

Impact of various Teaching Methodologies on the Entrepreneurial awareness and intention of Students at the University of the Philippines Los Banos

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARBS/v5-i7/1746 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v5-i7/1746>

Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship has been regarded as one the solutions to reduce unemployment and poverty in the country. Thus to encourage young people to acquire an entrepreneurial mindset and eventually start their own business, many schools have introduced entrepreneurship in their curriculum either as a specialization or as a full degree. The aim of this research is to examine from the perspective of the students, which of the various teaching methodologies being used in entrepreneurship classes has the greatest positive impact on students' entrepreneurial awareness and intention. A survey, using a five-point Likert scale, was conducted among students of the University of the Philippines Los Baños taking an introductory course in entrepreneurship. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that majority of the students learn best through a combination of traditional techniques methodologies like lectures and non-traditional methods like business pitch competition. These results provide the faculty members handling the subject a greater assurance that the current teaching strategies meet the objectives of increasing entrepreneurial awareness and intention among university students.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, education, entrepreneurial awareness, entrepreneurial intention

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been hailed by both developed and developing countries as a way of achieving and sustaining economic growth. It is generally believed that the more entrepreneurs there are, the more employment opportunities there will be. In the recent past, it has been observed that many colleges and universities in the country prepare students to be employed in big companies without opening their eyes to the possibility that they too can start their own company and make it big, thus, providing a ready employment not only for themselves but eventually also for others. Inculcating an entrepreneurial mindset among young people might help them consider entrepreneurship as an alternative career option. To this end, the Department of Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship (DAME) of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) offered, for the first time, an introductory course in entrepreneurship, ENTR 1 (Unleashing the Entrepreneurial Spirit), during the second semester of academic year 2011-2012. Through this course, it hopes to influence the minds of more young people to start their own businesses at an early age. It has been three years since this course was offered and it would be interesting to find out its impact on the students' entrepreneurial awareness and intention. This study aimed to: 1) identify the current teaching techniques which were helpful in raising students' entrepreneurial awareness; 2) explore and propose other teaching methods that could help them gain better appreciation of entrepreneurship; and 3) determine if the course made an impact on students' entrepreneurial intention.

Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

In its 2011 report on high impact entrepreneurship, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) made a distinction between high growth entrepreneurs, moderate growth entrepreneurs and low growth entrepreneurs. High growth entrepreneurs contribute more to job creation than the other two types of entrepreneurs. In their survey, only 4% of total respondents were high growth entrepreneurs but their businesses comprised 40% of the total employment generated by all

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entrepreneurs in the survey. Entrepreneurs who belonged to the high growth segment usually started their business between the age 26-45 and many of them have attended college. Majority of them tend to work in partnerships and most had a substantial number of overseas customers. Once their business took off, they became potential angel investors to other start-up businesses.

On the other hand, moderate growth entrepreneurs exhibited the same characteristics as high growth entrepreneurs, except that once the business has become successful, they tend to provide business funding only to family members. However, low growth entrepreneurs are different. Majority of them became entrepreneurs before they reached 26 years of age perhaps because a number of them did not get any college education and they felt they had no other choice. Most were sole business owners and have few overseas customers. They also seldom entered into partnerships when starting a new business.

The Philippines is said to be a highly entrepreneurial country. According to the Department of Trade and Industry, 99.6% of total firms are micro, small or medium enterprises (MSME) which provide 61% of total employment, 35.7% of value-added and 60% of exporters. However, according to Madarang and Habito (2007) in the Philippine Report for the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, a typical Filipino entrepreneur is male, between 25-44 years old, has reached secondary school and belongs to the lower socio-economic class. They are driven more by necessity than opportunity. Filipino entrepreneurship has low employment generation. Sixty percent of business owners stated that they did not have any employees, suggesting that they themselves performed all the business functions. Forty percent continued to use old technologies while only 30% of the entrepreneurs claimed that their product was new.

While many countries have chosen entrepreneurship as a path to economic development, including the Philippines, attention must be given to high impact entrepreneurship for it to have substantial contribution to a country's development. This is the reason why there is a need to inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset among university students who have greater potential in engaging in high growth businesses.

Entrepreneurship Education

Can entrepreneurship be taught? This is one of the foremost questions that researchers tend to ask in dealing with studies on entrepreneurship education. While many think that entrepreneurs are born, Drucker (1985) argued that entrepreneurship is a discipline and as such, it can be learned. If it can be learned, then it can be taught.

According to Kuratko (2003), entrepreneurship is more than just putting up a business. It requires a particular "entrepreneurial perspective" which encompasses opportunity seeking, risk taking and the persistence to carry out an idea to reality. He believes that this perspective can be developed in individuals. Wilson (2008) explained that when students are exposed to entrepreneurship and innovation early, there is a greater chance that they will consider an entrepreneurial career later on. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Rasli, Khan, Malekifar and Jabeen (2013) which reported a positive significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and education environment, which calls for the development of appropriate educational programs to nurture students in becoming entrepreneurs.

In a report to the OECD (2009), it was emphasized that central to entrepreneurship education is inculcating a positive mindset. It is acknowledged that it is a process which may take some time to be realized. This process involves two major elements. First is the development of personal qualities and attitudes that can help a person identify opportunities and act on them. The other element is development of knowledge and skills necessary to establish a new enterprise.

To achieve the objectives of entrepreneurship education, four factors must apply: a) entrepreneurship must be an integrated part in instruction; b) there must be collaboration with the local community; c) teachers must be competent; and d) school owners and school managers must be supportive of entrepreneurship education. Wilson (2008) also pointed out that entrepreneurship education cannot exist in a vacuum. Absence of an environment conducive to business will only discourage would-be entrepreneurs.

Liñan (2007) categorized entrepreneurship education into four. The first one is “entrepreneurial awareness education” which aims to increase knowledge of entrepreneurship which could possibly alter attitudes towards opting to become entrepreneurs in the future. The second category is “education for start-up” for those who already have an entrepreneurial idea and need some help in becoming self-employed. The third one is “education for entrepreneurial dynamism” for those who are already entrepreneurs and are focusing on growth and dynamism. The last category is “continuing education for entrepreneurs” which focuses on entrepreneurs with extensive experience.

Thompson (2009) defined entrepreneurial intention as a “self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future.” Thus, it is commonly used as a measure of the impact of entrepreneurship programs (Lorz, 2011).

Approaches in Entrepreneurship Education

Fayolle (2009) broadly defined entrepreneurship education as, “all activities aiming to foster entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills and covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation.” From this definition, it becomes obvious that teaching methods in entrepreneurship education must go beyond traditional means.

Entrepreneurship education differs from business education in the sense that it aims to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment. Activities may include: a) acquiring personal traits and skills like creativity, risk taking, autonomy, self-confidence and others, b) promoting self-employment as a possible career option, c) providing the knowledge and skills on how to start a company and manage it successfully and d) putting up actual business enterprises (European Commission, 2008).

Furthermore, the 2011 report of the European Commission pointed out that entrepreneurial competencies are “best acquired through people-led enquiry and discovery.” Traditional teaching may not be sufficient as the students tend to be passive recipients. The report further recommended that since entrepreneurship education cuts across many areas, “it should be available to all students and be taught as a theme rather than a separate subject at all stages and levels of education.” However, Lourenco and Jones (2006), cautioned entrepreneurship educators against falling into the trap of choosing between traditional and non-traditional means. They emphasized that various learning approaches must be employed to come up with a collaborative entrepreneurship education model.

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were used for this study. For the quantitative part, a self-rating five-point Likert Scale was used to measure the students' perceptions of the different teaching methodologies. Scale ratings were as follows: 1-Strongly Agree (SA); 2-Agree (A); 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neither); 4-Disagree (D) and 5-Strongly Disagree (SD). The survey was conducted on the last day of the second semester of academic year 2013-2014 after the integration lecture in ENTR 1 – Unleashing the Entrepreneurial Spirit, an introductory class on entrepreneurship. Before the pre-tested questionnaires were given out, it was made clear that the students' participation in the survey is voluntary and it would not have any bearing on their class standing. Out of a population of 230 students taking Entr1, 189 (82.17%) students participated in the survey. However, after the encoding of the results only 187 responses (81.39%) were included in the sample since two respondents did not properly answer many items.

The questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part of the survey asked for the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, course, year level and their reason for taking the course. The second part asked the students to rate each of the different teaching methodologies being used for ENTR 1 classes in terms of helping them to be more aware of the relevance of entrepreneurship and the competencies required to become successful entrepreneurs. These methodologies include lectures, business pitch competition, exercises, getting to know their personal entrepreneurial competency (PEC), interview with a foreign entrepreneur, film showing and readings with reaction papers. They were also asked to give their suggestions or comments if they had any. The third part of the questionnaire tried to find out the students' attitude towards four other teaching techniques in terms of potentially increasing their entrepreneurial awareness. These techniques include inviting entrepreneurs to give talks, company visits, test marketing and case analysis. The questionnaire also provided a space for their suggestions or comments. In the last part, as a measure of entrepreneurial intention, the students were asked, if overall, the course inspired them to put up a business in the future. Space was provided for their suggestions or comments. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mode and cross-tabular analysis were used to analyze the data. The mode, as a measure of central tendency, was deemed the most appropriate for Likert-scale type of survey as the responses are considered ordinal data because the degree of the differences in responses cannot be ascertained. Furthermore, getting the mean using the numeric responses may lead to a wrong interpretation of the data. Content analysis was done for answers on the suggestion portion and on their reaction to the personal entrepreneurial competency assessment which they submitted during the middle of the course.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the summary of the respondents' socio-demographic profile. The youngest student taking the course is 16 years old while the oldest is 23. A few respondents preferred not to reveal their age. The average age is 18 years old. Most are in their first (35.83%) and second (35.29) year in college. Close to 75% are women and for the semester under study a great number (85.11%) are from non-business courses like agriculture, agri-biotechnology, applied mathematics, applied physics, human ecology, nutrition, food technology, different fields of engineering, computer science, statistics, communication arts, chemistry, biology, sociology, development communication, and pre-veterinary medicine. Only 14.89% are from business courses such as agribusiness management or economics. More than half are taking the course because it interests them while almost one third are taking it because it is required by their curriculum. Others enrolled in the course because it fits their schedule or because of other reasons such as a friend's recommendation.

Table 1. ENTR 1 Students' Profile.

Age	%	Year level		Sex	%	Course		Reason	%
			%				%		
16	6.42%	I	35.83%	Male	26.06%	Business	14.89%	Required	31.38%
17	34.76%	II	35.29%	Female	72.87%	Non-Business	85.11%	Interested	59.04%
18	25.67%	III	17.11%					Fits schedule	7.98%
19	17.65%	IV	9.09%					Others	1.06%
20	7.49%	V	2.14%						
21	4.28%								
22	1.07%								
23	0.53%								

Note: Totals may not come up to 100% as some respondents did not answer all the items

Impact of Current Teaching Methodologies on Students' Entrepreneurial Awareness

Table 2 shows the ENTR 1 students' attitude towards the different teaching methodologies currently being used in Entr1.

Business Pitch Competition

The teaching methodology that received the highest positive rating in terms of increasing entrepreneurial awareness is business pitch competition (91.98%; half of which strongly agreed). This result is not surprising as studies have shown that student-led inquiry is an appropriate methodology in entrepreneurship education. The business pitch competition requires student teams to come up with an innovative and feasible business idea which they will present to judges who are entrepreneurs themselves. They are judged on the basis of innovativeness of the product or service, the market potential, financial feasibility, capacity of the team to implement the business idea and their readiness during the presentation. The only suggestion made by students regarding this methodology is to make the business pitch competition easier.

Lectures

Contrary to expectations, lectures came as a close second with an overwhelming majority (24.06% strongly agree and 67.91% agree) of the respondents being positively influenced by this methodology, which constitute almost two-thirds of total class hours. Although compared to the other teaching techniques, only about a fourth strongly agreed, more than two thirds agreed that the lectures helped them heighten their entrepreneurial awareness. Less than 10% disagreed or were unsure whether this methodology influenced them positively. This result corroborates the observation of Lourenco and Jones (2006) that various learning approaches must be employed to come up with a collaborative entrepreneurship education model.

Table 2. Students' Attitude Towards Current Teaching Methodologies as Regards Increasing Their Entrepreneurial Awareness.

Current Teaching Methodologies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Disagree	Mode
			Disagree	Disagree		
Business Pitch	83	89	8	6	1	2
Competition	44.39%	47.59%	4.28%	3.21%	0.53%	
Lectures	45	127	11	4	0	2
	24.06%	67.91%	5.88%	2.14%	0%	
PEC Assessment	83	88	13	2	1	2
	44.39%	47.06%	6.95%	1.07%	0.53%	
Exercises	63	104	11	8	1	2
	33.69%	55.61%	5.88%	4.28%	0.53%	
Videos	71	95	19	2	0	2
	37.97%	50.80%	10.16%	1.07%	0%	
Interview with An Entrepreneur	58	100	25	3	1	2
	31.02%	53.48%	13.37%	1.60%	0.53%	
Readings with Reaction Paper	36	113	29	9	0	2
	19.25%	60.43%	15.51%	4.81%	0%	

Note: Arranged according from the highest percentage of agreement to the lowest

However, in the suggestion part, there were conflicting views regarding the use of relay teaching during the lectures where each module is handled by a different professor. About three respondents preferred that there be just one professor handling the lectures while one appreciated the different ideas shared by the different professors. One common suggestion was to make the lectures more fun and exciting with closer interaction with the audience. Another comment was that the pace of some professors is too fast that he/she can hardly follow what is written in the power point presentation.

Assessment of Personal Entrepreneurial Competency (PEC)

Not far behind is the assessment of personal entrepreneurial competency with a total of 91.45% agreeing and strongly agreeing. The PEC Assessment required the students at the beginning of the semester, to rate a set of 55 statements according to how it applies to them. The questionnaire was adopted from Mcber Company and Management Systems International (MSI). Each statement corresponds to a particular entrepreneurial competency. The 10 PECs considered are: a) opportunity seeking; b) risk-taking; c) demand for efficiency and quality; d) commitment to work contract; e) persistence; f) information seeking; g) goal setting; h) systematic planning and monitoring; i) persuasion and networking; and j) self-confidence. Based on their reaction to the result of their PEC assessment which they submitted towards the middle of the semester after they have attended a number of lectures on entrepreneurship, many students were grateful as the assessment confirmed what they somehow knew as a strength or a weakness and made some resolutions on how to improve a specific entrepreneurial competency where were weak at. Some were surprised at the results which caused them to try to go into a deeper self-evaluation. A few chose to simply ignore the results if it did not fit with their existing self-concept.

Exercises

Exercises got a total positive response of 89.30%, about 2% lower than the aforementioned methodologies. These are exercises that lead to the complete business concept formulation. Compared to the business pitch competition which had an element of excitement to it, only 33.69% strongly agreed that it increased their entrepreneurial awareness albeit a little over 50% agreed on the positive influence of this methodology. Some suggestions made were to make the exercises less technical and to give details on making the step by step exercises.

Videos

Given today's visual generation, surprisingly, videos only came in fifth with a total positive response of 88.77%. There were about five to eight videos shown during the entire course; some were inspirational with no particular interviewee, others were actual interviews with

entrepreneurs. One of the suggestions given was to show more informative and motivational videos.

Interview with an Entrepreneur

This methodology got the second to the last ranking in terms of increasing entrepreneurial awareness, with total positive response of 84.5%. This is a group work which required the students to identify a foreign entrepreneur whom they will interview about his culture and its influence on his business practices, motivation in starting the business, key success factors and challenges being faced by the foreign entrepreneur in doing business in the Philippines. Prior to the interview, they have to research on the different macro or micro environment where the foreign entrepreneur is operating and how it impacts on the business. One respondent suggested that this activity be replaced with another since a number of foreign entrepreneurs around the university campus are already tired of being interviewed every semester and already refuse to entertain prospective interviewers.

Readings with Reaction Paper

The teaching methodology through readings with reaction paper got the lowest positive rating with only a total of 79.48% agreeing and of these, only 19% strongly agreed. The reaction papers are required for 2nd up to the 4th lecture modules. The professor taking care of the module has a free hand in choosing the related article which the students have to read and make a reaction paper on. In spite of the fact that this got the lowest rating, only one student made a comment which stated, “lessen the reaction papers”.

Possible Impact of Proposed Teaching Methodologies on Students' Entrepreneurial Awareness

Table 3 presents the students' attitude towards proposed teaching methodologies in terms of increasing their entrepreneurial awareness.

Invitation of Entrepreneurs to Give Talks

Of the proposed methodologies that have yet to be adopted, inviting actual entrepreneurs to share their experiences got the highest positive response with 91.98%, more than half of which strongly agreed that it could help increase their entrepreneurial awareness. While this mode of teaching was already in the minds of those who developed the course but it was rarely done due to the difficulty of coordinating the schedule of entrepreneurs especially since the lectures start early at 8:00 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 9:00 am on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is interesting to note that compared to interviewing a foreign entrepreneur which provides them greater opportunity to ask more questions and get to know an entrepreneur better, an overwhelming majority gave this approach a higher rating.

Company Visits

Company visits ranked second among the proposed activities that could help increase the students’ entrepreneurial awareness, with more than half of the respondents strongly agreeing and almost a third simply agreeing. While this approach may be more experiential since the students will be exposed to the environment of several entrepreneurs, a recent university policy has limited the scope of places to visit.

Test Marketing

Test marketing got a total positive rating of 84.49% for potentially increasing entrepreneurial awareness. This methodology, which is already being used for higher agribusiness management courses, requires students to test the market acceptability of their product or service by providing samples to target customers and asking them what they think of the product or service and at what prices they are willing to buy the product or avail of the service. A couple of respondents gave suggestions akin to this methodology like “selling products.” While this approach may help students gather substantial market data for a more convincing business pitch, the time required to do this might not fit the already packed schedule.

Case Analysis

The least ranked methodology is case analysis which got a total positive response of only 77%. It also got the most number of disagreements at 5.88%. No one bothered to give any suggestions. Perhaps the undergraduate students are not yet ready for this approach which might be better reserved for graduate students.

Table 3. Students’ Attitude Towards Proposed Teaching Methodologies as Regards Potentially Increasing Their Entrepreneurial Awareness.

Proposed Methodologies	Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mode
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Invite Entrepreneurs to Give Talks	112	59.89%	60	32.09%	12	6.42%	1
Company Visits	110	58.82%	61	32.62%	12	6.42%	1
Test Marketing	70	37.43%	88	47.06%	18	9.63%	2
Case Analysis	38	20.32%	106	56.68%	30	16.04%	2

Note: Arranged according from the highest percentage of agreement to the lowest)

Impact of ENTR 1 Subject on the Entrepreneurial Intention of Students

One of the more important objectives of this study is to find how the course has influenced the minds of the students as regards becoming entrepreneurs. Figure 1 shows the impact of the course on their entrepreneurial intention. In general, the course positively influenced the students' entrepreneurial intention with 36% strongly agreeing and 53% agreeing that the course

inspired them to put up their own business in the future. One respondent commented "Thank you for the inspiration". In the case of one who wrote "I really want to go into business in the near future" it is unclear whether this desire was due to the course or if prior to taking it, he already had plans of starting his own business. To resolve the issue, it would be better if future studies would include a pre-test and post-test both of which will measure the students' entrepreneurial intention before and after the course.

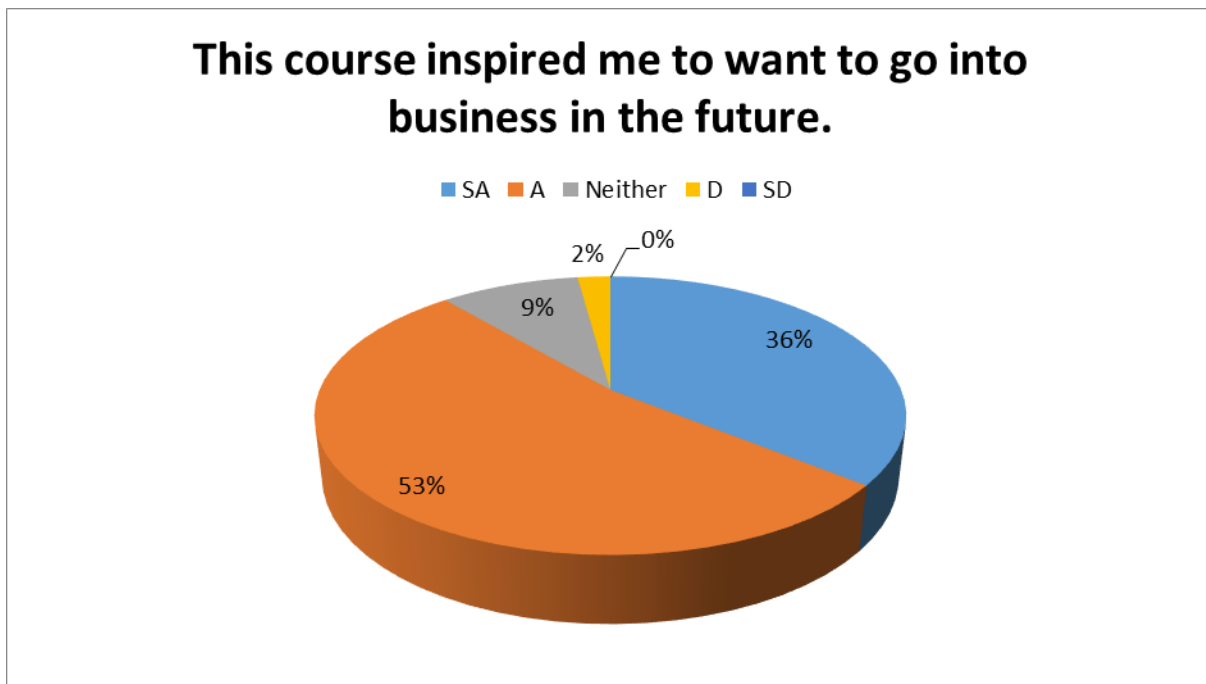


Figure 1. Impact of the Course on Students' Entrepreneurial Intention

Conclusions and Implications

From the results of the study, it appears that all of the methodologies currently being used in ENTR 1 had a positive impact on increasing students' entrepreneurial awareness, with business pitch competition and lectures getting the highest ratings while interviewing an entrepreneur and reading with reaction paper getting the lowest, although still within the acceptable levels. For those who developed and are teaching the course, this is a good indication that they are on the right track. But even if lectures got a high rating, it also got the most comments and suggestions revolving around the issues of changing of professors per module and professors having greater interaction with the students during the lecture. While minimal number of

negative comments can still be ignored, taking a closer look at the suggestions might contribute to improving the delivery of the course. As regards the other teaching methodologies that got high rankings, a thorough study need to be done as to how these could be incorporated in the schedule.

In terms of influencing entrepreneurial intention, it appears that, in general, the course had a positive impact on the students. However, in order to attribute the influence solely to the course, it is recommended that a pre-test and a post-test be done to measure the students' entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, since many of the students are taking this introductory course between their first and third years in college, it is uncertain if this entrepreneurial intention will actually be carried out after their graduation or even while they are still in the university. Finding out what percentage of the students who took ENTR 1 actually put up their own business would confirm and give a clearer picture on the impact of the course. This would call for a longitudinal study.

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