

Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Intent and Mindset of suburban University Students

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Abstract

Entrepreneurs are often regarded as the key persons behind economic development of a nation. They perform an important role in job creation eventually leading to economic prosperity. Several entrepreneurs have a great solicitude for societal welfare and they are steadily embracing business practices which are sustainable, thus resulting in a sustainable society.

Colleges and Universities in India should serve as the breeding grounds of wannabe entrepreneurs, including sustainable entrepreneurs, the emerging buzzwords in the field of entrepreneurship today. The study attempts to largely examine the influence of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention and mindset and attitude toward entrepreneurship, including sustainable entrepreneurship, of suburban University students.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intent, sustainability, sustainable entrepreneurship.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is about “discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2014). Entrepreneurship is about assuming the risk of a new enterprise. Entrepreneurship can be a catalyst for social and economic development (Parton et al., 2014). It helps in employment generation. It offers various benefits such as being one’s own boss or being able to apply one’s own ideas and others. However, often students choose the safe path of doing a job in public sector or private sector, instead of taking up entrepreneurship as a career.

Entrepreneurship education can be defined as “any pedagogical (program) or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills” (Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, 2006). Entrepreneurship education refers to education for entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes (Bae.T,J., Qian, S., Miao, C. and Fiet, J.O., 2014). There is an increasing interest in entrepreneurship education among students, higher education institutions and even politicians (Kuttim, M., Kallaste, M., Venesaar, U. and Kiis, A., 2014). Politicians are showing an increasing interest since entrepreneurship education can result in embracing of entrepreneurship as a career leading to job creation and hence reduction of unemployment in a country and also reducing the burden on governments to provide jobs to the citizens.

Moving on to concept of sustainability, as now known worldwide, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainability has become a keyword with respect to policymaking and economic development of a country. Innumerable projects involving huge amounts of money are being executed in the area of sustainability. Similarly, concept of sustainable entrepreneurship is gaining momentum worldwide. Sustainable entrepreneurship can be stated as “process of discovering and exploiting economic opportunities existing in market failures, which diminish sustainability, including environmentally relevant ones” (Dean & McMullen, 2007). Sustainable entrepreneur is one who protects the environment and takes care of various stakeholders associated with business (Khokhawala & Iyer, 2022).

This study explores the effectiveness of entrepreneurship courses (and also course delivery) of BBA curriculum in generating entrepreneurial interest, including sustainability aspects of business, i.e., sustainable entrepreneurship, among the students of Adamas University in Kolkata West Bengal, India.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurial education is “the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognise commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them” (Jones & English, 2006). The rise of entrepreneurship education programmes has been driven by extraordinary student demand as students prefer a style of business education that will equip them with the skills needed to be successful in a progressively diverse business environment (Cooper, Bottomley and Gordon, 2004). In developing countries, the primary measures used for promoting entrepreneurship in University students are entrepreneurship educational programmes (Guerrero, M., Urbano D. and Salamzadeh, A., 2014). Entrepreneurship education is becoming important and popular across the world with increasing unemployment in different countries of the world, due to increasing population and inability of the public sector and also private sector to provide enough jobs in this scenario. At times, economic recessions make matters worse. Hence, policymakers in various countries and also academia are recognising the growing need of imparting entrepreneurship education to enable the students secure jobs on their own by becoming entrepreneurs, instead of depending on governments or the private companies for jobs. After securing jobs on their own, the graduating students can even become job creators by providing employment to others.

The above facts invariably indicate the importance of entrepreneurship education and it also becomes very much necessary to see whether entrepreneurship education is able to generate the entrepreneurial intention and the required mindset among University students.

Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Schumpeter (1912) has referred to entrepreneurship as “creative destruction”. Sustainable entrepreneurs are the ones who “destroy existing conventional production methods, products and others and substitute them with superior environmental and social products and services” (Schaltegger and Wagner, 2010). Sustainable entrepreneurship combines environmental and social

aspects (Larson, 2000). Sustainable entrepreneurship is usually environmentally and socially orientated entrepreneurship. Therefore, it can be said that sustainable entrepreneurs take care of the environment and at the same time they are concerned about welfare of society. Hence, it becomes imperative that University students who embrace entrepreneurship as a career, should try to become sustainable entrepreneurs, and not just entrepreneurs in general.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study:

- To analyse the entrepreneurial interests of University students.
- To examine whether there is a correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intent of students.
- To evaluate whether there is a correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial mindset (including attitude toward sustainability) of students.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no substantial association between Course Content and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

H₀₂: There is no substantial association between Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

H₀₃: There is no substantial association between Entrepreneurial Teachers and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

H₀₄: There is no substantial association between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability of the students.

Methodology

Research has been conducted consisting of a properly designed questionnaire. ASTEE (Assessment Tools and indicators for Entrepreneurship Education) Questionnaire has been used. This was used as part of ASTEE Project which was conducted in 13 countries of Europe between December 2012 and June

2014 (Moberg., K et al., 2014). Since the Questionnaire is a standard one and previously tested, nominal effort was required to administer it and to do the evaluation. The Questionnaire consists of different dimensions probing the intentions of the respondents and some questions on their demographic profile. Various dimensions have been assessed by a number of constructs related to the questions. The Questionnaire has different sections, viz., “Entrepreneurial Mindset” including “Attitude toward Sustainability”, “Connectedness to Education”, “Entrepreneurial Knowledge”, “Entrepreneurial Skills” and “Connectedness to Labour Market”, other than demographic questions. “Entrepreneurial Mindset” has been estimated through the construct “Core Self-Evaluation”. “Entrepreneurial Intentions” have been evaluated through constructs stressing on willingness to start a new business or execute a business idea or inclination to become one’s own boss. The conceptual framework (as seen in the following Figure) shows the different dimensions that should be catered to by educational institutions in an effort to nurture enterprising individuals. The target population of the study consists of students in a suburban region, viz., Barasat, near Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The University chosen for study is Adamas University, as it is the largest and most prominent University in that region. The sampling technique adopted for data collection was simple random sampling. A sample size of fifty has been chosen (due to the small batch size of students opting for Entrepreneurship Courses). The data have been analysed using statistical techniques such as percentages, frequency counts, correlation and regression. The software used is IBM SPSS software.

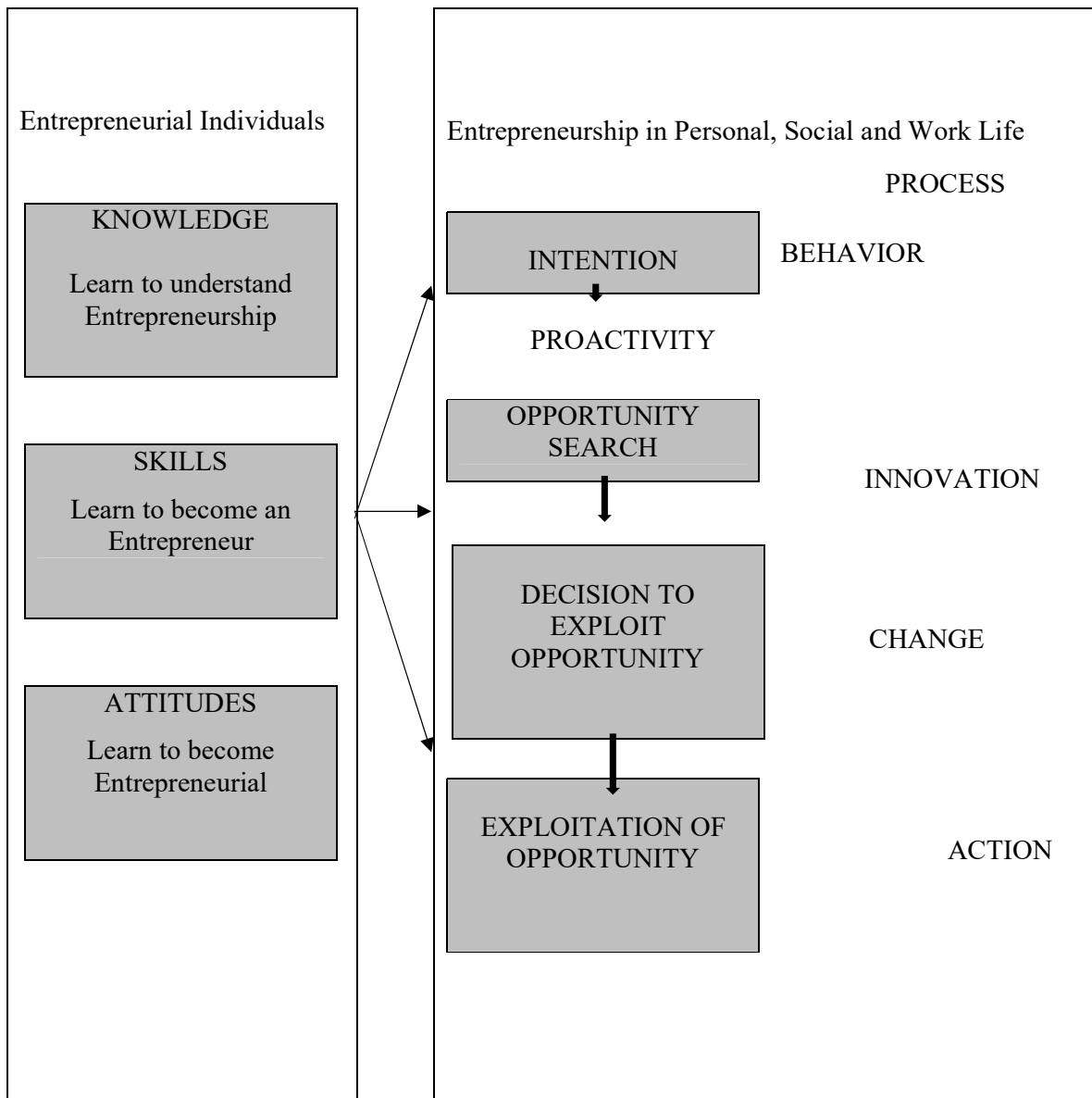


Figure: European Union Framework for Entrepreneurship Education Elements
(adapted from Moberg., K et al., 2014)

Operational Definition of the Variables

Entrepreneurship education refers to “content, methods and activities supporting the creation and development of knowledge, competences and experiences” (Moberg., K et al., 2014).

Entrepreneurial Intention refers to a “state of mind directing and guiding the actions of individuals towards the development and implementation of new business concepts” (Bird, 1988).

Entrepreneurial Mindset can be defined as a “collection of motives, skills, and thought processes” which results in entrepreneurial success (Davis et al., 2016).

Employee Innovative Behaviour refers to “employees’ intentional introduction of new products or services or new ways of doing things” (Janssen, 2000).

Entrepreneurial Teacher is “the teacher having entrepreneurial competences and a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship” (Peltonen, 2008).

Sustainability refers to “maintaining, renewing or restoring something specific, including the ethical dimension of fairness of trade-off between current economic pressures and the future needs of the environment” (Sutton, 1998).

Results and Discussion

Reliability Analysis

First reliability analysis is carried out to check internal consistency.

Table 1: Scale Reliability

The reliability analysis of scale-related target questions is as follows:

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha Score
Entrepreneurial Mindset	0.763
Core Self-Evaluation	0.721
Entrepreneurial Attitudes	0.705
Attitude toward Sustainability	0.725
Teaching Methods	0.930
Entrepreneurial Teachers	0.809

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha Score
Course Content	0.792
Entrepreneurial Knowledge	0.735
Creativity	0.936
Financial Literacy	0.878
Managing Ambiguity	0.711
Marshalling of Resources	0.717
Planning	0.873
Teamwork	0.762
Innovative Employee	0.718
Entrepreneurial Intentions	0.900

Source: Primary Data

As Cronbach's Alpha Score is greater than 0.70. for each construct, there is internal consistency (Kerlinger, 1986).

Section-I: Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics and Information pertaining to 'Connectedness to Education' and 'Entrepreneurial Mindset'

Number of respondents	50
Female	50%
Male	50%
Is anyone close to you self-employed:	
Father	55.88%
Other relatives	20.59%
Friends	2.94%
None	20.59%
Connectedness to Education	
The course content provides functional knowledge:	
Agree	35%
Strongly Agree	24%
The course content is interesting:	
Agree	38%

Strongly Agree	32%
The course content is of practical significance:	
Agree	38%
Strongly Agree	18%
In school, I have been taught how to think creatively:	
Agree	29%
Strongly Agree	26%
In school, I have been taught how to come up with ideas:	
Agree	44%
Strongly Agree	26%
In school, I have been taught how to translate ideas into actions:	
Agree	41%
Strongly Agree	15%
In school, I have been taught how to create a business:	
Somewhat Agree	35%
Agree	24%
Strongly Agree	15%
In school, I have been taught about the role of entrepreneur in society:	
Agree	32%
Strongly Agree	24%
In school, I have been taught how to evaluate a business idea:	
Somewhat Agree	35%
Agree	24%
Strongly Agree	15%
Entrepreneurial Mindset	
I am often the first one to suggest a solution to a problem:	
Strongly Agree	23.6%
I see possibilities where others see problems:	

Strongly Agree 14.5%

Source: Primary Data

Section-II: Inferential Analysis

The testing of framed hypotheses is as follows:

First Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no substantial association between Course Content and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Pearson's Correlation test has been used for testing the hypothesis.

Table 3: Correlation between Course Content and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Correlations			
	Course Content	Innovative Employee	Entrepreneurial Intentions
Course Content	1	.245	.259
Innovative Employee	.245	1	.426*
Entrepreneurial Intentions	.259	.426*	1

Source: Primary Data

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

The results suggest that there is no substantial correlation of Course Content and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Hence, Null Hypothesis is not rejected.

Second Hypothesis Testing

H₀₂: There is no substantial association between Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Pearson's Correlation test has been undertaken for testing the hypothesis.

Table 4: Correlation between Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Correlations			
	Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods	Innovative Employee	Entrepreneurial Intentions
Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods	1	.249	-.153

Innovative Employee	.249	1	.426*
Entrepreneurial Intentions	-.153	.426*	1

Source: Primary Data

* Significant at the 0.05 level.

From the preceding results it can be inferred that there is no significant correlation of Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Hence, Null Hypothesis is not rejected.

Third Hypothesis Testing

H₀₃: There is no substantial association between Entrepreneurial Teachers and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Pearson's Correlation test has been carried out for doing the hypothesis testing.

Table 5: Correlation between Entrepreneurial Teachers and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Correlations			
	Entrepreneurial Teachers	Innovative Employee	Entrepreneurial Intentions
Entrepreneurial Teachers	1	-.083	.077
Innovative Employee	-.083	1	.426*
Entrepreneurial Intentions	.077	.426*	1

Source: Primary Data

* Significant at the 0.05 level

The results indicate that there is no significant correlation of Entrepreneurship Teaching Methods and Being an Innovative Employee and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Therefore, Null Hypothesis is not rejected.

Fourth Hypothesis Testing

H₀₄: There is no substantial association between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability of the students.

Pearson's Correlation test has been utilised for testing the hypothesis.

Table 6: Correlation between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability.

Correlations		
	Course Content	Attitude toward Sustainability
Course Content	1	.412**
Attitude toward Sustainability	.412**	1

Source: Primary Data

** Significant at the 0.01 level

The results depict that there is a noteworthy correlation between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability of the students, since the significance value is less than 0.05.

Hence, Null Hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis of Predictor on 'Attitude toward Sustainability'

Since there is a significant association of Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability of the students, a further analysis is carried out regarding the degree of influence of Course Content.

For this purpose, Simple Linear Regression is performed where Attitude toward Sustainability of the students is considered as the outcome or dependent variable and Course Content is considered as predictor or independent variable.

Following are the test results:

Table 7: Model Summary of Predictor of Attitude toward Sustainability.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.412 ^a	.169	.152	.62627

Source: Primary Data

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

Table 8: ANOVA between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.841	1	3.841	9.792	.003 ^b
	Residual	18.826	48	.392		
	Total	22.667	49			

Source: Primary Data

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward Sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Course Content

Table 9: Strength of Relationship between Course Content and Attitude toward Sustainability.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.695	.531		
				8.843	.000

Course Content	.290	.093	.412	3.129	.003
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Source: Primary Data

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Attitude toward Sustainability

Interpretation

The Model Summary Table (Table 7) indicates that 16.9% of variation in the outcome variable is explained by the predictor, i.e., the Course Content. This is because R Square of the model is 0.169.

The ANOVA Table (Table 8) depicts the significance value to be lower than 0.05, thus denoting that the model provides a reasonable degree of prediction.

The Coefficients Table (Table 9) shows the significance value of the predictor to be less than 0.05. Hence, one can conclude that the outcome variable is reliably explained by Course Content variable.

The linear equation for the Model is framed as follows:

$$Y = 4.695 + 0.290 \text{ Course Content}$$

where, Y = Outcome variable 'Attitude toward Sustainability'.

Findings

The findings reveal that there is equal proportion of male and female students signifying that girls are likewise eager to pursue BBA. It is also evident that father of majority students is an entrepreneur. Further, most of the students are satisfied with the course content. Moreover, majority of the students is more or less satisfied with the teaching methods. However, entrepreneurial intentions are not significantly associated with course content of entrepreneurship courses, teaching methods and entrepreneurial nature of teachers. 'Being an

Innovative Employee' is not significantly associated with course content of entrepreneurship courses, teaching methods and entrepreneurial nature of teachers. It is also discernible that the entrepreneurial mindset is not getting that developed among the students due to low percentage of strong agreement related to the variables of this construct. But, there is a significant association between course content and attitude toward sustainability of the students.

Conclusion

The results suggest that there is not much entrepreneurial interest among the suburban University students (here Adamas University in Barasat near Kolkata, West Bengal, India). Since entrepreneurial intentions are not substantially connected with course content of entrepreneurship courses, teaching methods and entrepreneurial nature of teachers, one can conclude that the entrepreneurship courses of the University are not being very effective in adoption of entrepreneurship as a career choice by the students. Although the course content is satisfactory to the students, they are not willing to take up entrepreneurship as a career choice. However, the course content is able to generate a favourable attitude toward sustainability among the students.

The study provides insights regarding efficacy of entrepreneurship courses in inducing entrepreneurial intention and development of required mindset among the students of the University. Results of the study necessitate doing brainstorming regarding the content of entrepreneurship courses and modification of delivery pedagogy on account of lack of development of entrepreneurial intent and mindset of the students. Some completely new strategies may need to be adopted by the University such as delivery of guest lectures and inspirational talks by real-life entrepreneurs, providing funding to students for starting their business ventures through interesting ways such as in the lines of the popular reality television show 'Shark Tank' and adopt other innovative strategies regarding the same.

The study can be extended to explore the efficacy of entrepreneurship courses and their delivery in generating entrepreneurial interests among the students of various other educational institutes and universities in other regions of India too.

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