

# EXPLORING THE PERCEPTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR THE GROWTH OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN HEI'S OF LAHORE

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## ABSTRACT

*The most intriguing component of today's economy is entrepreneurship. It plays a key role in social, technological and economic development. In Pakistan, entrepreneurship has gained a lot of significance in recent years. For the promotion of entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) has received significant importance around the globe. By considering the increasing importance, this study has explored and identified the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education programs in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Lahore. For qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Three public and three private institutions were selected for data collection.*

*To collect data, ten interviews were conducted from teachers of HEIs in Lahore. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Four main themes were generated while talking to the teachers: entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial orientation, venture creation and structural support. Results show that for the enhancement of entrepreneurship, EE plays crucial role to some extent. This study proved helpful in understanding the state of EE for stakeholders including policy makers, universities and industry also.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Education Programs, Entrepreneurship, Higher Education Institutions, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Venture Creation, Entrepreneurial Intention.

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is not just one of the youngest nations in its region, but also one of the youngest nations in the world. 64% of the people is under the age of 29, with around 30% between 15 and 29 years of age (Najam & Bari, 2017). However, the majority of people are poor, according to an economic survey, 24.3% of Pakistanis live in extreme poverty, living through an income of less than \$1.25 a day, which shows Pakistan's worst poverty situation (Zreen et al., 2019). The situation worsens in long term and continued to pose a challenge to the economy of Pakistan (Gul et al., 2012). Pakistan needs to produce 4.5 million jobs in the next five years. By 2050, 43 million people will be jobless if new employment options are not created (Najam & Bari, 2017).

In this case, economic experts suggest self-employment as the most beneficial solution (Ahmed et al., 2010). Entrepreneurship is a crucial aspect of modern economic growth with its role in creating new businesses and employment opportunities, creating greater competition, and even increasing competitiveness through technological advancements (Shah & Soomro, 2017). The economic development in developed nations such as the US, Germany, and Japan is referred to a large number of entrepreneurs (Prakash, Jain, & Chauhan, 2015).

Entrepreneurship provides people sufficient opportunities for freedom, greater financial gains, and has a positive impact on the economic growth (Usman & Ahmed, 2018). However, entrepreneurship continues to remain limited in Pakistan. This is due to the limited past exposure by decision-makers and the Government (Haque, 2007).

EE has expanded substantially in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the globe. The key idea behind the expansion of EE is that entrepreneurship can be learned and taught (Fretschner & Weber, 2013), entrepreneurial intentions of students can be established and new businesses can be encouraged effectively (Nabi, Walmsley, Liñán, Akhtar, & Neame, 2018). EE is one of the most effective means of promoting entrepreneurship. EE has a distinctive position in the academic period of both developed and developing nations (Azizi & Mahmoudi, 2019).

The increasing importance of entrepreneurship in recent years has led to an exponential growth in EE. As EE has been implemented, evaluation is essential for improvement (Galvão et al., 2019). A national and international indicator doesn't show good scores of Pakistan for entrepreneurship (Hussain & Norashidah, 2015). The role of HEIs in developing entrepreneurship in the country is under investigated. Most of the studies about EE is moving around EI and doesn't show a real picture and contribution of EE in Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2010; Alam et al., 2019; Anjum et al., 2019; Shahid et al., 2018; Tanveer et al., 2013; Usman & Ahmed, 2018).

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (EE) in HEIs of Lahore. This study also identifies the academics perspective in regard to the development of entrepreneurship education programs. This study is going to see the effectiveness of EE in Lahore by using a qualitative approach and by collecting data from teachers. This study is significant because it shows us the real picture of EE and also shows that either it plays any role in the development of entrepreneurship or not. This study is also important because as per the limited knowledge of researcher, there was an attempt to find a relevant study but studies on this topic are scant. This evaluation technique looks more realistic than by just looking for intentions. By including the perspectives of teachers, this study also shows that how good programs are designed and inclined toward objectivity. The second section is a literature review, in which literature has been reviewed. The methodology of the study will be explained in section 3. Section 3 provides detailed information about research design, population and sampling. Section four shows the results of an in-depth analysis along with discussion. Conclusion of the study and future research directions described in section 5.

## LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Entrepreneurship is a process that begins with the search for opportunities in the creation of new products, employment, and prosperity in society. In fact, it is the formation of the substantial items out of nothing (Azizi & Mahmoudi, 2019). Recently noted a new wave of economic development is spreading all over the world, with entrepreneurship and innovation as the main drivers. Entrepreneurship is the most enabling, the most equitable, the most freeing, and the most transformative phenomena in the history of mankind (Morris, Webb, Fu, & Singhal, 2013). The literature has started to show an agreement that entrepreneurship is not really something with which individuals are born but rather evolves through education and life experiences (Fayolle et al., 2016; Gedeon, 2017).

The United States has been a pioneer in the field since Harvard business school's first global entrepreneurship program was implemented in 1947 (Maritz, 2017; Nabi et al., 2017). EE

has grown significantly over the past two decades, since 1995, the quantity of U.S. universities offering classes in entrepreneurship has grown by more than 500% (Thomas & Van Slyke, 2019).

Even though there is solid proof that the development of entrepreneurship has made considerable progress, still EE is new and at a beginning period of improvement (Alakaleek, 2019). Higher education frameworks of most nations over the world have made changes in their structure and work (Auranen, 2006), and they have likewise benefited extensive interests from EE in a feasible period (Rae, Martin, Antcliff, & Hannon, 2010). Throughout the industrially developed and developing world, the development of entrepreneurship and EE have now become matters of major concern in public policy (Mudde et al., 2019). In many countries across the world, the portion of policy commitment to EE has risen (Chowdhury, Audretsch, & Belitski, 2019). Governments also realized that stimulating the system of education is an effective strategy to make national entrepreneurship more prominent (Walter & Block, 2016). An effective program of entrepreneurship will inspire students to build their work; establish their futures; generate wealth; build their feelings of pride and self-worth; create their own identity, services and operations, jobs for others, serving the world and build an ability to give back (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). When EE programs are introduced, assessments are important for developing content, goals and methodologies. EE programs are developed, the success of the curriculum must be reviewed and changes introduced to achieve better medium and long-term results (Galvão et al., 2019). Programs need to be evaluated to make them more productive (Fayolle, 2013). Evaluations may include effectiveness (i.e. objectives met) and efficiency (i.e. goals attained and features configured) (Galvão et al., 2019). The success of EE is mostly measured in several surveys of EE by the extent of EI (Millman et al., 2010; Murugesan & Jayavelu, 2015). A review of the literature on the influence of EE is still not conclusive (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013). While reviews have indicated both positive and negative effects, evidence on the influence of EE has not drawn definitive conclusions (Fayolle, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Nabi et al., 2017). While the intention to create an enterprise is the most widely used component for the EE assessment, it is far from being the only result (Almeida et al., 2019).

## METHODOLOGY

The social element of research is addressed through qualitative studies. The qualitative methodology of research is often used when the issue is not well recognized and there is a prior willingness to thoroughly explore the issue (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Qualitative research can be carried out in different ways, but semi-structured interviews have been carrying out to conduct this study. The research was cross-sectional, and data was gathered over a particular period of time. Data was collected from teachers of 6 HEIs of Lahore. HEIs include the University of the Punjab, University of Central Punjab, University of South Asia, COMSATS University, Superior University and University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences. It was not possible to collect data from all HEIs of Lahore thus only 6 universities participated voluntarily in this research study. From these 6 universities, 3 of them are public sector institutions and the other 3 are private sector institutions, and these universities were chosen based on convenience sampling amidst pandemic COVID-19. Interviews are one of the most significant and frequently employed data collection methods in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. Ten in-depth interviews of teachers were conducted. For collecting the response of teachers, half of the interviewees were selected from public sector institutions while other half were selected from private sector institutions. Another

reason for selecting these 10 respondents is that they are formally authorized and specific personnel for entrepreneurship education in their institutions. Only ten interviews were conducted because data has started showing repetition. For transcribing an interview, recording and short notes were used. The interview codes were developed from the data after transcription and thematic analysis was performed to find out the main themes from the data. To address the research question, these codes and themes were then utilized.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurship is getting appreciation in the world (Farrukh et al., 2019; Song & Winkler, 2014). Developed Countries have also emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship in the economy (Prakash et al., 2015). The importance of entrepreneurship becomes more in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan (Dimov, 2007; Usman & Ahmed, 2018). EE is making grounds to promote entrepreneurship. Universities in Pakistan are now providing education related to entrepreneurship to promote it. Its basic goal is to mentally prepare the students to start their venture.

EE has gained an overwhelming response in the world (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). In Pakistan, over the last few years, Universities have started working on it and selling it as their product in each course as a part of it.

Its increasing importance has questioned its effectiveness. This question reveals that it has done the work to some extent to promote and support it or not. To study its effectiveness, information is collected from teachers to see that how teachers are working on it and what kind of steps they are following to promote it in society and play a part in the growth of entrepreneurship.

The study reveal four main themes in conversation with teachers i.e. Entrepreneurial Mindset, Venture Creation, Business Orientation and structural Support. Three main objective identified in this study i.e. Entrepreneurial Mindset, Venture Creation and Business Orientation are same as suggested by Gibb (2005) for effective EE program.

### Entrepreneurial Mindset

Empirical findings reveal that the basic purpose of EE is to change the mindset of students (Lindberg et al., 2017; Pihie & Sani, 2009; Wardana et al., 2020). Teachers want to shift their students from job seekers to job providers. They ask the students not to bound themselves by doing job from 8am to 5pm and broad their visions. They try to change the mindset of students by telling the luxurious life style of entrepreneurs. They also tell the students about the current job situations in the market boost the confidence of students that they have to do something on their own and know their self-esteem. They also tell the business opportunities in the underdeveloped countries just to change their mindset to think of starting their own business. On commenting about the importance of entrepreneurial mindset, respondent shared his views as:

The main objective of teaching entrepreneurship course is to let the students know that, instead of doing a job, they can also set up their own business throughout their lives. It is not necessary to find a job after completing a degree to earn bread and butter. They can also work on their own by starting their own business.

Findings show that the teachers motivate the students to make their mindsets by making them passionate and by telling them that this is the best option form them to pursue their career and enjoy the luxurious life. They also tell them that entrepreneurs are those who think different

and they have passion of doing of something for their own as well as for the society (Godar et al., 2005; Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017).

Studies find that the teachers also ask them to do something different, something creative and play a part in the social development and how they can take part in developing the economy of their country by making the economy strong (Meyer & de Jongh, 2018). They can add value to the life of other people and the development is difficult to achieve without entrepreneurship and it's the best option if the really want to do something for their country by sharing the burden. Respondent shared his views about the role of entrepreneurship for the betterment of society as:

We tell our students that entrepreneurs are the people who take part in improving the economy of the country by doing something beneficial for them and others also. By creating ventures, students may also take part in the betterment of society by creating jobs for others.

Change of attitude is important for the change of mindset by approaching the positive mentality and by dragging the students from their comfort zone (Wardana et al., 2020). They build the interest of students in entrepreneurship by taking them from procrastination to practicality.

Teachers organize different seminars and ask them to read and realize different case studies to drag them from rat race to entrepreneurs. Teachers also invite different entrepreneurs to speak to the students about their success and struggles being an entrepreneur to change the mindset of students towards it. One of the respondent commented:

We familiarize them with the well-known entrepreneurs, so they can understand the fact entrepreneurs are the persons that make actual changes in the society.

### **Entrepreneurial Orientation**

Apart from the mindset teachers also focuses on the knowledge to make the students familiar with it (Matlay, 2009; Ramsey et al., 2011). They try to deliver all the possible helpful knowledge to establish their business in future. Different concepts and theories are being taught to the students to make them capable of doing their business in near future. Teachers try to cover all the possible knowledge from generating ideas to the establishment of business. Teachers tell the students about the business trends so that they can generate new and creative ideas by keeping in view the environment and need on time. This program is not only limited to just business study students but also being taught to other students as well so that all students will be capable of doing something creative and unique to establish their own business related to their own field. One of the respondents deemed the objective of EE as:

Our very objective is to develop an understanding of the preliminary fundamentals of business within our students so that in the future if they want to pursue their career in it, they can polish their concepts in a better way.

When we talk about entrepreneurship, it is all about trust and fairness. In business, you should be fair and honest. It is morally and ethically fair and acceptable. Studies find that the teachers not only tell the students about the basic knowledge or orient related to it but also guide them about the skills and other knowledge that will be helpful to them. They also tell the business ethics and values to make the students familiar and their importance in developing their own personality and business. Respondent shared his experience as:

We focus a great deal on teaching ethical values to our students because, during their journey, they get a lot of opportunities where they try to use unethical means to succeed. We try to make them learn that they need to be a hard worker, passionate person, and a thorough gentleman to succeed in the field of entrepreneurship.

Theories and concepts will not be enough to prepare the students for the present and upcoming market they have to be mentally strong if they want to become entrepreneurs. In this regard interpersonal skills are of much importance as other skills, concepts and theories. Strong personality is important for entrepreneurs' success which is impossible to achieve without interpersonal skills (Allinson, Chell, & Hayes, 2000; Elmuti, Khoury, & Omran, 2012). By focusing on the importance of interpersonal skills respondent commented:

Without improving interpersonal skills how can you imagine the developed entrepreneurial personality? Student can't continue his entrepreneurial journey without improving interpersonal skills.

Risk taking is the key factor in entrepreneurship and there are special guidelines which are being taught to the students which show the way to deal with risk factors. Different techniques are used to make the students familiar with calculation of risk. While talking about the risk, respondent shared his experience as:

We educate students about risk; we told them that risk can be overcome. It is not something that is surprising for you. You adopt measures through which risk can be minimized.

Entrepreneurship is of a practical nature so theories and merely concepts will not be sufficient, and they should teach practical skills. In this regard teachers taught them about the importance of network building in this world which is becoming a global village for all. Teachers ask them to build their own network and also provide the platform at some points for network building in this competitive world and make them realize that your survival in the market is not possible without the network building. Network building is also important to increase the creativity and generating the new ideas and teachers also themselves intervene with students in network building or may ask them to go in the market and build networks themselves. Along with the network building teachers also emphasize on negotiating skills which have significant for the success of the business. Teachers show them how to negotiate with stakeholders and others to keep the situation win-win. While talking about network building, respondent said:

We aren't just teaching them to build networks but also try to help them to build networks. We provide them a platform where we introduce them to different stakeholders that are beneficial for them. We introduce them to financiers, target customers, and suppliers also. Techniques we teach them for building networks and networks that we try to build for them prove helpful in their entrepreneurial career.

### **Venture Creation**

Teachers realized the fact to students that the main objective of this program is to become an entrepreneur (Agwu et al., 2017). Teachers also assist the students in venture creation and tell the students to start their own business. Teachers ask them to generate new and creative ideas by keeping in view the environmental factors and refine those ideas. Teachers bring necessary changes and assist their students to bring those ideas into reality. As respondent shared his experience.

We asked students to initiate their businesses. We want students to start a business, even at a smaller scale. It may start from 50000 but students have to develop business

Merely idea generation is not enough for venture creation, so teachers help them in making business plans which is the formal picture of business idea. Teachers spent most of their time in teaching how to make business plan to students. Universities demand the students to present the established business plan of their projects in Final Year which is the important part of the final year. Students get the permission of practical implementation once the project is

presented before the jury assigned by the university and they approve the business plan of the students.

Generating finance is the most important matter while converting business model into reality (Paulson & Townsend, 2004; Somoye, 2013). Some Universities provides the platform for the students by coordinating with the teachers for finance generating where students are required to show their business model to investors, stakeholders and to general public. Teachers guide the students about all the procedure of generating finance and presentation of the business model. While some universities just guide the students about the platform of generating the finance. In both situations' teachers guide the students about generating of finance and its utilization with the passage of time. As respondent mentioned:

We teach them how to generate funds. We also teach them what types of options are available for generating finance.

Teachers promote creativity and innovation in this program. Teachers tell the students that there is a tough competition in the market and you won't survive for long if you go in the market with the same product which is already available in the market therefore you should do something different, creative and innovative either with the product or its quality or with the process you present it in the market (Fadaee & Abd Alzahrh, 2014). It is not compulsory for you to enter in the market with the new product while you can enter in the market by modifying the products making them look more attractive and appealing. While talking about the significance of innovation, respondent commented:

Now we are trying to do completely technology orientation work. We are trying to move forward from the small stalls toward technology orientation because it is less costly, the market is huge, and the horizon of opportunity is also broader. Though there are a large number of competitors, the market is also huge.

To ensure the complete understanding of the program almost all universities organize the entrepreneurship gala where students display their business models from ideas into reality on a small scale. Our public institutions also organize these kinds of Gala on a small scale due to lack of resources and funds due to which they are considered just a formal activity.

One of the findings of this study shows us that students also get to know market, observe the market and analyze the markets in their best interest along with the other techniques of this program which is a quite good and effective factor. Teachers always encourage the students to go in the market and do some research on the products and analyze different products in different markets. In this way they will be able to understand different markets and different products, their competitors in different markets and they will be able to find investors for their business models.

## Structural Support

Empirical findings show that the increasing demand of entrepreneurship in developing countries lacks the structural support (Farrukh, Khan, Khan, Ramzani, & Soladoye, 2017; Hussain & Norashidah, 2015). In our country Pakistan our Educational head Higher Education Commission (HEC) is not playing a crucial role in this regard. HEC just guides the outline of this program to universities which only refers to the theoretical part of this program but doesn't provide the outlines for the core part of this program which is practical implementation. While commenting on the role of HEC, respondent said:

The guidelines given to us by HEC are only related to the course outline. It just gives us a list of topics that covers only the theoretical not the practical aspect of entrepreneurship. To deal

with practical matters of entrepreneurship, we have to come up with some creativity and to meet this practical aspect; we have developed some standards for ourselves.

Study shows that the main reason behind the insignificant and non-productivity of this program is the lack of coordination between the institutions, students and stakeholders (Anjum et al., 2019). Stakeholders have such a huge communication gap that Pakistan neither has the updated database of entrepreneurship nor the national policy related to entrepreneurship yet. We don't have such structure through which we can approve the business models and launch them in the market through stakeholders. All the work is to be done only by the teachers and there is no proper structure from which students passed with their idea and convert it into reality. Lack of resources and lack of stakeholder's involvement hinders its growth in Pakistan. Due to lack of structural support, lack of resources and lack of stakeholder's involvement students also lack interest and doesn't take it seriously. Students just take it as a part of getting degree nothing else. Due to all these factors the condition of this program is getting worse day by day. While discussing the importance of structural support, respondent commented:

Why do people present their business ideas and launch them as a product in Silicon Valley? Because, in Silicon Valley, everything is defined beforehand that what are those processes through which a business idea must pass through to be launched in the market. The problem in Pakistan is that we lack structural support here. We are teaching the course but relevant input of multiple people like Educationist, capitalist, technologist and many others are not involved in it.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) that what role exactly it is playing in the growth of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is such a course which is being given huge importance worldwide. Entrepreneurship Education is being given importance in Pakistan as well. Universities are also marketing EE as a product. In this study, we have tried to determine whether or not the universities are succeeding in achieving the objectives of EE. Empirical finding tells us that teachers accept the significance of role of EE in promoting entrepreneurship. A finding of the study shows us that the most significant task of EE is that it changes the mindset of the students and influences them to become an entrepreneur. These findings also show that students are given an orientation of entrepreneurship and the necessary knowledge and skills required on the journey of entrepreneurship are imparted within the students. Empirical findings show that the basic purpose of EE is that the students start their own business. Findings tell us that the teachers support their students in venture creation to some extent. From idea creation to business development, they familiarize their students with all the processes. . Findings show that due to lack of coordination among the stakeholders of EE i.e. government, industry and university, its output is not up to the mark. Findings also show that the absence of entrepreneurship policy and the absence of the crucial role of HEC is also affecting the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education. We can conclude that EE plays an important role for the growth of entrepreneurship but it doesn't mean that educational institutions solely can do everything. EE have crucial role but for the better result and for real growth collaboration between the stakeholders are required. Without the collaboration EE may build their mindset, orient them with entrepreneurship and its process but doesn't take the students' ideas into real world. So, for the growth of entrepreneurship strong communication between Government, industry and educational institutions are required.



Future researchers can further add to their Entrepreneurship Education knowledge based on this study. Due to limited resources, time, and smart lockdown, I have been able to collect the data from only six universities. Future researchers can undertake a more generalized research by using all or most of the universities in Lahore. In this research, the data has been collected from three public and three private sector universities. Future researchers can collect separate data from public and private sector universities as well. Future researchers can also use quantitative and mixed method approach for more generalized results. Like, the findings show that the stakeholders (government, industry, university etc.) of EE lack coordination; the data for this study was collected only from universities. Future researchers can also include the government and industry aspects to see the effectiveness of EE. As the findings indicate that HEC is not providing any standard outline regarding EE, future researchers can generate a standard outline by including both the theoretical and the practical aspects, by taking the consideration of government, industry and university in their research and train the students according to the market demand.

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