

Entrepreneurship Education: A Students' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is believed to provide students with understanding of concepts of entrepreneurship, train and motivate them to indulge into entrepreneurial activities in future. This is an empirical study to explore the entrepreneurship education in engineering discipline from the perspective of students. The study also attempts to unearth the factors that motivate them to take entrepreneurial activities and their perceived hurdles. Data about the opinion of students regarding entrepreneurship education has been collected from 168 students. The data has been analyzed using various statistical tools. It is found that the students are highly interested in starting their own business. They consider that decision making skills, risk taking capacity, creativity, communication skills and ability to prepare business plan are the most important skills for a successful entrepreneur. They feel motivated to start their own business because of intrinsic factors like being their own boss, chasing their dreams. Lack of experience and lack of funds are the most deterring factors.

Keywords: *Budding Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Higher Education, Motivation for Entrepreneurs, Students' Perspective*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well understood that entrepreneurship has a significant impact on economic growth (Carree et al., 2002). Some early researchers argued that entrepreneurs are born not bred. It is beyond the capabilities of business schools or universities to teach individuals to become more enterprising (Johannison, 1991). In general, individuals are reluctant to take entrepreneurial career, since they consider it to be highly uncertain and risky (Petridou et al., 2009). However, recent studies show that entrepreneurship can be promoted through entrepreneurship education and training (Petridou and Glaveli, 2008). The entrepreneurship education has been defined as a collection of formalized teachings that educate anyone interested in business creation (Bechard and Toulouse, 1998). The entrepreneurship education can trigger the entrepreneurial initiatives by enhancing entrepreneurial mindset among the students (Petridou et al., 2009; Lubis, 2014). A study conducted on college students in China conclude that entrepreneurship education should be included in colleges and universities' reform and development plan, personnel training system, and teaching evaluation index system (Zou, 2015).

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The need of entrepreneurship education has been well established in the recent studies. However, there is a debate on how the education should be provided, what is the students' perception on the entrepreneurship education. There is a debate about the role of universities and business schools in their contribution to entrepreneurship education (Kirby, 2004). It is argued that the traditional education system does not promote the attributes and skills that are required to produce entrepreneurs. The traditional education system teaches students how to become a good employee instead of a successful entrepreneur (Solomon, 1989). It has been proposed that considerable changes are required in the process of learning. Entrepreneurship should not be equated with new venture creation but with creativity and change (Kirby, 2004).

The above discussion highlights that the entrepreneurship education is important for promoting entrepreneurship, but there is a need to carry out more research on the way of providing the entrepreneurship education. The students are one of main stakeholders in the entrepreneurship education process. The current study is purporting to study the perspective of the students: what students understand about the entrepreneurship education; what is their level of awareness and what are their concerns about the entrepreneurship education. The study is organized in five sections. Section 2 contains study of more literature about the study, the research methodology has been discussed in Section 3 and Section 4 contains data analysis and discussion. The conclusions have been made in Section 5.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Entrepreneurship Education Programs

The entrepreneurship programs run by business schools equate entrepreneurship with new venture creation and educate "about" entrepreneurship rather than educating for entrepreneurship (Kirby, 2004). The skill set needed to become entrepreneur include; persuasion skills, creativity, critical thinking, leadership skills, negotiation skills, problem solving skills, social networking and time management (Rae, 1997). To activate creativity and innovation, right brain thinking is required. The right brain thinking deals with uncertainties, open-ended questions, decision making with incomplete information, lateral thinking, intuitive thinking (Lewis, 1987). The entrepreneurship education programs should be designed in such a way to activate the right brain thinking of the students. Nowadays, entrepreneurship education programs use different teaching methods including lectures, guest speakers, case studies and role models (Solomon, 2007; Wilson et al., 2007). While designing the education program for entrepreneurs, the following points should be kept in mind- Student specific requirements should be understood; the teaching should be more specific to student requirements; didactic methods such as lectures, readings, text books and seminar should be used for providing new information; active case studies, group discussions, brainstorming etc. should be used for skills building; problem solving in real-world situation, consultancy with small firms should be taken to provide hands-on experience. The output should be assessed on behavioral and skill outcomes, product development, prototypes etc. (Hynes, 1996). It has also been found that there are gender differences in the motivational factors for participating in entrepreneurship program. There is a need to customize education programs to serve the need of female and male students. The entrepreneurship programs should be designed to inform the students about the real world conditions and presenting the ways in which the complexities can be overcome (Petridou et al., 2009).

In a research conducted in United Kingdom in 2007, business schools are found to be the main higher education institutions to provide entrepreneurship education. Nevertheless other

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