Entrepreneurial intentions of university students: Insights for entrepreneurial education in Southern Ethiopia  

Mary Thuo, Tagesse Abo, Senbetie Toma  
1Department of Educational Planning and Management, Wolaita Sodo University  
2Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension, Livelihood & Poverty Reduction, Wolaita Sodo University  
3Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Wolaita Sodo University  
Email: mthuow@yahoo.com  

Sub-theme: Business Entrepreneurship.  

ABSTRACT 

This study examined the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Southern Ethiopia as well as factors that influence their entrepreneurial behavior. A cross-sectional survey design was employed where 665 final year university students from five universities participated in the study. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation and Logistic Regression. The study found high entrepreneurial intention for final year university students in Southern Ethiopia, but, low propensity to venture into business, two years after graduation. Findings from the Logistic Regression analysis found strong support for perceived feasibility, perceived desirability and course support as predictors of entrepreneurial intention, but, no effect for perceived locus of control, gender and prior experience on the intention to start a business. Entrepreneurial behavior was influenced by; government support (policies and bureaucracy), institutional (lack of start-up capital, business premises, poor access to adequate and quality inputs, and markets), personal (lack of confidence and motivation, fear of failure, poor entrepreneurial skills and knowledge on opportunity identification), and societal issues (family/society support and perception). This study concluded that entrepreneurial intention for graduating university students is high, but, the likelihood of starting a business in the next two years was very low. The study recommended a need for universities to provide entrepreneurial trainings that equip students with relevant competencies for business start-up regardless of degree program. Additionally, the government and higher learning institutions could create a network of supportive systems that would lead to attitudinal change, besides helping students to build their self-efficacy in order to pursue business opportunities as career paths.  

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intentions; Business; University Students; Logistic Regression; Southern Ethiopia