

STUDENTS TOWARDS BEING ENTREPRENEURS
**RWANDAN FEMALE STUDENTS TOWARDS BEING
ENTREPRENEURS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

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Abstract

Many countries undertake entrepreneurship lessons as an accelerator for creating new jobs and encouraging students to be entrepreneurs. The present study was carried out to track the female students' career paths after completing high school. The study surveyed 41 students from both a day and a boarding school in Kayonza district, Rwanda. The findings reveal that female students from both schools prefer entrepreneurial jobs after completing high school. In comparison, 80% of students in the day and 58.5% of boarding school students chose their career path as entrepreneurs. The study was limited in the sample, and it suggested further research in the same area; however, it recommends teachers to inspire their students by inviting entrepreneurs around to school.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, female students, boarding school, day school*

Every person was born rich (Proctor, 2015). In this book, the famous New York Times bestseller, Bob Proctor, encourages people to follow their dreams. As Sandra Gallagher, the CEO¹ and Co-Founder of Proctor Gallagher Institute, testified, Bob Proctor is the best business motivation public speaker, and his writings and speeches have changed the entire life of those who read him. He said: "Most people are extras in their movie (Proctor, 2015, p. iv)." Most of us, if we think about the life we live, may realize that we are not the star of our movie at all. These bits of advice take us to the work of Robert Kiyosaki, "Rich dad Poor dad" (Kiyosaki, 2012), who compared what we study at school and what we use to attain and fulfill our needed life and wealth. He figured out that if what we study at school is connected to what we use to dig our real world, everyone would be satisfied and sustain his/her financial needs. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Kiyosaki has invented a four-quadrant cash flow to explain how income is distributed among people. The first quadrant comprises employees who work for others, the second comprises self-employed, the third comprises business people, and the four comprise investors (Kiyosaki, 2012). It is interesting that most intellectuals think about getting jobs and always stagnate in the first quadrant of cash flow (Kiyosaki, 2012; Proctor, 2015). It is noted that 95% of the world population is employees and self-employers, while business people and investors comprise only 5% of our world population. The ridiculous phenomenon is; those employees have attained the highest education to work for this small portion of third and fourth quadrant people who have invested their time thinking the great ideas

¹CEO: chief executive officer

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that improve human life instead of spending time studying for degrees. Thus, people should be equipped with the necessary skills to use after their schooling, as Kiyosaki argues that what lacks is financial literacy (Kiyosaki, 2012).

Entrepreneurship is a substantial mirror and generator of today's world economy (Hatak & Reiner, 2011). "Entrepreneurship is more than the mere creation of a business. The characteristics of seeking opportunities, taking risks beyond security, and having the tenacity to push an idea through to reality combine into a unique perspective that permeates entrepreneurs (Kuratko, 2003, p. 2)." Many countries are currently encouraging their citizens to look around and think of creating their jobs instead of seeking them from the government or private sector to provide jobs to others. For instance, Sweden has been identified as the first country that cares about entrepreneurship education. From this experience, due to the mission of mini-business 'Presnatch' based on offering solutions to the problem of visitors robbed of their handbags in public places, 87% of students believed that by participating in the program, their knowledge of how to run business and the ability to solve their routine problems had increased (Hatak & Reiner, 2011). Relatively, an Entrepreneurship lesson is one of Rwanda's lessons to augment the number of people who prefer to create their job instead of being job seekers. From 2010, Rwanda's government started implementing teaching Entrepreneurship lessons in secondary schools to help graduate students create their jobs. As the level of the unemployment rate was increased, the government of Rwanda expected that the Entrepreneurship lesson would reduce and exterminate unemployment (Niyonkuru, 2005; United Nations Rwanda, 2014). In Rwanda, the gender equity policy has been raised, emphasized, and implemented.

Various scholars have discussed the relationship between the intention of being an entrepreneur and the motives of schools. For instance, on the analysis of the impact of teaching entrepreneurship in graduate schools at Tunisian University, Ben and Boujelbene (2014) found that what the entrepreneurship's master alumni have learned is beneficial to their works got. It is to say; the entrepreneurial skills help them to perform their duties related to their current jobs. Self-efficacy and education have positively influenced female business students in Nigeria towards entrepreneurial intention (Isidore & Norsiah, 2012). These authors also found that friends' social environment helps the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial intentions. Bandura (2010) defines self-efficacy as one's belief to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments and reflect on confidence in exerting control over their self-motivation, behavior, and social environment.

On the other hand, entrepreneurial intentions are the ambitions of an individual to pursue a future business career. There was a strong positive correlation between strengthening entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions (Shinnar, Hsu, & Powell, 2014) moderated by gender differences among students. The authors found no statistical significance of entrepreneurial intentions in gender; however, the increase in entrepreneurial self-efficacy was statistically significant in male students.

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Veciana et al. (2005) found that boys are likely to desire and have a strong ambition to venture and create new firms than girls.

Much of the literature has mostly focused on male students in higher institutions; however, this study highlights the level of understanding of entrepreneurship career early as it investigated female secondary school students. This study aimed to know the overview of Rwandan students towards being Entrepreneurs after high school, especially female students who are in the last year of their secondary education. The study will help recognize if the students are aware of entrepreneurship's importance for themselves, their family, and the country. The study also will contribute to know what the female students think about the Entrepreneurship lesson. Therefore, it will stimulate other students towards engaging in the entrepreneurship industry and their teachers to teach entrepreneurship effectively and in a way to students benefit “open mind.”

The study has the following research questions: What is the career path do Rwandan females prefer after graduating high school?; How do Rwandan females value the Entrepreneurship lesson?; What are the proposed solutions to overcome challenges faced by females Entrepreneurs in Rwanda?

Methodology

Research design and population: This study mainly used qualitative methods (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Thus, we seek female students' opinions on what they will do after their high school studies and presented their ideas in the form of described themes (Orodho et al., 2016) and direct quotes. We conducted this study in two secondary schools located in Kayonza district, Eastern Province, Rwanda. We selected two schools, purposively and conveniently. One school was a girls' school while another school was mixed. The girls' school is boarding while the mixed school is a day school. Therefore, we surveyed 41 students of senior six MEG,² where 20 students are from the day while 21 students are from boarding school. This sampling technique allowed us to compare female students studying in boarding and day schools. We preferred day and boarding school students because their learning environments are different. For instance, students at day school spend the night at their home while at boarding school stay both day and night at school. The infrastructures are also different. We selected the combination of MEG because this combination can facilitate students to think about business through Mathematics and Economics lessons and entrepreneurship lessons. We did not consider male students in day school because our focus was to compare girls from both day and boarding schools. Several Entrepreneurs are male (see also in our introduction), so we only preferred to focus on female students to know if they think about challenges that the female Entrepreneurs faced and the solutions to overcome those challenges as the young generation.

Instrument and data analysis: The study used a questionnaire survey for data collection. The questionnaire had eleven questions, including eight qualitative and three quantitative questions (see Appendix A). We used MS Excel for data entry and

² MEG: a subject combination of Mathematics, Economics, and Geography

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analysis. For the first, second, and eighth questions, the MS Excel results were transferred from an excel document to a word document in the form of tables. The written result was also transferred from excel to word document to analyze possible and emerging themes. Therefore, we found three main themes that form the information provided by our respondents. Thus, “the vision of girl’s students about Entrepreneurship” theme, “the importance of Entrepreneurship lesson” theme, and “the challenge of being an Entrepreneur for females” theme.

Findings

The vision of girl’s students about Entrepreneurship: The first intended career was being an entrepreneur as 80% of students from day school and 58.5% of students from boarding school selected that (see Table 1).

Table 1 Preferred career after female students’ graduate high school

Career	Day students	Boarding students
Teacher	0	12.5
Medical doctor	0	0
Pilot	0	8.5
Technician	0	4
Designer	5	8.5
Entrepreneur	80	58.5
Agriculture	0	0
Other (Lawyer)	15	4
Other (Musician)	0	4
Total	100%	100%

This difference among those selected to be entrepreneurs and day students may be caused by the fact these day students are based at their home. Therefore, they can observe and be inspired by the entrepreneurial path than boarding students who are not open to the community. While no student from day school wishes to pursue a teaching career, 12.5% of boarding students wish to be teachers. We have noticed that day students are not confident enough to choose an airspace career as none of them selected pilot as a career while boarding students aim to be airplane pilots. The structure of these schools may cause it in terms of infrastructure and education quality. Boarding schools have more facilities than day schools, and boarding students can concentrate on their studies as they are based at school while day students spend nights and weekends at their homes.

The importance of Entrepreneurship lesson: All students are aware of the role of Entrepreneurship lessons as a necessity for our country. For instance, 100% think that entrepreneurship lesson is necessary because it provides the employment opportunity by reducing unemployment and brain drain in foreign countries, making youth become the job creator than job seekers. It leads to an increase in the citizens' income so that their standard of living also increases. It is necessary because the Entrepreneurs' taxes lead to an increase in the country's economic growth and the government expenditure increase, such as the improvement of infrastructures. Specifically, students from boarding school mentioned that entrepreneurship lesson is necessary because entrepreneurship combines different production factors to produce goods and services to maximize profit. It reduces ignorance in people in the business by which the country's economic activity develops, and the high number of

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dependencies in another country reduces. It helps Entrepreneurs have innovation and creativity in their businesses, expand their market inside and outside the country, and know how the business's properties can be controlled. According to a student from day school, the entrepreneurship lesson helps to know goods and services produced inside and those imported outside the country, to increase the number of investors in the country also increases and promotes friendship among other countries. "Entrepreneurship studies will help my country to use well idle resources in order to reduce over-dependence on another country; they promote economic growth and development, reduction of unemployment level, and increase of Gross domestic product figures within any country." "Entrepreneurship lessons will increase the skills of labor, increasing economic activity, and a high level of technology in my country."

Regarding the Entrepreneurship course's role in their life, students argue that Entrepreneurship will help them do the Budget of daily life and achieve their objectives and plans accordingly. It helps to focus on business as a career, business management by calculating profit and loss and understanding more about marketing. "Entrepreneurship will help me to know how I can manage my resources well in order to get the answers to some economic problems." "Entrepreneurship will help me to improve my skills and knowledge, which will lead me to create my business as a career for preparing my future, and the standard of living also will be improved." One student from boarding school said: "It will help me participate in the production of something new, build self-confidence and be self-reliance without depending on other people, this will prepare well my future family and give me a good life." The other two students from day school said: "It helps to solve the problem in my life, such as poverty, and to promote the increase of the development of the family." "It will help me to advise the new entrepreneurs about Creativity and innovation in their projects through discussion."

Regarding the role of Entrepreneurship lessons to help their family, boarding students said it would help their families share ideas about the strategies to follow in creating a business, managing their products to increase the income and job security. The students know well the importance of saving. For instance, they said what they learned will allow them to teach their families about saving to achieve their goals. Specifically, boarding students said: "through Entrepreneurship, I will take the right decision to create my own business so that my family reduces all of the money spend on me because I will have my money. It will help my family to reduce primitive thinking about the business and reduce the wastage of resources. It will help my family by making a budget and making a plan for daily activities, which helps them use our funds well." Day students said: "Entrepreneurship studies will help my family in the provision of employment opportunities, to reduce poverty in my family, and to improve the standard of life. I will help shift my family from the first category up to the second category by creating a job to get income in my family. I will help my family know production planning by using new techniques to get more product and the family's income and expenses."

The proposed solutions to the challenge of being an Entrepreneur: Apart from school, the study showed that students are occupied with various duties. For instance,

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among 20 students of day school, 65% do the business to raise domestic animals; however, none does agriculture while two students do any other activity. Among those who do business, three do handcraft business; one student does the business of selling sweet potatoes, one makes juice, and one does manufacture business. While in boarding school, the study showed that among 22 students, 40.9% of them do business, 27.27% raise domestic animals, and 18.18% participate in other activities. However, none of them does agriculture activities. For those who do business, 77.77% of students do trading shops, 11.11% of students do the selling of goods in the community, while 11.11% sell food. When asked those who raise domestic animals, the study found that two students raise 14 pigs, one student raises hens, goats, and pigs. We also found that while one student raises cows, goats, and pigs, another student raises nine hens while another raises five cows.

Students are aware of some females who are Entrepreneurs in their community, and they learn from them. Students from boarding school identified 204 females Entrepreneurs in their community. Among the lessons learned, hardworking and self-reliance were favorably mentioned. "What I learned from them is working hard to gain profit. They are self-confident, innovative in their production, and improve the relationship between members." "Always be independent, never give up, keep walking towards your goal, never waste time on unproductive activities, time management. They are the decision-makers, they have a good reputation name, and good risk-takers. I learned to have ambition, to bear risk-taker, and to be a job creator." "I can create a business with a small capital, I learned about how I can increase innovation and invention in my business, being confident in public speaking, having public cooperation with others that they work together, and having integrity." "I learned how to create my own business, how to fill confidence in what I want to do, I learned from them to have self-confidence and hardworking and honest, to be an entrepreneur, and to focus on my career." "I learned proper planning, work in a team, controlling something different, respect, the way and system for running business and techniques use in business, and I can now encourage many females to start their own business."

Students gave the reasons that can discourage the female from creating a business. There were no differences in day or boarding students' responses. They mentioned that there is no self-confidence among many females to create the business, and they have low skills and experience. Discouragement to create the business can also come from the lack of market, sexual corruption, lack of capital for raw materials, lack of family support, and low technology skills. "Females lack enough training about job creation because there are some females who know that business is for men only." Students also mentioned discrimination based on sex, lack of government support through a loan, which can support females in getting enough money to start their business. However, various Rwanda funds are ready to sponsor females in business, such as NEP *Kora Wigire*, women investment fund, and others. This finding may be caused by the lack of information from media and teachers. The low level of competition analysis skills with male entrepreneurs is caused by the fact that sometimes females are afraid to express their skills and knowledge, government policy like high taxes restriction for starting a business, and fear of losing the market. Poor

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infrastructure, lack of skills about the business, and lack of enough land were also mentioned as barriers causing females to refrain from business engagement.

From the causes of refraining females to engage in business opportunities, mentorship was provided by students. If they were the ones to increase the development of Rwandan females, students provided their answers to encourage female students, and they ranked their preferences (see Table 2).

Table 2 Ranks from students towards encouraging females in the business opportunity

		Day students				Boarding students			
		25%	50%	75%	100%	25%	50%	75%	100%
1	To work in the cooperatives	0	3	1	2	2	5	9	7
2	To make enough time looking for the job seekers	2	6	3	5	11	3	7	2
3	To think about how they can be job creators	7	4	4	5	0	3	11	9
4	To show them how they are capable of performing different jobs like male Rwandan	6	1	6	1	0	1	8	15
Total		15	14	14	13	13	12	35	33

To help females engage in businesses, boarding students prefer working in cooperatives than day students do. About nine and seven students at boarding school ranked working in the cooperatives at 75% and 100% respectively as advice to females, while only two students from day school ranked it at 75% and 100%, respectively. The spirit of creativity was shown by boarding students as 11, and 9 of them ranked being job creators at 75% and 100% respectively, while 7 and 4 of day students ranked it at 25% and 50%. Similarly, competition with males was highlighted by boarding than day students as 8 of boarding students ranked it at 100% while 6 of day students ranked it at 25%.

Discussion

“Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior are of utmost importance in the current global economy (Greet & Gils, 2016, p. 12).” Therefore, schools have the imperatives of stimulating these behaviors among all people within the community. The authors recommend that all countries include entrepreneurship courses in their curriculum. Not only this but also these courses should be learned in competence-based approaches.

In evaluating the Junior Achievement Young Enterprise student mini-company program in American and European selected schools (Oosterbeek et al., 2010), there was a negative effect on students’ intention and entrepreneurial skills to become entrepreneurs. In the present study, female students prefer an entrepreneurial job. Therefore, with this confidence, there is a need to select effective teaching strategies for teaching carefully and advising and advise students on issues related to carrying out entrepreneurship study of Nwokike (2016) in Nigerian schools, practical activities, demonstration, and mentorship in teaching entrepreneurship courses have improved business students' entrepreneurial skills for self-employment. In their study, Itangishatse and Ndiokubwayo (2019) disclosed that students performed better at $p < .001$ when they were taken outside the school to observe the available running businesses and talk to business owners. The study also revealed that this field trip kind

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of teaching strategy raised students' interest at a high level. Therefore, teaching strategies such as field trip (Itangishatse & Ndiokubwayo, 2019), inviting businesspersons to talk to students, video conferences (Kuratko, 2005), learning portfolios or personal development plans (Hahn et al., 2017), hands-on entrepreneurship (Gallant et al., 2010) can be adopted by teachers. Without a doubt, they will direct students into entrepreneurship career. "Guidance of many of these future entrepreneurial leaders falls on the shoulders of those in higher education (Vanevenhoven, 2013, p. 466)." The author encourages students and teachers, and instructors to be entrepreneurs to teach what they experience. It may be difficult for people with a fear of loss (Kiyosaki, 2012) and people who were never taught to be entrepreneurs to directly shift from resistance to change to the world of trials. However, it calls upon the people already in business to provide their experience full of challenges and success stories to students. Therefore, this is a duty of schools with the support of educational policymaking institutions.

The creativity among entrepreneurship students (Helena, 2015) should be taken into high consideration. Students should be trained to develop some innovative materials to develop their thinking at an early age. For instance, teachers may ask students to design a tool such as a cloth style, food, drink, machine they like. From seeing what they designed, they may love it and follow up on how it is made and therefore engage themselves in making them. This outcome is supported by the study of Johansen and Schanke (2014), where it indicated that, with less focus on the enterprise part, entrepreneurship projects had been a suitable teaching method as they improved Norwegian students' performance. Thus, students may be encouraged to prepare their project ideas and compete for rewards and raise their career choice. Due to the entrepreneurial school, Helena (2015) has identified three key objectives. The school should provide a framework for learning environments, illustrating how students develop the necessary knowledge and skills as needed tools for their lives and business. Schools should check their students' professional careers to promote students' attributes and train them to plan for their business. Moreover, "School should introduce entrepreneurial education progressively from an early student age to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Helena, 2015, p. 12)."

"Entrepreneurial motivation is an important link between intention and action (Solesvik, 2013, p. 1)." The students rated the top five barriers in the Shinnar et al. (2009) study. The barriers are a risk, lack of capital, current economic situation, competence, and knowledge. However, female students under the present study outlined related but quite different challenges. These are low self-confidence, lack of motivation, capital, and lack of skills that female entrepreneurs face. Concerning students' motivations for business start-up (Shinnar et al., 2009), the chance to implement their ideas, personal independence, create something of their own, be financially independent, and improve their quality of life was the five motivations highly ranked by the students. While having free time, dissatisfaction in a professional occupation, the difficulty of finding the right job, following a family tradition, and gaining high social status was the lowest ranked by students. Although making a

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decision is different from implementing that decision, the impacts of entrepreneurship education in business programs (Wilson et al., 2007) resulted in a substantial impact for girls than for boys on entrepreneurial self-efficacy. It shows well that encouraging females to join the entrepreneurial path is possible and beneficial. Westhead (2015) found that female entrepreneurship education students who are aware of business reported higher intentions than female non-entrepreneurship education students. However, female entrepreneurship education students citing risk perception skills reported lower intention showing how females in nature are vigilant and confident.

Empirical evidence shows that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control mediate the relationship between perceived entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial intentions (Solesvik, 2013). The role model has a significant impact on influencing female students to take an entrepreneurial path after their studies. For instance, a moderated mediation relationship was observed such that, for women, role models had a more decisive influence on self-efficacy, which, in turn, influenced entrepreneurial career intention (Barnir et al., 2011). Being an entrepreneur is possible after school. In the study of career path and business performance (Menzies & Paradi, 2003), 48% of students who have started businesses some time since graduation depended on the entrepreneurship courses they took. Therefore “students must be ready to be able to swift their current learning approach to a more practical way which is required in the entrepreneurial learning process (Keat, Selvarajah, & Meyer, 2011, p. 216).”

Conclusion and Limitation of the study

Our study “Rwandan Female Students towards Being Entrepreneurs after High School” showed that in terms of various professions such as teaching, nursing, piloting, technique, designing, entrepreneurship, and agriculture, these female students preferred being entrepreneurs after their studies. These students confirmed that what they accumulated from entrepreneurship lessons is vital to the country, their families, and themselves. They argued that it provides the capacity to create employment. Female students were found aware, confident to advise and monitored their fellow females towards business. Most of them know the importance of working in cooperatives and can motivate fellow females by showing them their capability to perform different jobs like males. Although we accommodated both female students from day and boarding students in this study, due to the small sample, we are not able to generalize the findings. In this regard, we recommend that researchers pursue other related studies with a significant sample to check schools' effect on students and entrepreneurship education. From the discussion, we advised teachers to monitor their students well with effective teaching methods and inspiration from entrepreneurs around the schools so that after school, students can pursue an entrepreneurial career.

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