show that formal sector employment growth was sluggish during recent development plan periods. In addition, a significant number of the working population is self-employed, mainly in subsistence agriculture or small-scale and often fragile businesses. The government continues to state that Zambia actually suffers a skilled-worker gap in manufacturing caused by the mismatch between the skills offered by training institutions and those demanded by industry. The level of self-starting entrepreneurs is also low especially among graduates. Therefore, it is against this background that this thesis attempts to analyse how Kwame Nkrumah University (KNU) of central Zambia mentors its students in entrepreneurship.

KNU is an established and recognized Public University mandated to provide higher education services as per the provisions of Part IV, Section 14 of the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013. Its vision is to provide quality, inclusive and socially responsible higher education and research. In the work of high unemployment among the youths in Zambia, the former government of the Patriotic Front tasked the higher education institutions to introduce programs that would enable young graduate start new businesses. This would help them become self-reliant. The university has four (4) schools namely; School of Natural Sciences, School of Education, School of Social Sciences and School of Business Studies. Being one of the leading teacher education universities in Zambia, Kwame Nkrumah University, embarked on a mission to reformulate certain courses and programs which included the introduction of an Entrepreneurship course under the program of Bachelor of Business Studies with Education and two programmes under the School of Business, namely; Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship and Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship with Education. In addition, two compulsory courses, i.e. Entrepreneurship and Information Communication Technology (ICT) were also fused in the Teaching Methodology Diploma program for all students and the ‘would be teachers.’

The main idea is to equip students with the principles and processes involved in being an entrepreneur and to be more creative, turn ideas into action by undertaking new business ventures. The courses are designed to emphasize the fact that entrepreneurship is about incremental wealth creation through the creation of new value and the improvement of existing products or services.

By the end of all these entrepreneurial related courses students among objectives are expected to:

- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the entrepreneurial process.
- II. Draft marketing, business, financial and organizational plans.
- III. Develop Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a means for self-employment and employment creation.

Apart from just giving theoretical knowledge to learners, at the end of the programs, they are expected to do internship in various business organizations in order to acquaint themselves to the actual business environment.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Each year, Zambia’s tertiary education institutions continue to produce more and more graduates into society thereby augmenting on the working age population which is not employed. It is however not clear to what extent these graduates are mentored in entrepreneurship skills for them to remain in the streets without jobs (self – employment). In this vein, this study investigated how tertiary education institutions in general and in particular at Kwame Nkrumah University are mentoring students in entrepreneurship in an attempt to help solve the problem of high unemployment among the educated youth population.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

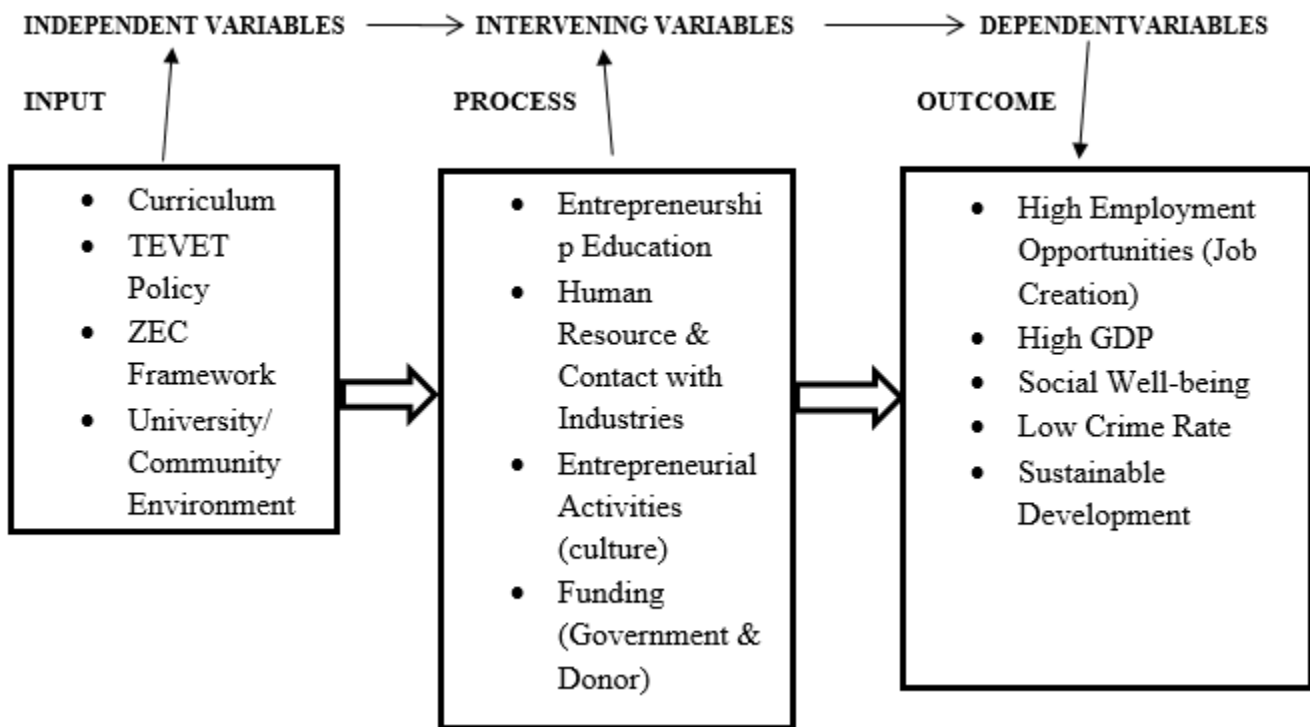
The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies for enhancing mentorship in entrepreneurship for undergraduate students of tertiary education institutions, at Kwame Nkrumah University so as to reduce unemployed graduates in the country.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Conceptual Framework*

The entrepreneurial mentorship conceptual framework illustrated on figure 1 highlights Independent variables to be; the curriculum, TEVET policy and Zambia Educational Curriculum Framework which refer to government policies and administration, and also the university environment and community. Intervening variables of the study include entrepreneurship education, the human resource to administer, learners’ contact with industries, entrepreneurial activities or projects creating an entrepreneurial culture and funding from both government budgetary allocation and also from donor funding agencies. The aforementioned intervening variables are what we are also calling ‘inputs.’ Dependent variables or outcomes are high employment opportunities which signify job creation, high Gross Domestic Product (GDP), social well-being, low crime rate and all these would be summed up as sustainable development.

Figure 1: Entrepreneurial Mentorship Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher-September, 2020

### *Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

Mentorship may be defined in many different ways. According to Blackwell (1989), as quoted by Tiklova and Holienka (2016), mentoring is a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievements, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés. Nabi et al (2016) and Daka (2019) define mentoring as a one to-one relationship between an experienced person (a mentor) and a less experienced person (a protégé or mentee) that provides a variety of developmental and personal growth functions. According to Eesley (2016), formal mentorship has been defined as assigned, intensive, regular meetings over a short period of time (6 months to a year) while informal mentoring has been referred to as self-selected, less frequent and lasts for a longer-term (3-6 years). The protégé's preferences for feedback and trust in their mentors were important moderators (Eesley, 2016; Daka, Chipindi and Mwale, 2020; Daka, Mulenga – Hagane, Mukalula – Kalumbi and Lisulo, 2021).

Bruyat and Julien (2001) state that entrepreneurship is as much about the change and learning that the individual entrepreneur experiences by interacting with the environment and value creation that the entrepreneur causes through his/her actions. Learning and value creation are thus seen as two main aspects of entrepreneurship. This implies that entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others and Lackéus et al

(2013) stress that the value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social.

The aspect of entrepreneurial value creation is implicit to mentorship in entrepreneurship. The value created should be novel, it requires some kind of initiative on behalf of the value creator, and it involves acquisition of resources needed to create the value. The value creation process is managed and owned by the initiator of the process (i.e. the student) and that this initiator also assumes the risk of failure (Okpara and Halkias, 2011). Value creation occurs extensively in society, and is tightly connected to people's happiness since helping others results not only in making a living but also in feelings of meaningfulness, participation, engagement and life satisfaction.

Notably, we realize that mentoring may possibly be confused with coaching. However, mentoring generally tends to be more developmental (here helping mentees to grow and understand how to be entrepreneurs), directed by the mentee and hence more focused on personal growth than formal results, and voluntary on the part of the mentor. In contrast, coaching tends to be more focused on specific formal outcomes (commonly set by the organisation) and tends to entail a business relationship with coaches financially rewarded for their work (Audet & Couteret 2012).

Audet and St-Jean (2009) state that there are specific skills which entrepreneurs can improve through mentorship. These skills are categorised into; cognitive and affective training.

Audet and St-Jean further explain that cognitive training is marked by entrepreneurs' acquisition of new knowledge and that under affective training, entrepreneurs get an idea of who they are, what they really want to achieve. Additionally, they become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Entrepreneurs who are born out of mentoring eventually fall under; necessity driven entrepreneurs, opportunity driven entrepreneurs and growth driven entrepreneurs (OECD & European Commission, 2014). This implies that mentorship creates a relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The mentee, through practical engagements guided by the mentor acquires new entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and values. And that what each entrepreneur becomes is a product of what was the propelling or motivator force (Needs Opportunity and Growth).

### III. MENTORING FUNCTIONS

Crisp and Cruz (2009) have identify four major mentoring functions specifically within an undergraduate/student context: (a) support for setting a career path; (b) advancing students' subject knowledge; (c) existence of a role model to emulate and from whom to learn how to overcome challenges; and (d) psychological and emotional support. The arguments are that supporting a career path may assist students in making sense of the entrepreneurial process through developing entrepreneurial maturity. Here entrepreneurial maturity reflects a capacity on the part of mentees to make and act upon vocational choices by analyzing available information on themselves and the occupation. Regarding socio-emotional support function, it is argued that the presence of the mentor, as a role model, incorporates admiration of their journey and a desire to learn from as well as to emulate them; thus, affording the mentor an inspirational role (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). This implies that it may increase students' entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, Hedner, Abouzeedan, and Klofsten (2011) suggest that mentoring can help develop entrepreneurial resilience, enabling the overcoming of challenges, adversities or setbacks in the entrepreneurial career path.

In 2016, Nabi et al conducted a research at a British university whose principle focus was on the role of mentoring in developing student's entrepreneurial careers in the early years of university. The study suggested that mentoring helps to clarify mentees' understanding of themselves and the entrepreneurial process. It is argued that mentoring then provides a "direction" for their entrepreneurial careers to develop further, including specific steps required to move from idea to implementation. This supports the notion of mentoring developing entrepreneurial career maturity, by helping mentees to understand themselves and the entrepreneurial career path. Regarding the former, for example, mentees focus on becoming more self-aware or aware of their own strengths, weaknesses and ideas. Mentees also acquire an understanding of the entrepreneurial career path as a developmental process, which again reinforces the

notion that mentoring helps entrepreneurial career maturity in terms of providing knowledge about the process of starting up a business.

Another overarching mentoring function category as established by the study is the socio - emotional support which also incorporates two main themes, the presence of a role model and emotional support. The presence of a role model theme focuses on the participants actually seeing the mentors' entrepreneurial achievements and that it can be done, rather than just being told that it is achievable. Seeing the mentors' success on their entrepreneurial journeys serves to inspire mentees, and reassure them that the journey is realistic and achievable.

Beyond the role-model presence function, it is revealed that mentors provide a range of emotional support functions to early years of university mentees. This theme focuses on mentors helping with emotion-based issues by directly addressing fears and anxieties of a financial nature, for example, of raising or losing capital, wasting time, or having large overheads. The results suggest mentoring influences entrepreneurial intentions in terms of either increasing or maintaining intentions, through specific mentoring functions and that the link between mentoring functions and entrepreneurial intentions is enriched by considering entrepreneurial intentions models. The study revealed above was conducted at a university which solely works towards forming professional entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship in higher education has attracted considerable attention. More so, the European Commission (2011) points out that entrepreneurship education is on the agenda in almost all countries, either being in development, or already articulated in some form. Further reports indicate that, entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial mind-set of young people, their intentions towards entrepreneurship, their employability and role in society and the economy (European Commission, 2012). With reference to the same work of the European Commission, it is affirmed that entrepreneurship education may serve as a tool for fostering social inclusion and that it can also be a means to greater integration of the framework for key competences for lifelong learning. This logically links to the attainment of particular Sustainable Development Goals highlighted earlier in this paper.

Gibb (as cited in Gibb et al, 2018) avails that entrepreneurial higher education institutions are designed to empower staff and students to illustrate enterprise, innovation and creativity in research, teaching and pursuit and use of knowledge across different fields. They contribute effectively to the enhancement of learning in a societal environment characterised by high levels of uncertainty and complexity. Such institutions are dedicated to the creation of public value through a process of open engagement, mutual learning, discovery and exchange with all stakeholders in society. This implies that institutions give necessary skills and resources

that would enable staff and students to engage in productive and innovative activities and even assess them in a formative way so as to be sure that they attained the targeted skills (Mulenga – Hagane, Daka, Msango, Mwelwa and Kakupa, 2019).

#### *Objectives of Entrepreneurship in Education*

Some scholars have outlined some objectives that entrepreneurship education claims to achieve. According to Paul (2005) and Ojeifa (2013) cited in Ayatse (2013), entrepreneurship education is structured to achieve the following objectives:

Firstly, it offers functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-oriented. Entrepreneurship is also expected to provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities. Secondly, entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development and at the same time it offers tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible. Furthermore, entrepreneurship also may also be viewed as a means of reducing high rate of poverty as well as creating employment generation.

Thirdly, entrepreneurship is also expected to reduce high rates of poverty, create employment, as well as help provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses. And lastly, Ayatse (2013) urges that entrepreneurship is expected to “inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults this will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on” (Ayatse, 2013). For the European Commission (2012), Entrepreneurship education is expected to improve the entrepreneurship key competence, which will have an impact not only on the role of the individual in the economy (working life) but also in society (social and personal life). This may further imply that, as a matter of fact, the effect of respective entrepreneurship programs on the role of society differs. The few stipulated objectives of Entrepreneurship education above would, in a more summed-up way imply that this kind of education would procure youths with the functional aspect of education, propel economic growth, generate vast employment opportunities and instil in them a spirit of perseverance, focus and determination. Subsequently, this may translate into high economic growth, poverty reduction and indeed sustainable development.

#### *Strategies for Enhancing Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

Scott (2019) argues that the strategy to employ in enhancing mentorship of students in entrepreneurship consists of five key considerations: organization, mentor cadre, mentor training, mentor assignment and evaluation. Organization essentially refers to effective administrative roles, making sure

that mentorship is legitimized through adherence to policies and laws, encouraging active stakeholder participation, ensuring allocation funds and resources and enforcing accountability. According to Scott (2019), mentor cadre refers to the establishing a formal process for recruiting and selecting mentors. Training of mentors must consider familiarizing them with policies and programs affecting universities or institutions of higher learning. On mentor assignment, Scott states that there must be a formal process to match mentors and mentees. And under evaluation, institutional effectiveness, students` development, mentor selection and training and mentor assignment have to be assessed.

Bosma et al also (2014) argue that a critical factor the success of entrepreneurship ventures is the ability of entrepreneurs/students to utilize entrepreneurial skills and capabilities in meeting business challenges. This implies that developing the know-how of students in entrepreneurship is a strategy to prioritize. In the quest to enhance mentorship of students in entrepreneurship, Hoppe (2017) suggests that mentors should teach case studies, relate theoretical content to real business challenges, stress importance of technology, allow students to participate in entrepreneurship contests and enrolling in Entrepreneur-in-Residence Programs. He continues in explaining that teaching case studies will expose students to executives` thought process when analyzing situations to provide real life business solutions and mistakes.

In the same line of thought, Bosma et al (2012) argue that case studies are an effective method to spur students` curiosity, putting them face-to-face with real life business solutions. This will also turn class participation into speaking events (Daka, Banda and Namafe, 2017) and a mentor can achieve this by integrating ignite talks or pop-up debates. Relating theoretical content to real business challenges (Daka and Changwe, 2020) is a vital strategy in enhancing mentorship in entrepreneurship. A mentor must link ideas to concrete examples such as discussing in inflation and monetary policies, for example, when teaching social media marketing, a lecturer can point to how companies like Facebook and Twitter have become promotional fulcrum for many businesses around the world, (Gimmon, 2012).

Furthermore, stressing technology`s importance will enhance entrepreneurship in that mentors need to explain how strategic businesses use technology to communicate, market, innovate and ultimately earn a profit. Gimmon (2012) adds that current generations are very knowledgeable when it comes to technology, but it is not always entrepreneurship oriented, hence the need to teach students strategic ways companies and entrepreneurs are using technology to make money. Clutterbuck (2009:89) argues that “participating in entrepreneurship contests is a great opportunity for students to put their knowledge to practice and meet students from other schools and exchange experience, learn how other institutions teach in the case of mentors.” Besides that, competitiveness

also needs practice and development since the business world can be deemed a huge competition.

Clutterbuck (2009) emphasizes that mentors need to enroll in entrepreneur-in-residence programs to enhance their creativity, critical thinking and competitiveness. He further argues this allows mentors to provide support and enthusiasm to the students besides all the constructive feedback or advice that they can give. The afore-mentioned programs are meant to educate and update mentors on changes made in the curriculum. Eventually, both mentors and students would take advantage of situation simulations. It is further argued that such programs shape entrepreneurial thinking and help use the knowledge gained from lecturers and books in practice. Orientations towards entrepreneurship among students may be dependent on their adaptive skills and ability to effectively navigate through unanticipated transitions and risk inherent entrepreneurship. Henceforth, behavior modifications towards enhancing these traits may substantially be beneficial in encouraging entrepreneurship among students.

#### *Mentorship Models in Entrepreneurship*

Mentorship has become paramount, and the demand for robust mentoring initiatives that deliver quantifiable results is at an all-time high. There are many models which can be used but in the field of education, three models work well and these are progression model, peer mentoring and self – directed mentoring. Blenker et al (2012) proposed a progression model that leans on two central ideas. The first idea is that entrepreneurial activity can lead to many kinds of value, not only economic value. The second idea is the existence of a value-creating entrepreneurial mindset and generic methodology possible to apply to all walks of life. In their concluding argument, they state that such an entrepreneurial approach to life is a mandatory component of all entrepreneurial education, no matter if the desired outcome is venture creation, growth or social change. Subsequently, based on the above stated approach, they propose four basic building blocks that can develop entrepreneurial attitudes among learners, and that constitute practical recommendations that teachers can draw on:

- 1) Letting students construct entrepreneurial stories anchored in their own life world helps them develop their opportunity skills.
- 2) Letting students reflect upon problems and disharmonies in their own life world helps them develop everyday value creation skills.
- 3) Letting students imagine themselves as entrepreneurial individuals in a distant future helps them transform into a more entrepreneurial identity.
- 4) Letting students work in interdisciplinary teams picturing and then realizing entrepreneurial opportunities, this may help them develop team-efficacy, (Blenker et al, 2012).

Peer mentoring model in entrepreneurship has proven to be one of the most effective mentoring models in training institutions like a university, as two students work together and exchange their expertise and experience they form a

mutually beneficial mentor-mentor relationship. Moreover, working with someone at your experience level means you're likely to retain the skills you've acquired. This is because your peers tend to be more aware of the challenges you face than those who are considerably above you on the corporate ladder. On the other hand, self – directed mentorship requires a curious and motivated student to take the initiative and contact a lecturer/advisor, usually to meet regularly and provide training and/or career advice that is directly relevant to the mentee's professional goals.

#### IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research used the mixed method approach and specifically employed the Concurrent triangulation design. Qualitative and quantitative data was concurrently collected in one phase. This design is a form of mixed methods design in which the researcher converged or merged quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. The researcher selected this design because it allows the collection of both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall results after a separate analysis. The aforementioned design helped in overcoming weaknesses from either of the sides. The target population was all undergraduate students at Kwame Nkrumah University of Kabwe-Zambia who are undergoing the process of being prepared for life in society, Lecturers and Administrators.

Kwame Nkrumah University had by the time of study a total of 6, 000 full – time and part – time students. Half of this number were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year. The study covered 10% of the undergraduate students, that is; 10% of the full time students and 10% of the part-time students. That is about 300 respondents in number. The university also had about 200 staff and 10% of them were interviewed: 20 lecturers and 4 administrators. Therefore, the sample size made a total of 324 respondents of Kwame Nkrumah University. This study technically chose the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students who have substantial experiences at the University and among these students, simple random sampling was employed. Random sampling for Lecturers and purposive sampling for Administrators were used respectively. It is important to note that respondents other than undergraduate students at Kwame Nkrumah University were chosen based on their influence on the process of mentoring undergraduates in entrepreneurship. This implies that, a number of staff members were a viable source of data for this research as indicated above. The researcher administered structured questionnaires to the undergraduate students, the use of in-depth interview guides on Lecturers and Administrators. Some unstructured interviews were also conducted on some lecturers and some administrators. These interviews involved closed ended and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. Samples of the opted for instruments are included in the appendices

## V. FINDINGS

### *Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

56 students said “yes” to being mentored while 231 said “no” they are not mentored. The frequency or extent of mentorship of undergraduate students in entrepreneurship is mostly determined by the structure of the curriculum in application at the university. From the administration, it is revealed that the university uses the General Education Curriculum for training students.

### *Strategies to Enhancing Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

Among different strategies suggested by students on how to improve mentorship of students in entrepreneurship as reviewed in the findings are: revising the curriculum, introducing entrepreneurship as a compulsory course, train lecturers in entrepreneurship, providing qualified mentors, creating entrepreneurship clubs and associations, securing and providing grants and loans for students, sensitizing students by holding entrepreneurship talks and seminars, linking students to entrepreneurs and motivating them. Of the respondents, 23% mentioned revising the curriculum, 94% mentioned introducing entrepreneurship as a compulsory course, 91% mentioned provision of qualified mentors, 68% suggested entrepreneurship talks, 38% creation of entrepreneurship clubs or associations, 54% holding entrepreneurship workshops and seminars, 16% securing grants and loans for students, 25% promoting industrial attachment, 78% sensitization and 63% mentioned motivating of students.

All members of staff suggested that the curriculum catering for tertiary education be revised putting entrepreneurship as a compulsory course and also recommended that training of mentors should be conducted as the strategies to improving the mentorship. In addition, they all suggested that financial and material support must be increased in entrepreneurial activities and mentorship. About 31% members of staff highlighted that engagement of students in entrepreneurial research can be considered as a viable strategy.

## VI. DISCUSSION

### *Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

As presented in the findings, respondents expressed some awareness about mentorship in entrepreneurship. 13% expressed no knowledge of the subject. The findings of this research have established that respondents who expressed awareness had an understanding of mentorship in entrepreneurship that generally revolves around guidance by qualified personnel in being equipped with knowledge, skills and values in view of innovatively and creatively utilizing available resources to solve existential problems. The mentorship which represented 18.7% were those from the School of Business Studies and they just referred to what they covered in the courses in the school. This should that there

was no strategies that the university had put in place in as far as mentorship is concerned. Respondents’ understanding actually correlates with the understanding of Gibb et al (2018) in stating that mentorship in entrepreneurship empowers staff and students to illustrate enterprise, innovation and creativity in research, teaching and pursuit and use of knowledge across different disciplines amid different social challenges. Gibb et al further affirm that in fact, such institutions which take up the task of mentoring students in entrepreneurship are dedicated to the creation of public value through a process of open engagement, mutual learning, discovery and exchange with all stakeholders in society. Mentoring students in entrepreneurship is actually rendering them more productive, it is investing in human capital. In the same vein, Karabol and Halsey (1977: 313) state that “the productiveness of human beings is now vastly larger than all other forms of wealth taken all together.” This resonates with the principle argument of the Human Capital theory which served as a guide for this study.

Subsequently, 87% of respondents confirmed being aware of the importance of being mentored in entrepreneurship and expressed a number of justifications. Knowing the fact that in Zambia, it is not guaranteed that a student upon graduating will become employed formally either by the government or the private sector, respondents highlighted that knowledge, skills and values acquired through mentorship in entrepreneurship would enable them find their way to integrate into society by creating their own jobs and for others through innovation and creativity. Stressing on the very reality in the context of Zambia, Ngoma (2012) argues that as a classified poor country, improving the population’s health, education and technical training has high priority to enhance productivity. Discussions above actually tally with what one administrator stated:

*Our approach currently is to equip our students with academic knowledge and with skills of how to impart this knowledge to the young learners. We have done this so well, there is more than enough well equipped teachers, sadly there is approximately over 50,000 trained but unemployed teachers and their education can only afford them a job, without a job, their education is useless. But if we want to go a step further, which we must do to equip our students with skills and entrepreneurial knowledge that the students can use to do something and add more value to society than just the ability to teach well.*

It is reviewed that students would become critical thinkers and researchers, self-reliant and well equipped with knowledge on the market viability. Such efforts would eventually have a larger bearing on the social and economic growth of the country; reducing poverty and the crime rate. This correlates with what Paul (2005) and Ojeifa (2013) cited in Ayatse (2013) have formulated as objectives of mentorship of students in entrepreneurship: mentorship in entrepreneurship

offers functional education for the youth that will enable them to become self-employed and self-oriented. Entrepreneurship is also expected to provide the youthful graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities. Additionally, entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development and at the same time it offers tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible. Furthermore, entrepreneurship may also be viewed as a means of reducing high rate of poverty as well as creating employment generation.

Respondents expressed the importance of restructuring their attitude or culture vis-à-vis entrepreneurship when they mentioned that such mentorship would enable them think outside the box. In the same context, Ayatse (2013: 85) argues that entrepreneurship is expected to “inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults this will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.” The European Commission (2012: 14) states that “Entrepreneurship education is expected to improve the entrepreneurship key competence, which will have an impact not only on the role of the individual in the economy (working life) but also in society (social and personal life).” This may further imply that, as a matter of fact, the effect of respective entrepreneurship programs on the role of society differs.

The findings had established that at least 80% of respondents had not received mentorship in entrepreneurship and this represents the majority. Mentorship in entrepreneurship is predominant under business studies because it comes as component in the School of Business. However, there were still a few respondents who benefited from lecturers of non-business studies taking the initiative of chipping in principles of entrepreneurship either at the beginning or at the end of their time tabled lectures. Out of 19 members of staff interviewed, it was found that only 4 belong to the school of business. Nevertheless, the rest of the staff though not in the school of business, they highly uploaded the aspect of mentoring students in entrepreneurship and 8 of them confirmed that they made sure they talked about entrepreneurship in their lectures. Below is what one of the members of staff said in an interview: *“I try to emphasize on entrepreneurship during my lectures. At times, I even invite entrepreneurs from around town to come and talk to students.”*

This shows that the members of staff well understood the vitality of entrepreneurship in grooming students to stand contemporary social challenges. All members of staff confirmed being entrepreneurs of some sort. And generally, efforts from the staff are made in attempting to expose students to entrepreneurship, according to the findings of this research. Only one member of staff (Lecturer X) confirmed that although she was well aware of the importance of entrepreneurship and that she was an entrepreneur to some

extent, she had not done much in mentoring students in entrepreneurship when she said: *“Even if I understand my role in preparing undergraduate students for life in society, I and other lecturers outside the school of business have not played our roles well.”*

#### *Strategies for Enhancing Mentorship of Students in Entrepreneurship*

A curriculum is the totality of all the planned learning experiences. It is a plan for the practice of education and it can also be referred to as the heart of the school systems. If the provision of mentorship in entrepreneurship is to be enhanced, it is important to consider going back to the drawing board, revising the curriculum (plan for education). It is inevitable that the curriculum developed matches the needs, aspirations and expectations of society or rather the population for which it is prepared for and in the case of the contrary, the curriculum is doomed irrelevant. This argument actually carries with what UNESCO (2016) states: in order to ensure that students in Zambia acquire the skills, knowledge, and values they need for their personal fulfillment as well as for the realization of the country’s social and economic development, and particularly in the context of its Vision 2030, a curriculum aligned to the demands of the current labor market must be designed.

In this study, there was no existing mentorship strategies identified and therefore students suggested ways of mentorship strategies to be put in place by the university. However, it is cardinal to bear in mind that the mentorship to be providing via the strategies being discussed must essentially be goal-oriented and not just as a partial fulfillment for a particular course. Other than involving students in the institution’s entrepreneurial projects, they are supposed to be linked to actual entrepreneurs and enterprising firms. The industry may be given an opportunity offer its own support, actual entrepreneurs may offer motivational talks to students and holding activities such as workshops and seminars would highly supplement on the mentorship. Encouraging creation of clubs and associations of entrepreneurship would propel sensitization on entrepreneurship.

Financial support is a necessity for the establishment and sustenance of entrepreneurial projects. The university should consider procuring or lobbying for funds for establishing and sustaining entrepreneurial projects. The university could solicit funds that can be provided to students as loans and lobbying for firms that would be willing to support the mentorship of students through grants. At a certain level of their mentorship in entrepreneurship, students should be allowed to use the knowledge and skills they gain by letting them establish and run their own ventures. Identifying, pursuing and advocating for policies that allow access to government funds for empowerment of youths could be one of the ways through which a financial support system may be built between tertiary education institutions and the government. 100% of the staff interviewed highlighted how



critical the financial support system is to both running university entrepreneurial projects and the mentorship process in entrepreneurship.

The researchers agree with the claim that development begins with the mind. Universities are key places where competent minds are shaped and generally, it may be argued that universities are the principal source of the skilled leadership and technical expertise needed to guide national development. These human resources constitute fundamental inputs for national capacity building that is a requirement for development and economic growth. Universities would easily achieve the development of an entrepreneurship rich culture through changing the mentalities of trainees. It is essential that these universities' basic functioning is assured if countries are to have the human resource competence that they need to manage their development effectively. Donors have urged for institutional strategic planning exercises in response to university initiative (Cloete et al, 2015). In the same line of thought, the GRZ (2017) states that Zambia needs an attitude and behavioral change tailored towards transforming the national development pathways among a cross-section of its leaders and citizens. It emphasizes that there is need for a paradigm shift that focuses on addressing negative cultural attributes while enhancing the positive traits. Now, this requires inculcating positive cultural values through education systems from family, communities and beyond. The education system may address and promote civic, environmental, innovation and entrepreneurship elements to address negative attitudes. This implies that the education system acts as the vehicle for this change. Tertiary education institutions are key means to fostering the aforementioned change.

Seven members of staff emphasized on turning entrepreneurship and related activities into a strong habit for the entire University. In the same line of thought, Clark (1998) adds that enterprising universities, much as firms in the high tech-industry, develop a work culture that embraces change. He further states that the new culture may start out as a relatively simple institutional idea about change that later becomes elaborated into a set of beliefs which, if diffused in the heartland, becomes a university-wide culture. Strong cultures are rooted in strong practices. As ideas and practices interact, the cultural or symbolic side of the university becomes particularly important in cultivating institutional identity and distinctive reputation.

Without doubt, significant innovation in the character of a university means that some core tasks and some deep structures are altered to the point where the long-term course of the organization is changed. Such transforming work must be done locally, in the university itself. It must extend over years that often become decades. The sustained work calls for collective action leading to new practices and beliefs, steps that are entrepreneurial in character, with much risk-taking and flexible adjustment along the way. When traditional

habits are not enough, universities need to develop an entrepreneurial response (Clark, 1998).

## VII. CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, we may conclude that it necessarily follows that majority of the students at the university were aware of mentorship in entrepreneurship and its indispensable importance to the contemporary society. However, the number of students who were actually being mentored in entrepreneurship was far below average, implying that at least 87% of the students were not being mentored in the aforementioned discipline and the majority was not even aware that the practice of mentorship in entrepreneurship takes place at the university. This mentorship was formally being done under the school of business studies. No evident strategies existed at the university and proposed strategies have been highlighted which included that the component of mentorship in entrepreneurship to be inclusively added to the curriculum in a specific nature. Among the recommended strategies are: practically involving students in entrepreneurial projects/activities in view of nourishing their mentorship has been deemed essential, linking students to actual entrepreneurial to allow the sharing of diverse experiences that include successes as well as challenges. This has simply been referred to as linking students with industry allowing them to put into practice the knowledge, skills and values they acquire other than just being theoretically mentored. There is need to carry out a study on the strategies which Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) institutions use mentoring their students and relate to how such can be applied to educational institutions like Kwame Nkrumah University.

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