



## Learning Entrepreneurship: A Study of Instructional Practices in Business Education and Entrepreneurial Skills of Business Graduates in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*This study intended to investigate the instructional practices at business schools and the learning of entrepreneurial skills. The objectives of the study were: to find out prevailing instructional practices of business educators, entrepreneurship skills of business graduates and the relationship of instructional practices with entrepreneurial skills. The population of the study comprised of business educators and business graduates of the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. The data was collected through two self-developed questionnaires from 79 business educators and 170 business graduates. The results revealed that traditional instructional practices are used by majority of business educators. However some of the business educators used modern instructional practices. The traditional instructional practices have negative relationship with entrepreneurial skills while modern instructional practices have positive relationship with entrepreneurial skills. It was recommended that training may be provided to the business educators to enhance their pedagogical competencies for teaching entrepreneurial skills.*

**Key Words:** Entrepreneurship, Instructional Methods, Entrepreneurial Skills, Entrepreneurship Education

### Introduction

The right approach to enhance learning is to improve the teaching-learning process (Ille Carrier, 2007) in all the fields of knowledge including entrepreneurship education. It is important that the teachers, who teach entrepreneurship like other fields of education, have clearly designed instructional goals. Effective teaching comprises knowledge, skills, and attitude with the aim to transfer business students into successful entrepreneurs. It enables teachers to concentrate on the basic purpose of teaching to engage learners in developing their understanding and skills about relevant knowledge, concepts, and processes (Trigwell, 2013).

The field of entrepreneurship is mostly operational in nature and based on hands-on practices. This poses a challenge for entrepreneurship educators as they must encompass such instructional practices within classrooms and business schools that must be reflective of real market situations. In entrepreneurship education, unlike other disciplines, some components are common but there is difference in teaching goals. Therefore, it is needed for entrepreneurship educators to develop an innovative instructional framework for the implementation of entrepreneurship education (Gibb, 2002).

The conventional teaching methods apart from delivering theoretical knowledge about the field intends to convey practical skills and expertise. The cognitive domain of the field is taught appropriately but the non-cognitive domain which includes practical aspects of the field is a challenge for teachers to teach properly through using appropriate methodology. Like other fields of knowledge, entrepreneurship can also be learned through effective teaching-learning process and conducive institutional environment. Ducker (1985) described that entrepreneurship can be learned and has not the characteristics that can be inherited. Likewise, Gorman, Hanlon, and King (1997) also reiterated that empirical evidence supports the claim of learning of entrepreneurship through scientific and formal educational strategies. This is further evident from the increase in figures of the

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business schools where entrepreneurship education is in teaching practice of business educators. This increasing trend has developed from 1970 onwards (Kuratko, 2005). In the same pattern, researchers explored factors that triggered economic performance of United States in the last 10 years, is focus on entrepreneurship development as a primary goal of policy in business schools of universities and colleges (Minniti, Bygrave, & Autio, 2005).

Generally, teaching methods in practice at business schools are lecture method, lecture cum demonstration method, case studies and research projects, which are inadequate to address the length and breadth of entrepreneurship, the field of entrepreneurship requires creativity, assessment, independent thinking, opportunity recognition, networking, resilience and managerial skills (Shaheen, 2018). Such skills development is in dire need of adopting innovative and modern instructional approaches in the teaching of entrepreneurship like- project method, heuristic, flipped learning approach, problem-based learning and 7Es instructional model (Hussain, Ahmad, Saeed, & Khan, 2015). An effective entrepreneurship program delivers skills and competencies coupled with successful entrepreneurship.

The above studies further sensitize the need for a paradigm shift in the instructional approaches of business schools' teaching faculty. This shift from conventional instructional practices to modern instructional approaches of business education will lead to the development of requisite social capital as per the requirement of the field of entrepreneurship. The study intends to identify the appropriate instructional practices for the teaching of entrepreneurship at business schools of Pakistan.

### **Research problem**

The above mentioned rational and research evidence demands the investigation of appropriate instructional practices for the development of entrepreneurial skills of business graduates of public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### **Research Targets**

This study ensured the attainment of the following research targets;

1. To investigate the prevailing instructional practices for the teaching of entrepreneurial skills of business school graduates in the public sector universities of KP
2. To find out the foundational entrepreneurial skills required for a successful business school graduates in public sector universities of KP
3. To measure the correlation between business educators instructional practices and their business graduates entrepreneurial skills

### **Research questions**

Based on the research targets following research questions were designed for the study;

1. What are the prevailing instructional approaches adopted by business educators for the teaching of entrepreneurship for business education students?
2. What are the major entrepreneurial skills required for successful entrepreneurs graduated from the business schools of KP public sector universities?
3. Is there any correlation between the instructional practices of business educators and the entrepreneurial skills of business school graduates of KP?

### **Literature Review**

According to Hindle (2007), major instructional practices include; lectures, case study, group discussion, presentations, written reports, group projects, activity-based learning, workshops, guest speakers and web-based learning. In entrepreneurship education, along lecture method of teaching, case studies and business plan preparation are famous teaching methods (Solomon, Duffy & Tarabishy, 2002). Whereas, Hytti and Gorman (2004) presented an opposing view. They categorized teaching methods of entrepreneurship according to

objectives: 1) if the objective is to create awareness and recognition about entrepreneurship, then pedagogical practices are the best options available such as seminars, symposiums, workshops, conferences, and media talks are the best sources. Through these channels information can be disseminated in shortest period of time. 2) While if the objective is to transfer entrepreneurial skills, then the appropriate way is training and education where the medium of instruction is learner-centered and in close coordination of real-life experiences. 3) In the same way if the objective is to produce practicing entrepreneur then techniques and methods applied in control environments such as business simulations and role-playing may be used (Wang & Ahmed, 2004).

Likewise, based on the available evidence, the instructional practices used in business schools can be categorized into two groups. These groups are called passive methods and active methods of instruction, but both these instructional traditional for the teaching of entrepreneurship education as it demands more hands-on practices in real-life situations for which more advanced and experiential instructional approaches are required (Samwel Mwasalwiba, 2010). In view of Bennett (2006) the contribution of passive methods towards influencing entrepreneurial attributes is less effective. Whereas Fiet, Piskounov, and Gustavsson (2000) consider the convenience in delivery by using lecture method as a reason for its use at most of the educational institutes.

In business education, business plan preparation is one of the most important dimensions required for entrepreneurship education. A business plan is such a document that provides information about an organization's current and future position of a specific venture (Honig, 2004). In general terms, it represents a blueprint of a new venture of any entrepreneurial activity of entrepreneurs and acts as the backbone for a venture. That is why it has to be drafted on scientific grounds. Planning based on assessment of every aspect of a new venture is the first step towards its preparation. It also acts as an instrument of venture communication to stakeholders and provides legitimacy to business firms. But on the other side teaching for the preparation of proper business plan is a challenge for entrepreneurs through and prevailing instructional approaches in business education schools. A business plan must have certain technical characteristics such as representing ideas with justification, target markets, appropriate resource identification, scheduling, and relevant business strategies. The feature of persuasiveness must be at the core of a business plan (White et al, 2010). The pedagogical implications in preparing a business plan is a challenging subject for entrepreneurial educators (Honig, 2004). Evidence from teacher education researches the teaching of this important dimension needs real-life situations for which the business schools require close coordination with local market and industrial sectors.

Like White Hertz, and D'Souza (2010) concluded in their research study that an expected business venture can be transformed into a business plan if the right kind of instructional practices is used. That is why there is a need to explore the subfields of instructional practices. Furthermore, this work can be properly realized by the business educators of universities with collaborations of teacher educators of universities.

On the contrary, according to Kuratko (2005) lack of solid theoretical grounds is a hindrance to the development of right instructional practices for entrepreneurship education. Similarly, Solomon (2007) is of the view that chaotic nature of entrepreneurship should be taken into consideration while designing pedagogies. Sexton and Bowman (1984) emphasized that as entrepreneurs have to take risk in their operations in unstructured and unstable situations, therefore novel ways must be introduced in entrepreneurship education to flourish individual and group activities. Ronstadt (1990), also supported that the field of entrepreneurship is amorphous and vague.

The practical aspect of the field of entrepreneurship is both art and science (Sexton, 1986). This further makes its teaching complex and requires more time and skills. The "science" part of entrepreneurship can be taught through conventional instructional practices. Whereas the "art" part involves creativity, risk-taking and other personality attributes, therefore only conventional instructional practices may not be sufficient for its teaching. But, it is mandatory to teach both arts and science of entrepreneurship to students for their effective learning (Henry, 2005). Although, the gap between arts and science of entrepreneurship is a vast science yet the art part is not entirely un-teachable. The development in this area has been neglected. The skills required to become successful entrepreneurs are teachable and can be learned through training and education (McClelland, 1961). The study of Vesper's (1982) which was based on the university professors at USA, finds that there is a consensus among them that entrepreneurial skills can be transferred to students through teaching.

## Research Methodology

The study explored the instructional approaches for the teaching of entrepreneurship in business schools. Its relationship was measured with the entrepreneurial skills of business school graduates. The design adopted for the study was quantitative where co-relational design was adopted to launch this research study. The study was descriptive in nature and data were collected through personal visits from the faculty members and business school graduates.

The population of this study comprised all the business educators and graduates of public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. From this population, a sample of 79 business educators and 170 business graduates were selected through systematic sampling techniques from all public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The researcher collected the data about instructional practices from business educators and about entrepreneurial skills from business graduates of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through two structured questionnaires. Both these research questionnaires were pilot tested before the final administration of these scale for data collection from the targeted groups for the purpose to measure the Cronbach alpha, the reliability co-efficient value for faculty questionnaire was .81 while for business graduates questionnaire the reliability co-efficient value was .79.

Furthermore, the content validity of these research questionnaires was ensured through expert opinion where a committee of business faculty member experts and teacher educators were shared the research objectives of this study along with these questionnaires. After, ensuring the reliability and validity of the instructions these scales were administered to the sample groups for data collection through personal visits. All the collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation) where efforts were made to analyze the collected data descriptively and inferentially.

## Results

**Table 1.** Traditional Instructional Practices of Business Educators

Instructional Practice	Mean	S.D
Lecture method	4.2857	0.88379
Demonstration method	3.1929	1.22267
Lecture cum demonstration methods	3.9071	1.31344
Socratic method	3.1071	1.07754

The instructional practices of business educators for the teaching were divided into traditional and modern instructional practices. The above table means scores and standard deviations showed that business education educators are following traditional instructional methods for the teaching of entrepreneurship, where lecture method was followed most frequently as compared to the lecture cum demonstration method of instruction.

**Table 2.** Modern Instructional Practices of Business Educators

Instructional Practice	Mean	S.D
Problem Solving Method	2.9786	1.23770
Activity-based method	3.2000	1.54640
Blended learning approaches	2.8857	.92204
Discovery method	2.6500	1.24615

As the above table shows, the means scores and standard deviations of the statements about modern instructional practices of business educators showed that business education faculty use modern instructional approaches very rarely except activity based methods of teaching. Furthermore, it was revealed that the faculty is reluctant towards using modern instructional practices. The reasons for this reluctant attitude of teaching faculty members towards adopting modern instructional practices include their unawareness about these modern instructional practices, lack of in-service training in pedagogical practices and unavailability of required educational resources.

**Table 3.** Entrepreneurial skills of business graduates

Entrepreneurial skills	Mean	S.D
Resilience skills	4.2857	0.88379
Creative Skills	3.1929	1.22267
Planning Business Skills	3.9071	1.31344
Risk Management Skills	3.1071	1.07754

Table 3 shows the entrepreneurial skills of business school graduates. The cumulative mean score scores and standard deviations reflected that majority of business graduates have mastered the four important entrepreneurial skills. The sample group opined that they have high level of resilience skills and business planning skills as compared to creativity skills and risk management skills. The reasons behind these results are the local settings and situations of businesses, lack of financial support and market trends.

**Table 4:** Relationship between Traditional Instructional Practices and Learning of Entrepreneurial Skills of Business Graduates

	Resilience Skills	Creative Skills	Planning Business Skills	Risk Management Skills
Traditional Practices	-0.256** .002	-0.282** .001	-0.244** .004	-0.516** .000

Table 4 shows a negative correlation between traditional instructional practices and business graduates' entrepreneurial skills which include resilience skills, creativity skills, business planning skills and risk management skills. Pearson r values are significant which revealed negative correlation between the traditional instructional practices and students' entrepreneurial skills. So, traditional instructional practices of business educators are not effective for the teaching of entrepreneurial skills and these traditional instructional practices may not be used.

**Table 5:** Relationship of Modern Instructional Practices and Entrepreneurial Skill

	Resilience Skills	Creative Skills	Planning Business Skills	Risk Management Skills
Modern Instructional Practice	.644** .000	.670** .000	.753** .000	.756** .000

Contrarily, this table shows positive correlation between modern instructional practices and entrepreneurial skills of business school graduates which include resilience skills, creativity skills, business planning skills and risk management skills. Pearson r values are significant and revealed strong correlation between the modern instructional practices and students' entrepreneurial skills.

The traditional ways of teaching in entrepreneurship education have persistently been criticized based on adoption of teaching methods which are mostly used in business education. The aim of business education is primarily to make students understand and work in a multinational organization where required resources are readily available. While the aim of entrepreneurship education should be to equip students with such competencies, that enables them to develop their own organization in the available resources. Previously the best way to develop an entrepreneur was limited to business plan writing skills but now it went ahead of it in the form of focus on various competencies, personal and behavioral attributes. Still there are gaps in entrepreneurship education that can be addressed for effective learning of students. The entrepreneurship educators are focusing on trial and error models to tackle gaps which are identified by business graduates (Plaschka & Welsch, 1990).

Apart from traditional instructional practices, some modern practices such as problem and activity-based learning can enhance the entrepreneurial capacity of the students. In a problem-centered learning approach, students are involved and are motivated to search for the solutions, in terms of a framework (Blumenfeld, 1991). This activity may not discover ultimate models for business problems but will provide an opportunity for students

to learn about field issues under the mentorship of teachers. The integration of classroom instruction and field issues such as service-based learning plays a facilitative role in providing multiple perspectives to students (Spring & Jiao, 2008). The association measure in current study between instructional practices and skills of entrepreneurs has been examined to explore best practices for learning entrepreneurial skills.

## **Discussion**

The study found that traditional instructional practices were used by business educators. Within traditional instructional practices, the lecture method was most frequently used as compared to lecture cum demonstration and case study method of instruction. Research supports that lecture and memorization do not help in developing the ability to apply the knowledge in every situation (Kang & Howren, 2004) which may also be extendable to the teaching of entrepreneurship education. Traditional instructional methods are based on facts and not on conceptualization neglecting critical thinking, ownership of learning and hands-on practice opportunities for learners.

In support of the demonstration method Muhammad, Bala, and Ladu (2016) concluded that demonstration method is more effective for learning of concepts related to economics, mathematics, and sciences related subjects. Their findings needed to explore new instructional practices that are effective for teaching concepts related to markets.

Similarly, the research study conducted by Gandhi (2015) asserts that for teaching of entrepreneurship, instead of focusing on just lecture method, other methods within modern instructional practices which are related to learning of the field such as interactions with entrepreneurs and innovative assessments should be used. Similarly, Hussain, Ahmad, Saeed, and Khan (2015) supported the flip learning approach to enhance skills development among students. Furthermore, instructional practices where students are engaged in higher-order thinking skills like problem-based learning, project method and heuristic methods which improved critical thinking skills (Wong, 2007).

Correspondingly, entrepreneurship application which is so dependent upon the context of the market, available business ventures, financial support, and instructional methods play the intervening role to minimize the gap between theory and practice from the perspective of entrepreneurship education. Therefore, modern instructional practices designed in consonance with the structure of entrepreneurship can acquaint students with both the science and art of the subject.

## **Conclusion**

It was concluded that faculty of business schools were using traditional instructional practices for teaching entrepreneurial skills where the lecture method of instruction was the most prominent among all these methods.

Furthermore, the faculty members of business schools rarely use modern instructional practices to develop the entrepreneurial skills of students.

It was also concluded that traditional instructional practices have negative correlation with entrepreneurial skills while modern instructional practices had positive correlation with entrepreneurial skills.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study it was recommended that:

1. The business schools of public sector universities may design training workshops for their faculty members using modern instructional practices. For this purpose, they may hire services of teacher education departments at their respective universities.
2. Learning and Innovation Division (LID) of HEC, may develop a manual of modern instructional practices for business educators and disseminate it to faculty through short term workshops.
3. The focus of entrepreneurship education programs should not be purely based on cognitive domain but on behavioral domain as well practices that can be achieved through designing relevant activities.

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