

The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Fostering Entrepreneurial Intentions of Higher Education Students

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Abstract

Accomplishment of higher education is not enough to get employed in today's economic world. It demands from young graduates to consider other practicable career options like entrepreneurship. The foremost objective of the study was to examine the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering and refining entrepreneurial intentions of students at higher education level. The data were obtained through a cross-sectional survey by using a questionnaire from 600 graduate and post-graduate students of three public universities. Data were analyzed using multivariate statistics. The findings showed that entrepreneurship education was significantly affecting the entrepreneurial intentions of the students. This study added towards the limited literature on entrepreneurship education in Pakistani context. Higher education sector, therefore, should give attention to encourage entrepreneurship awareness among students to cultivate entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Higher Education

Introduction and Literature Review

Pakistan is dealing with the fierce race of world-wide economic growth, hence, only higher education is not enough to acquire employment in the developing and developed countries. In the turbulent economic context of today's world, young graduates need to envision entrepreneurship as a practicable career choice. Entrepreneurship makes a person job creator instead of job seeker. In developing countries like Pakistan, where youth is estimated about 60% of the whole population, entrepreneurship is considered very necessary for increasing self-employment and new business venture creation. From different territorial perspectives the effect

of entrepreneurship helps to overcome the problems of unemployment by raising the level of entrepreneurial initiatives (Audretsch, 2002).

Entrepreneurship remains limited in Pakistan when we make comparison with the global world due to lack of sound policies on behalf of policy makers. If policies are made then government fails to implement these policies in true letter and spirit towards entrepreneurship. Reasons behind this failure is slower economic growth in prominent indicators for initiating new business ventures along with unhealthy and limited economic opportunities (Haque, 2007). However, the government recently has taken some initiatives toward self-employment of youth and human capital development through the start of different schemes such as Prime Minister Youth Loan Scheme, Prime Minister Rozgar Scheme, short term technical courses with the collaboration of Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA).

Entrepreneurship Education can fully assist the students of higher education to develop their attitudes and aspirations toward self-employment and entrepreneurial initiatives which will ultimately overcome the current unemployment problem (Norasmah & Faridah, 2010). Many researchers have admitted entrepreneurship as a suitable solution to eradicate unemployment among graduates (Ghazali, Ibrahim, & Zainol, 2012; Kamariah, Yaacob, & Jamaliah, 2004). The educational institutions can play their part by offering formal entrepreneurship training in the curriculum of business and technical education besides organizing seminars, conferences, and short courses for the undergraduates and graduates. Higher Education Commission, under Prime Minister Youth Program, have also invited all laptop scheme awardees to take subsidized courses from the worlds' top universities online (students have to register @ Pakcoursera) to foster entrepreneurial activities.

Entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a significant alleviator for economic stagnation, unemployment and industry up gradation (Zhou, Zhao, & Katzy, 2012). The important thing to note about entrepreneurship is the fact that entrepreneurial intentions and skills can be developed as planned behaviors in an academic program (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). Drucker (1985) says that "Entrepreneurship is not magic; it's not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It's a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned" (p.41).

Entrepreneurship involve processes like capability to recognize and manipulate opportunities, effective and efficient exploitations of resources, and developing business strategies and plans (Shane, 2003). Such a level of knowledge, skills and proficiency for becoming a successful entrepreneur, can be achieved through formal entrepreneurship education that can equip the students with critical and reflective ability along with the training of entrepreneurial processes to inculcate the entrepreneurial intentions (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006).

Becoming an entrepreneur is a deliberate decision of an individual that can be supported by appropriate entrepreneurship education (Liñán & Chen, 2009). According to Schlaegel and Koenig (2014), entrepreneurship education plays an important role in development of understanding among students about entrepreneurial enterprises. It helps in discovering, creating, and exploiting resources and opportunities. Therefore the concept of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions along with other entrepreneurship attitudes and skills are important in entrepreneurship theory and practice (Thompson, 2009).

Recently some rich theoretical and conceptual studies have revealed the role of entrepreneurial knowledge (Shepherd & DeTienne, 2005), entrepreneurial education (Ravasi & Turati, 2005), ground-breaking initiatives (Schatzel, Iles, & Kiyak, 2005), risk handling (Mullins & Forlani, 2005), and entrepreneurial intentions or aspiration (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003) in successful running of entrepreneurial enterprises. However, multifaceted and concrete efforts are required from policy makers to establish entrepreneurial orientation in educational institutions. Administrative support of an educational institute will promote an entrepreneurial community of practitioners and educators to organize and deliver suitable entrepreneurship education curriculum and pedagogy. This is the only way to inculcate, develop, and evaluate the entrepreneurial knowledge and intensions among students (Mwiya, 2014).

Entrepreneurial intention is a self-conceived belief of a person who aims to start a new business and deliberately plans to do so in future. According to Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, (2016) “An array of factors are potentially relevant to the formulation (or not) of entrepreneurial intentions: personality traits, family and friends, experiences and education, political and economic conditions, and perceived motivations and obstacles” (p.2). The studies on entrepreneurship have found a

positive and significant correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions for being entrepreneurs. It has been revealed that entrepreneurship education provides a platform for students to recognize and exploit new business opportunities in society. They learn knowledge, skills, and technologies that enhance the level of their critical and creative skills which is essential for establishing their own businesses (Shepherd & DeTienne, 2005). These studies have also explored positive correlation between entrepreneurial intentions and other attitudinal factors like desirability and competitiveness (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999). The researchers have acknowledged the projecting role of entrepreneurship education in socialization of students towards entrepreneurial careers and opportunities (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Krueger et al., 2000). Furthermore, studies have also revealed the effect of entrepreneurship courses on effective and efficient management of new business ventures by adding value and increasing probability of success in such ventures (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005).

Consequently, entrepreneurship education enhances entrepreneurial intentions of students by creating awareness to start a new business venture in the modern competitive world. Global competition and corporate downsizing are among the big challenges of modern economies. Entrepreneurship is a reasonable solution to such uncertainties. It has been considered the best solution to the problem of unemployment among young graduates (Zin & Smith, 2005). The motivation for this study is to investigate the relationships between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions among higher education students.

The type of education that is being offered in most of the higher education institutions of Pakistan has produced graduates who have no demand in the present markets. These graduates expect to get salary employment after completing their formal education with lower levels of entrepreneurial intentions. Unemployment among graduates of Pakistani higher education institutions has become a national crisis for economy. The prolonged gap between graduation and employment dates has been continuously increasing. This unfortunate situation has become a major source of frustration among the higher education students.

The major objective of this study was to examine the effect of entrepreneurship education i.e. curricula, teaching methodology, and

university role, on entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students.

Methodology

Population and Sample

All students of business education and commerce, enrolled in public sector universities of the Punjab, who had studied entrepreneurship as a subject, were the population of the study. A total of 600 graduate and post-graduate students were selected from the population across three universities i.e. University of the Punjab Lahore, University of Sargodha, and BZU Multan. Details are given below in the table:

Table: 1

<u>University Name</u>	<u>MBA (8th Semester)</u>		<u>M.Com (7th Semester)</u>		<u>BBA-Hons (6th Semester)</u>		<u>B.Com-Hons (5th Semester)</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
University of Sargodha.	34	45	09	11	33	21	25	22	200
Hailey College, Punjab University Lahore.	12	12	23	21	39	38	27	28	200
Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan	32	18	36	14	25	25	35	15	200
Total:	78	75	68	46	97	69	87	65	600

The division of student sample university-wise, class-wise, and gender-wise

Sampling Technique

The researchers desired to collect the data from those students who had prior knowledge of the entrepreneurship subject and who had studied entrepreneurship as a subject, so purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Data were collected from both male and female students, so as to make the research relevant and authentic; nonetheless the effect of gender difference was not the research objective of this study.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was developed in light of extant literature review. The constructs of the study were defined on the bases of theory. Therefore, the developed scales and the items were based on the conceptual domain of our central constructs. First, each construct was defined conceptually. Second, the items were developed that would truly

serve as the indicators of that domain. At the same time, the relevant literature was extensively reviewed and identified a pool of the items for each construct. Third, in preparation of questionnaire the researcher consulted experts, from time to time, to assure content validation. The suggestions and contributions were fully incorporated into last version of the questionnaire. Finally, the reliabilities were calculated for each scale of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was consisted of 3 subscales and 30 items. All subscales: 'Curricula' 'Teaching Methodology' 'University Role' consisted of 10 items each. A separate tool was developed to measure 'Entrepreneurial Intention' which consisted of 8 items. The questionnaire (tool) was based on seven-point Likert type scale.

Validation of Research Instrument

The questionnaire was examined by the experts from department of education and business education department of University of Sargodha. The research instrument was modified, where necessary, according to the opinions of experts. For pilot testing the questionnaire was administered to 60 business and commerce education students at university of Sargodha who had studied entrepreneurship as a subject. These 60 students were excluded from the sample. The statements of the instrument were found easy to understand for the respondents and none of the items were found ambiguous.

Table 2

Reliability Analysis of the Scales

Sr. No.	Factor	No. of Statements	Cronbach Alpha
1	*EE Curricula	10	0.82
2	EE Teaching Methodology	10	0.77
3	EE University Role	10	0.83
4	Entrepreneurial Intentions	08	0.75

*EE stands for Entrepreneurship Education

Internal consistency coefficient was computed using Cronbach alpha. Factor-wise reliability coefficients for each factor are given in table 2. The Cronbach alpha coefficient ranges from 0.75 to 0.83 which is considered acceptable.

Results

The overall model fit along with the effects of each predictor was assessed through the Multiple Regressions using IBM SPSS 22.

Table 3

Mean and SD of construct variables

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
Curricula	4.77	1.06
Teaching methodology	4.66	0.98
University role	4.50	1.12
Entrepreneurial intentions	4.91	1.02

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the model, the test shows curricula scores as (M=4.77 SD= 1.06), teaching methodology scores as (M=4.66 SD= 0.98), university role scores as (M=4.50, SD= 1.12), and entrepreneurial intentions scores as (M=4.91, SD=1.02).

Table 4

The effect of EE curricula on entrepreneurial intentions

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.463 ^a	0.214	0.213	0.901			
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	132.801	1	132.801	163.264	.000 ^b	
Residual	486.423	598	.813			
Total	619.224	599				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.788	.170			16.360	.000
Curricula	.445	.035	.463		12.777	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Curricula b. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intentions

The above table reveals the results by using simple linear regression to analyze the effect of entrepreneurship education curricula on students' entrepreneurial intentions (F (1,598) = 163.264, $p < 0.05$), with an R^2 of 0.214. The results indicate that the entrepreneurship education curricula had significant positive effect upon the entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students.

Table 5

The effect of EE teaching methodology on entrepreneurial intentions

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.590 ^a	0.349	.348	.821			
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	215.879	1	215.879	320.063	.000 ^b	
Residual	403.345	598	.674			
Total	619.224	599				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.060	.163			12.634	.000
Teaching Methodology	.613	.034	.590		17.890	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intentions, b. Predictors: (Constant), Teaching methodology

The above tables shows that the effect of entrepreneurship education teaching methodology on students' entrepreneurial intentions is significant ($F(1,598) = 320.063, p > 0.05$), with an R^2 of 0.349. The results indicated significant positive effect in this case.

Table 6

The effect of EE and university role on entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.535 ^a	0.286	.285	.859			
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	177.352	1	177.352	240.017	.000 ^b	
Residual	441.872	598	.739			
Total	619.224	599				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.736	.145			18.889	.000
University Role	.484	.031	.535		15.492	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intentions, b. Predictors: (Constant), University role

The above tables shows the results of students’ entrepreneurial intentions based on their university role which is significant ($F = (1,598) 240.017, p > 0.05$), with an R^2 of 0.286. The results indicated significant positive effect in this case.

Table 7

The effect of curricula, teaching methodology, and university role on entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.657 ^a	.431	.428	.769		
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	266.944	3	88.981	150.541	.000 ^b
Residual	352.280	596	.591		
Total	619.224	599			
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.342	.174		7.702	.000
Curricula	.157	.036	.164	4.397	.000
Teaching Methodology	.360	.043	.347	8.464	.000
University Role	.254	.034	.281	7.553	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intentions, b. Predictors: (Constant), Curricula, Teaching methodology, University role

The above tables show that a multiple linear regression was calculated to analyze students’ entrepreneurial intentions based on their entrepreneurship education curricula, teaching methodology, and university role. The results were significant ($F (3, 596) = 150.541, p < .000$), with an R^2 of .431. It was found that students’ entrepreneurial intentions are equal to $1.342 + 0.157$ (curricula) $+ 0.360$ (teaching methodology) $+ 0.254$ (university role). The results indicate that the entrepreneurship education curricula, teaching methodology, and university role had significant positive effect on the entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students.

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of the research revealed that the entrepreneurship education that involves curricula, methodology and university role, had significant positive effect upon the entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students. This finding coincided with the findings of Remeikiene, Startiene, & Dumciuviene, (2013) who reported that the study program impacts students' intentions for entrepreneurship. The results of this study are similar to other studies (Mwiya, 2014; Schlaegel & Koenig 2014; Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999) The role of the entrepreneurship instructor is to structure curriculum and co-curricular activities that ensure entrepreneurial concrete experiences for learners. The active nature of the learning process provides an experience, from which the learner can reflect and learn (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Finger & Asun, 2001; Moon, 2013). The reflective process is facilitated by the instructor, whose goal is to help students interpret and understand their experiences so that learning can occur (Finger & Asún, 2001; Moon, 2013). Curricula should be designed to create real entrepreneurial experiences for the learners; in this way, entrepreneurship instructors are facilitators rather than teachers. The entrepreneurship instructor switches from focusing on what to learn and instead teaches students how to learn (Hase & Kenyon, 2000).

The contemporary studies show the influences of entrepreneurship education curricula, pedagogical methods and university role on entrepreneurial intentions. These three elements of entrepreneurship education collectively predict entrepreneurial intentions (Liñán & Chen, 2009; Liñán, Rodríguez-Cohard & Rueda-Cantuche, 2011). The findings revealed that in classrooms, teachers describe the process of entrepreneurship to students as a process in which students attempt to develop their ideas into entrepreneurial opportunities. Students work independently or as members of groups and they perform a series of activities that are designed to help them develop their products or services. Furthermore, students must take their product or service and try to sell it, which involves assessment about who the customers are, how best to reach them, and how best to make the sale. Thus, throughout the semester, students' involvement to practice all of the functional parts of entrepreneurship on their own ventures improves their entrepreneur intentions.

In this environment the role of entrepreneurship education and other programs that promote entrepreneurship, goes beyond the teaching of

business skills. Prospective entrepreneurs need to know how to make good decisions about paths that have a high likelihood of leading to the type of entrepreneurship they wish to pursue. As they consider their career goals, they need to understand what steps to take to achieve them, and how to capitalize upon their experience (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). So, to develop their entrepreneurial intentions proper entrepreneurship education is important and must be improved.

Pakistani higher education institutions are utilizing the traditional methodology for teaching different subjects including the subjects of business administration and commerce. Higher education institutions are interested in developing pedagogy that could stimulate the production of entrepreneurs with strong entrepreneurial behavior. When students take responsibility for learning, they can take an interest in defining their learning objectives and assignments, and at exactly that point specific entrepreneurial abilities are created and polished. It is argued that changes to pedagogy are required to address this problem.

Recommendations

The results of the study leads to the conclusions that the entrepreneurship education (curricula, teaching methodology and university role) had significant positive effect upon the entrepreneurial intentions of higher education students. It is a need of the day to make capabilities more effective by relevant education, arrangement of more skilled instructors, and effective university environment in the field of entrepreneurship. There is a need to build linkages among the government and private institutions to create an eco-system that leads to development of entrepreneurship oriented disciplines of education in Pakistan. Besides business and commerce students all the students of higher education, should be oriented towards entrepreneurship in all departments of the universities. They must attend seminars, participate in workshops and group discussion to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and self-confidence to enhance their entrepreneurial capacities during entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, proper entrepreneurship education should be initiated to improve the entrepreneurial information processing, entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial awareness among students. There must be coordination between academicians and entrepreneurs to enrich the coaching facilities for internship to higher education students.

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