

Chapter 1: The Entrepreneurial University in the Global South: An Introductory Overview

The emergence of the entrepreneurial university conception represents a transformative shift or trope in the role that higher education institutions play within society. The concept of the entrepreneurial university is increasingly gaining in contemporary higher education discourse and practice (Pinheiro & Stensaker, 2014; Klofsten *et al.*, 2019; Liu & van der Sijde, 2021). Universities should act as regional agents of change, facing greater external and internal pressures to generate solutions to economic and social problems (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007; Bagchi-Sen & Smith, 2012). The model of the entrepreneurial university canvassed in this intellectual output involves tertiary institutions taking an active role and exerting their agency in regional development through economically motivated activities such as technology transfer and university–industry partnerships (Clark, 1998; Goddard *et al.*, 2014). Technology transfer (TT) refers to the process of transferring knowledge, skills, and technologies from one organisation or individual to another, to the end of transforming scientific research and innovations into practical applications that can benefit society (Gottwald, Buch, & Leal Filho, 2013).

The study critically examines the Entrepreneurial University Model against the backdrop of the profound social and economic challenges adversely confronting contemporary Zimbabwe, including financial crises, unemployment, poverty, and inequality. These challenges resonate globally, yet the roles and characteristics of entrepreneurial and engaged universities have been less studied in the Global South thus constituting a research lacuna which this research seeks to fill. Additionally, there is limited discussion on religious or confessional universities that are key features of the academic landscape in the Global South (Cruz-Coke, 2004; de Donini & Torrendell, 2007; Tavares, 2009). In the educational domain, universities have been implementing programmes to increase the entrepreneurial intention of students, thereby creating more supportive contexts for starting businesses (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015) the aim of promoting regional development (Bramwell & Wolfe, 2008; Kirby, 2006).

The concept of the entrepreneurial university has gained intellectual traction in Europe and America, where learning and intellectual institutions are increasingly viewed as key players in fostering innovation and economic development. In these regions, the entrepreneurial university model emphasises collaboration between academia, industry, and government, facilitating technology transfer and enhancing regional competitiveness (Etzkowitz, 2003). Successful implementation of this model relies heavily on several preconditions, including a supportive policy environment, strong leadership, and a culture that encourages risk-taking and innovation (Carayannis & Campbell, 2011). However, there are critical do's and don'ts to consider; for instance, universities should prioritise partnerships with local businesses to ensure that research aligns with market needs, while avoiding isolation from the community that can hinder engagement and relevance (Goddard *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, fostering an inclusive environment that promotes diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary collaboration is essential, as it enhances creativity and problem-solving capabilities (Wathanakom *et al.*, 2020). By drawing from the experiences of entrepreneurial universities in the Global North, institutions in the Global South can adapt these strategies to address their unique challenges and opportunities.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, higher education institutions are increasingly viewed as vital contributors to economic development and social transformation. In this region, universities face unique challenges, including limited resources, high unemployment rates, and a growing demand for skilled labour (Morris *et al.*, 2020). Successful implementation of the entrepreneurial university model requires several preconditions which therefore could scaffold development and success, such as strong leadership, institutional support for innovation, and the establishment of effective partnerships with industry and government (Sinha *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, it is crucial for universities to promote an entrepreneurial culture that encourages creativity and risk-taking among students and faculty (Goddard *et al.*, 2014). However, pitfalls to avoid include neglecting community engagement and failing to align educational programmes with local economic needs that can lead to a disconnect between university outputs and market demands (Nkusi *et al.*, 2020). By addressing

these factors, Sub-Saharan African universities can effectively contribute to regional development and foster sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems.

In the context of national policies and university cases, the entrepreneurial university model has gained prominence in several Sub-Saharan African countries, reflecting a growing recognition of the role that higher education institutions can play in fostering economic development and innovation. For instance, South Africa's government has implemented policies such as the Small Business Act that aims, inter alia, to promote entrepreneurial activities and support small and medium enterprises (Akinyemi & Adejumo, 2018). Universities in the rubric of the University of Cape Town have established entrepreneurship centres that provide resources and training for aspiring entrepreneurs, aligning academic programmes with local economic needs (Ogunsanya *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, in Nigeria, the establishment of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) has facilitated partnerships between universities and industries, promoting technology transfer and innovation (Oliyide, 2012). However, successful implementation of the entrepreneurial university model requires addressing challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of infrastructure, and the need for a supportive policy environment (Morris *et al.*, 2020). By leveraging national policies and fostering collaboration between academia and industry, universities in the Global South can enhance their contributions to regional and national development.

The entrepreneurial university is widely perceived as a powerful mechanism for modernising higher education institutions (HEIs) (Pinheiro & Stensaker, 2014). The increasing expectation for universities to become regional agents of change that tackle social and economic problems has seen the models of entrepreneurial universities emerging more recently (Klofsten *et al.*, 2019; Thomas & Pugh, 2020). Modern-day universities are seen as drivers of both innovation and entrepreneurship that can enhance regional competitiveness and economic growth (Audretsch, 2014; Urbano & Guerrero, 2013). Higher education institutions have a responsibility to contribute to the economic and social well-being of their communities, and the notion of the entrepreneurial university has evolved in response to this. It positions the university within a

—triple helix model, where contributing to economic development by applying research findings in business practices is added to the traditional goals of teaching and research (Etzkowitz, 1993). This model fosters increased connections between universities and industry, facilitating the transfer of academic knowledge into tangible outcomes.

In this context, the ZEGU emerges as a significant and plausible case study. The study critically examines how ZEGU exemplifies the entrepreneurial university model in the Global South, addressing both the opportunities and challenges it faces in driving regional development and innovation. The examination of ZEGU 's approach provides valuable insights into how Church-related universities can navigate and contribute to the entrepreneurial landscape, thus filling a critical intellectual gap in the existing body of literature on entrepreneurial universities in the Global South.

The chapter has provided a comprehensive introduction to the concept of the entrepreneurial university, particularly in the context of the Global South. It emphasised how universities are increasingly seen as key players in regional development, contributing to economic growth and social transformation. The chapter explored the roles and characteristics of entrepreneurial universities, focusing on their potential to address the profound economic and social challenges in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. The Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) was highlighted as a case study, illustrating how a church-related university in the Global South can exemplify the entrepreneurial university model. The discussion included how these institutions foster innovation, promote technology transfer, and build partnerships with industry and government to enhance regional competitiveness. The chapter also touched on the need for universities to balance economic objectives with social responsibility, ensuring that their initiatives align with local community needs. In the final part of the chapter, the significance of adapting the entrepreneurial university model to the unique challenges and opportunities in the Global South was underscored. The chapter concluded by positioning ZEGU as a valuable case study for understanding the dynamics of entrepreneurial universities in this context. The next chapter will delve into the conceptual and theoretical frameworks

underpinning the study, focusing on the intersection of enterprise and entrepreneurship in the university setting. It will explore the varying definitions of an entrepreneurial university and discuss the broader implications of these concepts in fostering innovation and economic development in the Global South.