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Is Entrepreneurship Course Cntent Developing, Or Killing The Entrepreneurial Zeal Among University Students In Uganda?

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Abstract:
This paper was motivated by the findings of the study that investigated the contribution of entrepreneurship education to the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions among university students in Uganda(Oyugi, 2011) . The paper recognizes the development and the teaching of entrepreneurship courses in most universities in Uganda with the aim of rolling out students sufficiently equipped to become job creators. At a time efforts are being made to address graduate unemployment through mainstream training in entrepreneurial skills in post-primary and post-secondary education, this paper provides timely guidance on the entrepreneurial curriculum. In particular, the author poses, and attempts to respond to a basic question: do attendees of university level entrepreneurship courses perceive the courses as adequate to develop the self-efficacy and entrepreneurial zeal they need to start new ventures? The findings showed significant positive relationship between perceived entrepreneurship course content and self-efficacy and self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. However, no significant relationship was established between perception of content and entrepreneurial intentions. Although the students perceived the content to have given them knowledge about business in general, they did not credit the content for creating entrepreneurship zeal among them which points to the gaps in the content. The gaps in the contents may be due to the fact that universities and business academics largely confine their attention to the functional disciplines of management and neglect the essence of entrepreneurship.

Key Words:Management courses, entrepreneurship course content, essence of entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial zeal, universities in Uganda.

Introduction

This paper was motivated by the findings of the study that investigated the contribution of entrepreneurship education to the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions among university students in Uganda (Oyugi, 2011). The paper recognizes the development and the teaching of entrepreneurship courses in most universities in Uganda with the aim of rolling out students sufficiently equipped to become job creators. At a time efforts are being made to address graduate unemployment through mainstream training in entrepreneurial skills in post-primary and post-secondary education, this paper provides timely contribution on the entrepreneurial curriculum.

Aware that the bigger study considered course objectives and method of course delivery together with course content, this paper focuses on the course content only.

The paper starts by presenting the theoretical and conceptual review, followed by methodology . Thirdly, the results were presented and discussed. The fourth part draws conclusion and recommendations for improved entrepreneurship course content in particular, and entrepreneurship education in general. Finally the paper highlights the implications to various stakeholders.

Literature Review

Course Content

Course content is one of the constructs of entrepreneurship education that needs to be studied in order to assess the relevance of the course in terms of what the students expect and how the content inspire them. As Colvin (1997) asserts, "a course content or outline is a concise statement of the main points of a course of study or subject" (as cited in Golola & Balyage, 2001:172), Colvin (1997) also views a course outline as a blue print or plan of the course. Inglar, Bjerknes, Lappen and Tobiassen (2002) define content as the subject matter that may be written in a book or said by a lecturer. Inglar, et. al (2002) point out that in vocational education, content is more than the subject matter. Content is both textual and experiential matters.

Entrepreneurship course content deals with aspects that may be influenced by teachers but that are ultimately laid out by

institutions, faculties or by the university itself in their curricula. Thus the course content determines whether the students would build the confidence and intentions to be entrepreneurial or not and it is the means of assessing the curriculum as a whole. Drawing on Johannisson's (1991) level of learning, three main dimensions which orient and structure the course contents can be distinguished:

The professional dimension – relates more to practical knowledge, or know-how. The professional dimension relies on three kinds of knowledge: *know- what, know-how* and *know-who.* Know- what refers to what one has to do to decide and act in any given situation. For example, what one must do to create a company; know-how refers to how to deal with any given situation, for example, how to check the adequacy between a given project and one's personal profile, taking into account accumulated experience, how to identify risks and how to deal with them; know-who refers to who are the useful people and which are the useful net-work depending on the situation.

Theoretical dimension – deals with knowledge in its broad sense. The content taught concern the effects and impact of entrepreneurship, or any other question related to the phenomenon and process.

The spiritual dimension – is knowing how to focus mainly on two aspects: know-why and know-when. Know-why is what determines human behaviour and actions; what makes entrepreneurs do what they do; testimonies of entrepreneurs in various situations. Know-when is the right time to go ahead; what is the best situation according to one's profile? Successful teaching in entrepreneurship should enable individuals to position themselves in space and time as regards the entrepreneurship phenomenon. Positioning oneself in space consists of identifying the entrepreneurial situations which are consistent with one's profile. Positioning oneself in time implies recognizing the moment in one's life when it is both possible and desirable to commit to an entrepreneurship project.

If the three dimensions are not considered in orienting and structuring the course content, quality of content would be sub-standard, and teachers would find it difficult to address issues related to confidence building in their students which in turn will affect their entrepreneurial intentions.

It can be argued that entrepreneurship education can be delivered in a number of different knowledge context dependent upon the desired outcomes and place in the curriculum. The most common context is that of setting up a business/self employment. Even in the context of setting up a business, the curriculum seems crowded with content with limited opportunities for students to pre-test their entrepreneurship ideas.

Essence of Entrepreneurship

Sherpherd and Douglas (1997) refer to essence of entrepreneurship as being the ability to visualize and chart new courses of business by combining information from both the functional disciplines and the external environment within the context of extreme ambiguity and uncertainty. What should be taught and developed are abilities to use creative strategies and innovative tactics. What does this mean in terms of entrepreneurship course content?

First, entrepreneurship is beyond the limits of the functional disciplines. Entrepreneurship involves bringing together the unknown and addressing the many unstructured and unique issues facing the unknown. Entrepreneurs must make decisions in the face of the unknown. Thus, entrepreneurship addresses the many unstructured and unique issues facing the manager in an environment of uncertainty. Acknowledging that the information requirements to be a successful entrepreneur are considerable, the essence of entrepreneurship involves bringing together the many component parts of an organization as well as information from the external environment. The functional disciplines, however, are more structured and repetitive, with the information required to make decisions more heavily reliant on internally generated information with high proportion of historical data.

Second, the entrepreneurial process needs to be continuous and ongoing, with the timing of decisions often irregular in order to grasp unforeseen opportunities, or triggered by other changes in the environment. Decisions are often deliberately broad and have fewer concrete details. Entrepreneurship is charting new territory, which brings with it special navigational problems to be solved. Contrarily, the functional disciplines are determined, reviewed, adjusted, and then presented in greater detail.

Finally, entrepreneurship involves the mobilization and coordination of resources. Thus the essence of entrepreneurship is the ability to envision and chart a course of action for a new business venture. It manifests itself in creativity, innovation, perception of trends especially when the way forward is not obvious. Therefore the entrepreneurship content should contain and serve to instill and enhance these abilities.

The paper recognizes the development and the teaching of entrepreneurship courses in most universities in Uganda with the aim of rolling out students sufficiently equipped to become job creators. However, the trend of development of the entrepreneurship courses may not necessarily be the

same across universities.

Trend of entrepreneurship course content development

Entrepreneurship for a long time did not emerge as a stand-alone area of study in academics. It was treated as a factor of production under the main domain of economics discipline. However, as a result of proliferating emphasis worldwide on entrepreneurship as the catalyst for economic development and job creation, policy makers developed a wide range of measures to support entrepreneurship. Key among these was the call for academic institutions, such as universities, to contribute through appropriate educational programme, that is, entrepreneurship education (Laukkanen, 2000).

According to Gibb and Nelson (1996) entrepreneurship education relates to the development of functional management skills and abilities that train the individual to start, manage, and develop a business. McIntyre and Roche, (1999) note that entrepreneurship education, as an academic discipline, has its origin in the United States (US). The Harvard Business School offered the first entrepreneurship related course -- management of new enterprises -- in 1945. This course was taught to boost the economy after World War II. Although the course grew in popularity, entrepreneurship education did not expand especially in the 1950s. The growth of large corporations and the decline in small businesses hindered this development (McIntyre and Roche, 1999). After 1958, further entrepreneurship education started spreading around the world (Winslow, Solomon & Tarabishy, 1999). Following the increase in entrepreneurship and small business management courses in these years, researchers recognized the rapid growth of business ventures. In the 1970s, entrepreneurship education got another boost because of its positive impact on small business development and job creation. Following this development, sixteen colleges and/or universities started offering entrepreneurship courses in the US. Since then, entrepreneurship was being taught at over 1500 colleges/universities in the US (Reynolds and Bygrave, 2004).

In developing countries, meanwhile, there is also a considerable presence of these types of initiatives, with economic development as their main concern. These experiences, frequently called Entrepreneurship Development Programmes, spread noticeably, due to their more-than-reasonable level of success (Loucks, 1988). These programmes do not normally include an explicit definition of entrepreneurship education. The contents of these programmes tend to be very basic, and normally include training on a specific occupation at the same time as they promote the participants' establishing as independent craftspeople.

The trend in the 21st century indicates that entrepreneurship courses are becoming a standard part of the curriculum of many technical schools/colleges and universities around the world. The entrepreneurship zeal among universities, especially in Uganda, led to development of entrepreneurship courses. The courses were designed and developed under different course titles and content but with similar objectives. One of the common objectives is to inspire graduates of the programmes to start-up and grow businesses

However, since the objectives of offering the course in entrepreneurship are similar, the content also tend to be similar. The similarity is due to the fact that the universities develop course content through benchmarking and networking. What is true of most universities in Uganda is that entrepreneurship is offered as course unit which cut across various programmes. While this is the case, it is also true that some universities have developed or are planning to develop a full programme for Bachelor of Entrepreneurship or Master of Entrepreneurship. Given the autonomy and their status, universities in Uganda had not been having exactly the same course titles for entrepreneurship. Different universities had different tittles. Some of the titles identified were – Entrepreneurship Development, Basic Principles of Entrepreneurship and Introduction to Entrepreneurship. Regardless of the variation in the course titles the current trend is moving towards harmonization of entrepreneurship courses. This is presented in the next section.

Current Course Content of Entrepreneurship in universities in Uganda

As a quality control measure of university education in Uganda, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was set up to regulate the conduct of universities in Uganda. Part of the mandate of NCHE is to approve programmes that meet minimum standards. In April, 2011, NCHE approved minimum standards for courses of study in Management and Business Studies for undergraduate programmes. Among these was the Bachelor of Entrepreneurship Programme. This paper used the content of the approved Bachelor of Entrepreneurship Programme to illustrate the current course content for entrepreneurship education in universities in Uganda. The course structure is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: ***ACADEMIC COURSE CONTENT FOR BACHELOR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP*** **YEAR ONE**

	L	T	P	CH	CU	
Principles of Business Administration	45	30	0	60	4	
Principles of Accounting	45	30	0	60	4	
Business Communication Skills	30	30	0	45	3	
Information Communication Technology I	45	0	30	60	5	
Business Law I	45	30	0	60	4	
Quantitative Methods	45	30	0	60	4	
Principles of Management	45	30	0	60	4	
Business Economics	45	30	0	60	4	
Entrepreneurship Development I	45	30	0	60	4	
Practical Business Start-up & Management	15	30	90	75	5	
Total Credit Units in Year One						**41**
YEAR TWO	**L**	**T**	**P**	**CH**	**CU**	
Intermediate Accounting II	45	30	0	60	4	
Business Statistics	45	30	0	60	4	
Information Communication Technology II	30	0	60	60	4	
Business Law II	15	30	0	30	2	
Elements of Production Management	30	30	0	45	3	
Entrepreneurship Development II	45	0	30	60	4	
Finance for Small Business	45	30	0	60	4	
Business Research Skills	15	15	15	30	2	
Principles of Small Business Management	45	30	0	60	4	
Service Sector Management	45	30	0	60	4	
Principles of Creativity and Innovation	30	30	30	60	4	
Total Credit Units in Year two						**39**
YEAR THREE	**L**	**T**	**P**	**CH**	**CU**	
Strategic Management	45	30	0	60	4	
Marketing for Small Firms	45	30	0	60	4	
Business Software Applications	30	0	60	60	4	
Business Ethics	30	30	0	45	3	
Feasibility Study and Analysis	30	30	30	60	4	
Principles of Human Resource Mgt	45	30	0	60	4	
Ugandan Economy & Regional Integration	30	30	0	45	3	
Project Planning and Management	45	30	0	60	4	
Elements of Taxation	30	30	0	45	3	
Human Behaviour at Work	30	30	0	45	3	
Business Plan	15	30	60	60	4	
Total Credit Units in Year three						**40**

TOTAL CREDIT UNITS

Year One	41
Year Two	39
Year Three	40
Total	**120**

Source: National Council for Higher Education (2011)

The preceding table 1 shows course structure for a three year programme leading to the award of a Bachelor of Entrepreneurship degree in Uganda. The table shows the total number of courses for each year lecture hours and practical hours together with the total credit units.

Research Method

This research employed a mixed methodology approach using quantitative and qualitative design (Creswell, 2003) which is highly grounded in the philosophy of social sciences literature. The choice to collect the data using a combination of methods was based on the idea of triangulation for creating a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomenon as well as increasing the validity of the research findings.

Population of interests for the study was final year students (who studied entrepreneurship course) from three universities out of a population of 22 universities in Uganda at the time of the study (2006 – 2009). The targeted universities were: Makerere University Business School, Kampala International University and Uganda Martyrs University. The three universities were purposively selected because they had been teaching and examining business and entrepreneurship courses for more than five years and so considered well established to provide the necessary data. From these universities, all the final year students (2008/2009) studying entrepreneurship were targeted. A total of 2,042 students were identified from Makerere University Business School, 85 from Uganda Martyrs and 96 from Kampala International University giving a total of 2,223 to form the student population.

Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument. Focus group discussion and interviews were also used to gather more information from respondents.

Data obtained from the questionnaires was analysed using SPSS 17.0 software. The analysis was done at two levels: univariate and bivariate. At the univariate level, descriptive statistics were used; at the bivariate level correlations were used to determine relationships between variables.

Analysis

This result was further analysed using statistical analysis to establish the extent to which content contributes to the development of self-efficacy and intentions. First, Pearson correlation matrix was used to examine the relationships between content, self efficacy and intention variables. The results of correlation matrix are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations Matrix for the Relationship between content, self efficacy and intentions.

	1	2	3
Content(1)	1.000		
Self Efficacy (2)	.454**	1.000	
Entrep.Intentions (3)	.049	.418**	1.000

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: Author (2013)

The result indicates that Content of entrepreneurship and Self Efficacy were found to be significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.454$, $p<0.01$) supporting part of hypothesis one. However, the result did not show support for significant relationship between content and intention. Instead relationship between self efficacy and entrepreneurship intention was significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.418$, $p<0.01$). This finding was further explored by conducting interviews with the students. The result of the interviews with 20 students, revealed that content and time allocated was not enough. They reported that course unit in entrepreneurship is usually done in one semester and for two hours per week. They would prefer the course to be spread throughout the programme. Two

Students commented that there was lack of continuity since the course unit is done in one semester and usually in the second year of their study. This creates a gap in as far as flow of knowledge is concerned and students lose the interest and see less value of the course. Instead they concentrate on their core courses. Despite the limited scope of content and time, all the 20 students interviewed admitted that entrepreneurship course is a good course and whatever content they learnt was in line with their expectations. This finding means that students appreciate more content and time in order to build the necessary skill and be able to assess whether they are entrepreneurial. This is consistent with De Noble et al (2000) findings that students have to be given time to develop an appreciation for the myriad of activities necessary to raise capital, attract critical human resources, and define the company's core purpose. Thus the course contents determine whether the students can build the confidence and intentions to be entrepreneurial or not, and it is the means of assessing the curriculum as a whole. Johannisson (1991) asserts that if the quality of content is sub-standard, teachers will find it difficult to address issues related to confidence building in their students which in turn will affect their entrepreneurial intentions.

The issue of content of entrepreneurship education was probed further during a focus group discussion. In their view, they agreed that the content was good but suggested that risk management was important missing link in the content. The teachers argued that the students would receive the knowledge but would still lack confidence to venture into entrepreneurial activities because of fear of the risks. However, a lot has been said about content but the question that remains to be answered is whether it is the content which is at stake of skills-building that are not well taken care of. It was found that the issue of timetabling could not allow for skill-building which requires longer hours during and outside the lectures. First there are so many other courses in any one semester which leaves very little room for effective skill-building hence less confidence-building and less entrepreneurial intention.

Correlation matrix results did show significant positive relationship between content and self efficacy ($r=0.454$, $p<0.01$), self efficacy and entrepreneurial intention ($r=0.418$, $p<0.01$) but could not be used to predict their behaviours. Linear regression takes us a step further in the direction of prediction. If the correlation between content, self efficacy and intention variables is sufficiently consistent, content can be used to predict self efficacy or intentions

The model summary table provides the value of R and R^2 for the model that has been derived. R has a value of .454 which indicates the correlation between content and self efficacy. The value of R^2 is .206 which tells us that content accounted for 20.6% of the variation in entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This means that 79.4% of the variation in entrepreneurial self efficacy cannot be explained by content alone in the model. Therefore, there must be other variables that have influence also. Adjusted R^2 shows that 20.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial self-efficacy of the students is explained by content of entrepreneurship. It can be said that content contributes 20.3% to the development of self efficacy. The model also produces *Durbin-Watson test* statistics value of 1.833. The test statistic can vary between 0 and 4 with a value of 2 meaning that the residuals are uncorrelated. The value depends upon the number of predictors in the model, and the number of observations. As a very conservative rule of the thumb, values less than 1 or greater than 3 are definitely cause for concern (Field, 2005:170)

Meaning there is a problem of correlation. Since the result of the Durbin-Watson test statistic is 1.833>0.203 Adj R^2, it can be concluded that the model is well specified. This means that content and self efficacy are uncorrelated.

The regression output compares very well with the correlation ($r=0.454$, $p<0.01$) results and therefore it can be concluded that the hypothesis was partially achieved. Content positively contribute to development of entrepreneurial self efficacy.

A separate regression analysis was conducted with entrepreneurial intention as the dependent variable with content and self efficacy as predictor variables. The results were presented in Table 3 where there is no significant relationship between content and entrepreneurial intention ($r=-0.157$, $p>0.01$)

Table 3: Relationship between content, self efficacy and entrepreneurial intention

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.492	.018		7.603	.000		
Content	-.039	.021	-.157	-.851	.066	.819	1.221

Self Efficacy	.164	.029	.485	5.705	.000	.819	1.221

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intentions

Source: Author (2013)

Results show that self efficacy is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention. The overall regression was significant at 1% level. The modal summary is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression Model with entrepreneurial intentions as dependent variable

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.442a	.195	.183	.20012	.195	16.476	2	136	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intentions

Source: Author (2013)

The regression model predicted 18.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention. The table reveals that content is not a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention unless mediated by self efficacy.

Considering the fact that the perceived course content is not a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention, further analysis was done by first categorizing the courses into those that capture the essence of entrepreneurship as opposed to those that focus on the functional disciplines. The analysis was done on the basis of number of courses for each category per year, number of credit unit for each category identified and corresponding proportion worked out for purpose of comparison. Table 5 gives a summary of the result.

Table 5: Comparision of content relating to entrepreneurship and the functional discipline

COURSE CATEGORY	**YEAR 1**				**YEAR 2**				**YEAR 3**				**TOTAL**			
	NO. OF COURSES	**%**	**CU**	**%**	**NO. OF COURSES**	**%**	**CU**	**%**	**NO. OF COURSES**	**%**	**CU**	**%**	**NO. OF COURSES**	**%**	**CU**	**%**
ESSENCE OF ENTREP	2	**20**	9	**22**	2	**18**	8	**21**	1	**9**	4	**10**	5	**16**	**21**	**18**
FUNCTIONAL DISCIPLINE	8	**80**	32	**78**	9	**82**	31	**79**	10	**91**	36	**90**	27	**84**	**99**	**82**
TOTAL	10	**100**	41	**100**	11	**100**	39	**100**	11	**100**	40	**100**	32	**100**	**120**	**100**

CU = Credit Unit

Source: *Author (2013)*

Table 5 shows that in Year 1 there are 10 courses out of which 2 (20%) are entrepreneurship courses and 8 (80 %) relate to functional discipline. The total credit units for all the 10 courses is 41 of which entrepreneurship courses have 9 (22%) and 32 (78%) are for functional disciplines. In Year 2, there are 11 courses of which 2 (18%) are entrepreneurship courses, 9 (82%) are functional disciplines. Total credit unit is 39 of which 8 (21%) are for entrepreneurship courses and 31 (79%) are for functional

disciplines. In Year 3, there are 11 courses of which 1 (9%) is for entrepreneurship and 10 (91%) go to functional discipline. Meanwhile there are 40 credit units in Year 3 out of which 4 (10%) are for entrepreneurship and 36 (90%) are for functional disciplines. In the three years there are 32 courses and 120 credit units in total. Out of the 32 courses, only 5 (16%) relate to entrepreneurship and 27 (84%) relate to the functional disciplines, 21 (18%) of the total credit units is for entrepreneurship and 99 (82%) go to functional disciplines. The current situation is represented on graphs and charts for a quick glance. Figures 1a, 1b depict the result shown in table 5.

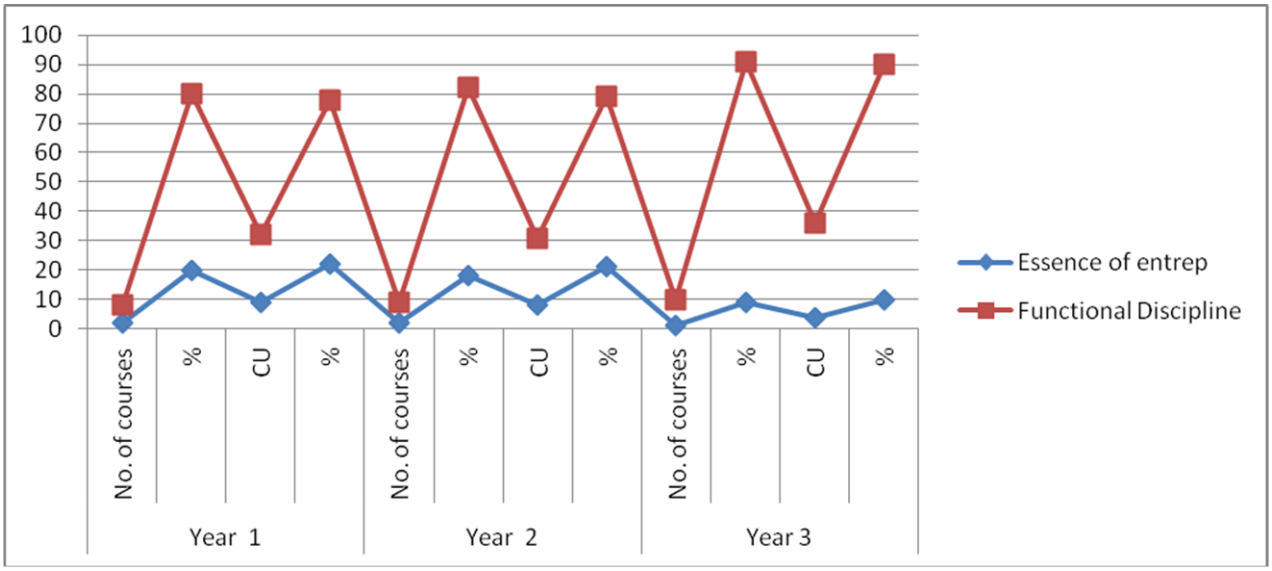

Figure 1a: Line Graph comparing current status of entrepreneurship courses as compared with the functional discipline.
Source: Author (2013)

Figure 1a shows that the courses and credit units for entrepreneurship courses is about 20% and below while for functional discipline is about 80% and above. This situation was further represented by drawing a chart to illustrate the variation by sorting out entrepreneurship courses from functional disciplines. This is presented in figure 1b.