

Imbibing Entrepreneurial Culture: Effectiveness of Teaching-learning Scenario towards Entrepreneurship Development

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Abstract—*The present paper focusses on the importance of instilling entrepreneurial culture through a dynamic teaching-learning process at the university level. A shift from pure academic teaching to intense practice-based teaching using modern technology in business schools has been highlighted in the paper. A measurement framework to assess the effectiveness of teaching-learning scenario towards entrepreneurship development has been suggested in three areas like course content, course delivery and course assessment. Such a framework is expected to be useful to the academics to think anew and retest their teaching portfolio towards entrepreneurship development in the positive feedback loop over time.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship development is clearly reflected in the enormous efforts along with huge investments put into entrepreneurship and small business support programs of different countries. Koellinger & Thurik (2009) find, using panel data from 22 OECD countries, that entrepreneurship tends to be a leading indicator of the business cycle. They also conclude that entrepreneurs play major roles in nations' recoveries from recession. The growing volume of research acknowledges the importance of entrepreneurship education and training as a source for increasing start-up intentions, survival rates and growth (McMullan et al., 2002; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Fayolle & Lassas-Clerc, 2006; Katz, 2007; Souitaris et al., 2007; OECD, 2010; Omoruyi et al., 2017; Papagiannis, 2018; Kolay, 2019). Entrepreneurship education has been positioned sixth in importance out of the sixty recommendations on the solutions to the major problems faced by small businesses (Whitehouse Conference on small businesses, Solomon & Fernald, 1991). Universities in many countries have followed the example of US universities and have instituted a wide range of efforts on entrepreneurship education (Fayolle, 2000; Lin, 2004; Kuratke, 2011; Onyema & Daniil, 2017; Papagiannis, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education focuses on the development of functional management skills and abilities that train the individual to start, manage, and develop a business (Gibb & Nelson, 1996). On the similar lines, enterprise education (as it has been popularly known in the UK) focuses on advancement of personal attributes and attitudes that prepare the individuals for self-employment. Both enterprise and entrepreneurship education encourage independent business creation. Reviews of literature on enterprise and entrepreneurship education (Dainow, 1986; Kolay, 1992; Kuratke, 2011; Kolay, 2012; Papagiannis, 2018) give evidence that these programs encourage entrepreneurs to start business. Specially crafted courses of various universities on entrepreneurship development definitely offer basic insights on specific disciplines but the extent to which such quick-fix programs in a university environment help create enterprise needs to be examined. Opportunity identification may be teachable, but not opportunity creation. In the words of Professor Howard Stevenson of Harvard University, "you cannot teach someone to become Bill Gates, teach someone to compose like Beethoven, only you can teach the notes and scales, give them the tools they need to become a composer", similarly the tools to become an entrepreneur.

What do we expect as an outcome of entrepreneurship education? Is it the number of new business owners/the immediate rate of business start-ups or the development of long-term intellectual and societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Galloway & Brown, 2002)? If the managers in business become more entrepreneurial, it would improve productivity and enable them to compete more effectively in the world market place (Stevenson & Gumpert, 1985). Entrepreneurship is not distinguished as a specific subject but needs to permeate all the activities of the university concerning courses, research, and external activities (Gibb, 1987). What is relevant is the entrepreneurial behaviour to be imbibed into the students of entrepreneurship development programs. Majority of students of an undergraduate or graduate program may not become entrepreneurs. Blending practice with the theory, learning by doing along with the knowledge of theoretical constructs, the pragmatic diversions along with the

academic rigor in university programs may have significant contributions towards entrepreneurship development. This calls for increased attention directed not only towards realising more spin-offs or start-ups thus stimulating nascent entrepreneurship, but also improving entrepreneurship in itself, making graduating future employees as well as business owners more competent as entrepreneur-managers who would believe and practice nurturing creativity, and innovation with quantum jump in productivity and industrial growth (Lin, 2004; Omoruyi et al., 2017). The major task before the academic community is to re-examine their teaching and assessment methods and search for ways and means to reengineer their traditional teaching-learning approaches into learning by doing scenario, adopting entrepreneurial teaching to permeate entrepreneurship culture in the university setting.

There is now a plethora of curriculum design, delivery and assessment evaluation methods from formative to summative, structured to unstructured, quantitative to qualitative, positivist to non-positivist, formal to informal, top-down to bottom-up, coordinator-led to teacher-led to student-led and self-review to peer-review (Wall & Ottewill, 2000). Many researchers have worked in the past to rate the effectiveness of academic programs using a host of criteria focusing on either performance or importance in the market place (Nale et al., 2000). However, work done in order to assess the extent to which the academic curriculum of different universities germinate the seeds of entrepreneurship and promote entrepreneurship culture is sparse. The present paper is an attempt in this direction to assess the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Teaching Learning (ETL) scenario of Business Schools with reference to MBA programs.

Entrepreneurial learning of MBA Programs:

Like any other university program, MBA program has various theoretical inputs like leadership style, motivation theories, finance and economic principles, system concept, science of decision making. Students here are expected to develop a set of cognitive skills, including knowledge interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which transcend the academic and vocational divide. Academicians of business schools realize now the limitations of mathematical models and no more aim at theoretical exact solutions. Traditional thematic and analytic approaches in the classrooms are now extended to deal with practical issues, real life cases, work placement, external partnership, and link opportunities to network (Raffo et al., 2000). Academicians and practitioners work together to solve industrial problems that includes the art, science, technology and management and the learning outcome from cross-disciplinary approach facilitates entrepreneurship education (Galloway & Brown, 2002). Participants now-a-days very well appreciate that they may be the best amongst the inefficient, but they know very well where they stand against the world standard. Continuous improvement is the target before any entrepreneur-manager whether s/he is in the business or in the classroom searching for a solution of a business problem. Real life problems are multi-dimensional and complex. They always deal with uncertain scenario. So also we hardly have complete information for planning and control. In real life, business entrepreneurs rarely have clear-cut scripts to follow in the midst of time pressure and chaotic rapidly changing contexts at times (Baron, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2000). To cope with such constraints, business entrepreneurs may use simplifying strategies or heuristics to make sense for their decisions and actions to move forward (Busenitz & Barney, 1997; Zacharakis & Shepherd, 2001; Kuratke, 2011; Onyema & Daniil, 2017). To deal with such scenarios today's business teachers have started designing rule-based systems using neural network, artificial intelligence, and simulation games in the classroom. The use of such heuristics indeed generates the behaviour necessary to act entrepreneurially (Simon, et al., 2000).

On the resource side, majority of the business school teachers are not pure academics, they are in constant touch with the world of practice through their ongoing consulting and research projects along with networking with local industrial sector, banks, and financial institutions, developmental agencies and the government. To supplement theory with practice, now-a-days many business schools have introduced practitioners in the field as adjunct/visiting faculty. Practitioners do act as the second supervisor for guidance and assessment on the students' project assignments. Stories of successes and failures from well-established entrepreneurs always draw the keen attention of participants that facilitates entrepreneurial achievement connected by themes of confidence and self-belief (Rae & Carswell, 2000). Books and cases apart, business schools use quite extensively the available various databases of organizational events, performance statistics, share price movements etc. for assignments, cases, exercises, and analysis for empirical research based on real life phenomenon. With more and more development in e & m-businesses, organizations of today take special care and attention to publish all the relevant information in their websites, providing quite a huge database to business students and teachers for analysis and synthesis evolving the teaching-learning scenario more realistic and practice based.

Regarding the teaching methodology, the proportion of direct lecture session in business school subjects has been comparatively less. It has become more of participating nature, and discussion based. Students work in groups, discuss amongst themselves, clarify their doubts with their teacher, and present their ideas on possible solution to live business problems. It is more and more student managed activities with teacher as the facilitator as the epitome of entrepreneurial learning (Wesselink et al., 2007). Sometime they are working on given cases, again, many a times, they are working on organizational problems as project assignments. In fact, action in the project method has been favoured for entrepreneurial learning rather than the reflection in the case method as found by researchers long back (McMullan & Boberg, 1991; Preshing, 1991). Reflective report on a topic or a

mathematical solution of a problem may be an individual assignment, but many a times they play the role of different functional and strategic managers in a team assignment. Leadership qualities being the essence of business success comes into play amongst the MBA students during the team working, and someone’s leadership quality gets recognized and emerges as the leader of the project team.

On the assessment side, the final examination component has been gradually reduced, continuous assessment holds the major component for business courses. Discussion and class participation, critical analysis and thinking through quizzes, and live project assignments, presentation, and report writing form the major part of continuous assessment component of courses in most of the business schools. Competition is the order of the day in the business in the globalized market place. Likewise, hardly any assessment is done in business courses in an absolute sense, rating and ranking prevails in search of new ideas, practical solutions, and constructive suggestions in the presentation, and report writing. Business courses desire now not reflective observations, but active experimentation, trials, and testing through simulations in the computer labs, if not in the actual field. Many a times, analysis and results are presented before the practitioners in the field, and their views and ratings also form part of students’ assessment. That gives the class participants the confidence they need to shake off their weaknesses, and reduce their risk aversive behaviour, which is so critical for entrepreneurial learning and development.

Any entrepreneur or a business manager has to always face challenges. Conceive, develop, and market a new product or service is a challenge. Likewise, in course of business education, participants in the class get an opportunity to review their strengths and weaknesses, and explore the opportunities once they complete their MBA courses. Like inter-firm comparison, participants do compare with others in the class while choosing a particular option, and setting specific targets. MBA program makes the participants realize that any problem can be viewed from yet another angle, the ways of present working can always be improved, still better decisions and actions can bring in higher productivity. That belief and confidence are the gains from the MBA programs, and that may help encourage many of the participants in the class to continue to learn, develop others and help to create more and more learning enterprises in the positive feedback loop (Kolay, 2019) as presented in the Figure-1 below.

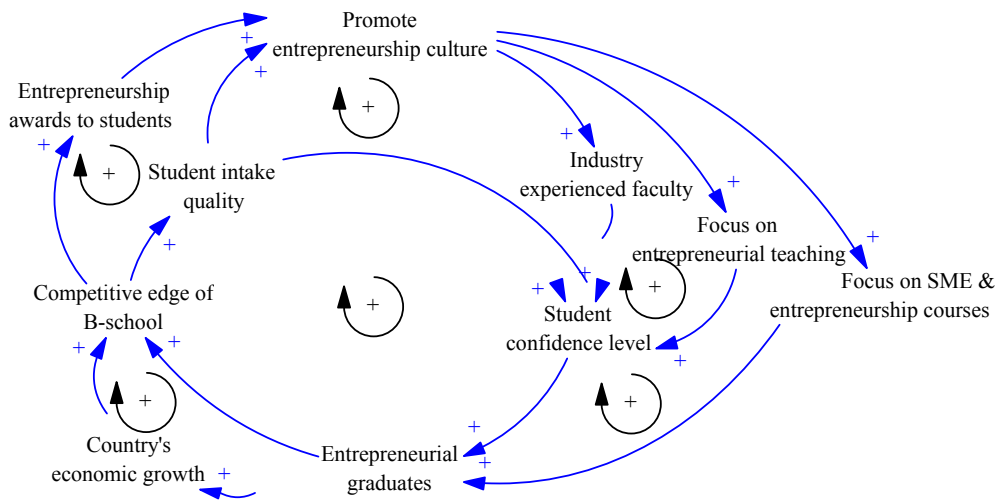


Figure 1: Entrepreneurial Teaching Learning Scenario of MBA Programs

Entrepreneurial Teaching-Learning Measurement Framework:

Taking the cue from the above analysis, a generalized measurement framework has been proposed here to assess the effectiveness of entrepreneurial teaching-learning (ETL) scenario in an academic program of a university. A set of hypotheses have been made in three broad areas of course offer viz., content, delivery, and assessment of any academic program along with their respective measures as presented in the Table-1.

Table 1: Measurement Framework for entrepreneurial teaching-learning scenario

Areas of ETL scenario	Hypotheses	Proposed measure
Course Content:		
1. Use of practice with theory	Higher the proportion of practice built into theory, higher the ETL	Proportional coverage by way of other than lecture sessions as per lesson plan

2. Skills development as learning outcome	Higher the weighting to generic and technical skills development as learning outcome, higher the ETL	Total engagement of students-inside and outside class
3.Focus on newness and developments	Higher the focus on newness and developments, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used on latest developments
4. Focus on innovation and creativity	Higher the weighting on innovation and creative performance, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in innovative and creative activities- inside and outside class
5.Use of problem solving approach	Higher the weighting on problem solving in addition to problem identification, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in using problem solving approaches- inside and outside class
6. Focus on issues in a holistic sense	More the focus on a holistic view of a problem, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in dealing with organizational problems and issues in a holistic sense
7.Use of uncertain scenario problems	More the focus on uncertain scenario, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used in dealing with uncertain scenario problems
8.Use of contextual assignments and cases	Higher the proportion of contextual assignments and cases used, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in contextual assignments and cases – inside and outside class
9.Use of global issues and problems	More the focus on global issues along with country specific, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used for dealing with cases of global issues and problems
10.Use of social goals along with profit goals	More the focus on social goals along with profit goals, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used for dealing with cases of social goals along with profit goals
11. Focus on sustainability issues	More the focus on sustainable performance, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used for dealing problems towards sustainability performance
12. Focus on role of judgment in decisions	Higher the proportion of judgment role demanded along with analytical approach, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in assignments and cases using insight and judgement in decisions
13. Decision making with limited information	More the decisions based on limited information, higher the ETL	Use of proportional class time assigned to problems and cases with information constraints
14. Focus on approximate solutions	Higher the focus on approximate solutions rather than exact, higher the ETL	Proportional class time to be used for inexact methods and obtaining approximate solutions
15. Opportunity seeking decisions and actions	More the focus on opportunity seeking actions, higher the ETL	Students' engagement in live cases and projects for organizational value addition
Overall ETL- Course Content		
Course Delivery:		
1.Use of learning through doing	Higher the use of learning through doing, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to exercises, assignments, cases and projects
2.Use of problem based learning approach	More the use of problem based learning approach, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to organizational live problem solving
3.Encouraging students' participation	More the use of participation and discussion, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to students' participation in the continuous assessment
4.Use of project based approach	More the use of projects instead of cases, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to student-led project activities
5.Use of group activities	Higher the proportion of group activities, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to students' group activities
6.Use of diverse specialization in group	Higher the diversity of specialization within a group, higher the ETL	Extent of diverse specialization of students in class
7.Use of information from verbal sources	More the use of information from non-authoritative/verbal sources, higher the ETL	Percent of data used from verbal sources in cases and projects by students
8.Use of networking with outside world	More the focus on networking with outside, higher the ETL	Proportional time to be spent by students on organizational visits
9.Use of practitioners for the course delivery	More the use of practitioners for one half of the course delivery, higher the ETL	Proportional class hours to be delivered by practitioners as adjunct/ guest faculty
10.Tight time management as against loose	More tight the demand for time management, higher the ETL	Proportion of lateness in students' submission of assignments
Overall ETL- Course Delivery		
Students' Assessment		

1.Focus on continuous assessment	More the weighting on continuous assessment, higher the ETL	Relative proportion of continuous assessment marks out of total marks
2.Focus on competitive performance	Higher the weighting to relative competitive performance, higher the ETL	Proportion of relative grading of students' assignments, cases, projects, etc.
3.Focus on multi-criteria based assessment	Higher the weighting on multi-criteria based assessment, higher the ETL	Relative weightings to five domains of learning outcome
4.Presentation and defence based assessment	More the weighting to presentation and defence, higher the ETL	Relative weighting to presentation and defence based assessment
5.Use of multiple and external assessors	Higher the weighting on multiple and external assessors, higher the ETL	Proportional weightings to multiple and external assessors
Overall ETL- Students' Assessment		
Overall ETL		

2. CONCLUSIONS:

The focus of entrepreneurship education has rightly shifted now a days from venture creation to matter of culture and matter of behaviour that need to permeate throughout the entire university activities. No doubt, it's a real challenge for the academic community to reengineer their traditional teaching methods to transform into entrepreneurial teaching-learning approaches really to aim at learning for entrepreneurship, rather than learning about entrepreneurship. The suggested framework to assess the effectiveness of new teaching strategies could be the starting point to go ahead with entrepreneurial teaching-learning scenario, particularly for the business school programs aiming at managerial skill development for the world of practice. Much more research is needed to rethink on the content of various courses, teaching and assessment methods, so also the required teachers profile to aim at entrepreneurial learning outcome at course, program, and university level. In fact, rapid developments and introduction of ICT in the classroom teaching has added another dimension to make the entrepreneurial teaching-learning still more effective. But what is important is to initiate the entrepreneurial teaching process, then entrepreneurship culture would germinate throughout the university over time following its positive feedback loop.

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