
Transforming Education into Enterprise: A Comprehensive Review of Entrepreneurship Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Purpose: Entrepreneurship education (EE) in Bangladesh is increasingly recognized as a crucial driver of youth empowerment, innovation, and economic growth. This study reviews existing literature to assess the effects of EE on entrepreneurial intentions, competencies, and identity development among students.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study employs a systematic review methodology to integrate and analyze existing research on entrepreneurship education and its influence on entrepreneurial intentions, with a focus on developing countries such as Bangladesh. Relevant literature published between 2000 and 2025 was collected from peer-reviewed journals, books, and policy reports using keywords including “entrepreneurship education,” “entrepreneurial intention,” “business graduates,” “Bangladesh,” and “innovation.”

Findings: The findings indicate that while universities offer various EE programs, their effectiveness is often constrained by theory-oriented curricula, insufficient practical exposure, faculty limitations, and socio-cultural barriers. Experiential learning, mentorship, interdisciplinary integration, and supportive institutional and policy frameworks emerge as critical enablers of an entrepreneurial mindset. Initiatives such as Innokids demonstrate the potential of early skill-based interventions in shaping entrepreneurial behavior.

Practical Implications: The study highlights the need for context-specific, hands-on, and sustainable EE programs that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Originality/Value: Enhanced collaboration among educational institutions, industry, and policymakers is essential to cultivate entrepreneurial competencies, improve employability, and contribute to Bangladesh's broader economic and social development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Bangladesh, entrepreneurial intention, experiential learning, youth empowerment, higher education

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education provides students with indicators to assess their competencies for engaging in entrepreneurial activities (von Graevenitz *et al.*, 2010). However, its impact on students' self-evaluated entrepreneurial competencies is often negligible, and in some cases, it may even negatively affect the aspiration to pursue entrepreneurship (Oosterbeek *et al.*, 2010).

Analyses of existing educational frameworks reveal distinct challenges in evaluating entrepreneurship education initiatives (Duval-Couetil, 2013), while experts explore both obstacles and facilitators that influence the transition from student to entrepreneurial identity (Vanevenhoven and Liguori, 2013).

Training programs in entrepreneurship, especially at the postsecondary level, have expanded considerably over the past few decades (Rideout and Gray, 2013), prompting business schools to align their strategic frameworks with the increasing importance of entrepreneurship education (Binks *et al.*, 2006).

Educators are increasingly relying on guest speakers and class discussions instead of traditional lectures, and student-centered learning enhances employability by developing skills applicable across various work environments (Solomon, 2007; Jones and English, 2004). However, progress notwithstanding, social-cognitive, psycho-cognitive, and ethical or spiritualist theories continue to be underexplored within entrepreneurship education (Bé *et al.*, 1998).

Standards and evaluation mechanisms are essential for evaluating programs effectively (Vesper and Gartner, n.d.; Kuratko, 2005). The emphasis of entrepreneurship education is shifting from individual, classroom-based instruction to participatory, experiential learning facilitated through group dynamics and collaborative networks (Rasmussen and Sørheim, 2006).

Institutional entrepreneurs, including policymakers and ministers, play key roles in shaping enterprise policies (Arshed *et al.*, 2014). Integrating enterprise education into non-business disciplines such as engineering and science can stimulate innovation (Hynes, 1996).

Gender differences in the impact of entrepreneurship education are evident: male students may show higher entrepreneurial intentions, whereas female students often report stronger positive experiences, highlighting the need for tailored programs (Packham *et al.*, 2010; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016).

Practical, hands-on approaches instead of purely theoretical instruction are recommended, including active pedagogy, experiential exercises, and updated curricula (Vanevenhoven, 2013; Joakim Falkäng, and Alberti, 2000; Blenker *et al.*, 2008).

Entrepreneurship education encourages students to overcome intrinsic and extrinsic barriers, fostering innovation and entrepreneurial initiative (Stamboulis and Barlas, 2014). University students with high entrepreneurial inclination tend to exhibit virtues such as risk-taking propensity, locus of control, achievement motivation, and innovativeness, contributing to the formation of successful entrepreneurs (Gürol and Atsan, 2006).

Innovative pedagogical methods, including gamified learning and 3D virtual reality, enhance the development of entrepreneurship skills, efficacy, and competencies in realistic business contexts (Grivokostopoulou *et al.*, 2019). More broadly, entrepreneurship education contributes to economic acceleration and social transformation (O'Connor, 2013).

In Bangladesh, it is particularly vital for promoting creativity, resilience, and self-reliance among youth facing limited employment opportunities. Despite challenges such as outdated curricula, limited practical exposure, socio-cultural barriers, and resource constraints, emerging entrepreneurs demonstrate the transformative potential of well-structured, contextually appropriate programs.

Strategic policies, industry-academia collaboration, and localized research can strengthen entrepreneurship education, making it a critical investment for sustainable economic growth and societal development.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship education provides students with indicators to assess their competencies for engaging in entrepreneurial activities (von Graevenitz *et al.*, 2010). Evaluating such programs presents challenges, requiring consensus on learning outcomes, stakeholder-centric assessment priorities, and adequate resource allocation for sustainable assessment initiatives (Duval-Couetil, 2013). Studies employing the Entrepreneurial Education Program (EEP) framework, using robust psychometric methods, examine both facilitators and barriers in students' transition to entrepreneurial identity (Vanevenhoven and Liguori, 2013).

However, the impact on self-evaluated competencies is often minimal, and aspirations to pursue entrepreneurship may even be negatively affected (Oosterbeek *et al.*, 2010).

Interest and availability of entrepreneurship training at postsecondary levels have expanded over recent decades, supported by policymakers who view entrepreneurship education as a mechanism for economic development and job creation, particularly near academic institutions fostering technopreneur growth (Rideout and Gray, 2013). Strategic alignment within business schools and universities is essential, reflecting both current and anticipated significance of entrepreneurship education (Binks *et al.*, 2006).

Traditional methods, such as business plan assignments, remain popular, yet educators increasingly employ guest speakers and class discussions, supporting student-centered learning and employability (Solomon, 2007; Jones and English, 2004). Despite progress, social-cognitive, psycho-cognitive, and ethical theories remain underexplored in entrepreneurship education research (Bécharde and Grégoire, 2005).

Entrepreneurship programs are evaluated based on clearly defined standards, and educators must take initiative in leading program development (Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Kuratko, 2005). Action-oriented and experiential learning approaches, implemented in Swedish universities, emphasize participatory learning, collaborative networks, and practical entrepreneurial activities (Rasmussen and Sørheim, 2006; Neck *et al.*, 2011).

Government investment in research can enhance evidence-based understanding of effective policies and interventions (Pittaway and Cope, 2007). Future research should also address emerging employment trends, such as the gig economy and digital transformation (Ratten and Usmanij, 2021).

Entrepreneurship education contributes to economic acceleration and innovation, distinguishing between efficiency- and innovation-driven economies, and shaping individual engagement with entrepreneurship (O'Connor, 2013; Küttim *et al.*, 2014). Pedagogical approaches, including cognitive and non-cognitive strategies, teacher styles, enterprise-for-life, gamified learning, and VR-based methods, enhance practical skills and entrepreneurial outcomes (Moberg, 2014; Finch *et al.*, 2016; Grivokostopoulou *et al.*, 2019).

Empirical studies demonstrate positive impacts on self-efficacy, decision-making, long-term firm creation, self-employment, and SME ownership, confirming entrepreneurship education's relevance for socio-economic development (Mei *et al.*, 2020; Elert *et al.*, 2015; Matlay, 2008).

In Bangladesh, entrepreneurship education is critical for reducing unemployment, fostering creativity, and supporting youth in innovation-driven industries such as technology and agriculture. Despite challenges such as outdated curricula, limited practical exposure, and socio-cultural barriers, emerging entrepreneurs demonstrate the transformative potential of well-structured, context-sensitive programs, emphasizing the importance of supportive policies and personalized educational initiatives for sustained economic and entrepreneurial growth.

3. Research Methodology

This study utilizes a systematic review methodology to integrate and analyze existing research on entrepreneurship education and its influence on entrepreneurial intentions, with a focus on developing countries like Bangladesh. Relevant literature

was collected from peer-reviewed journals, books, and policy reports spanning from 2000 to 2025, using keywords such as “entrepreneurship education,” “entrepreneurial intention,” “business graduates,” “Bangladesh,” and “innovation.”

Studies were included if they provided empirical, theoretical, or conceptual insights into the design, delivery, and outcomes of entrepreneurship education programs, while publications not focused on higher education or entrepreneurial outcomes were excluded.

The selected studies were analyzed thematically, emphasizing curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, practical exposure, institutional support, gender differences, and socio-cultural influences.

This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of the evolution, challenges, and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education, highlights gaps in research, and identifies opportunities for policy and practice improvements in higher education systems.

3.1 Entrepreneurship Education in Bangladesh

University-level entrepreneurship education in Bangladesh has a potential industry impact, recognized by donors and development partners (Hasan *et al.*, 2017). Initiatives like Innokids effectively foster early entrepreneurial intentions through life, soft, tech, and business (LSTB) skills (Rafiuddin and Tasmin, 2023).

However, business education often lacks alignment with industry needs. Graduates enter the workforce with limited practical experience, faculty research is rarely utilized, and reliance on foreign textbooks reduces contextual relevance (Khaled, 2020). Understanding the effects of entrepreneurship education on employability and intentions can guide program improvements (Gazi *et al.*, 2024).

Teaching effectiveness is moderate: public universities rarely offer entrepreneurship courses, while private institutions provide limited practical exposure (Abdullah, 2020).

Co-curricular activities contribute to skill development but are mostly informal and insufficient (G M Rakibul Islam *et al.*, n.d.; Dr. Md. Abdul Quaium & Mohammad Kabir Hossain, n.d.). External factors like political stability, infrastructure, funding, and governance also influence entrepreneurial growth (Chowdhury, 2007).

Overall, programs are largely theoretical, lacking practical application. While initiatives like Innokids demonstrate promise, systemic reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, and policy are needed to align entrepreneurship education with local economic and employment contexts.

3.2 Entrepreneurship Education: Prospectus and Challenges

Entrepreneurship education in Bangladesh embodies both significant opportunities and considerable obstacles. The increasing acknowledgment of its capacity to stimulate economic growth and empower youth is indeed promising. Initiatives within private universities and nascent programs such as Inno Kids exhibit potential by fostering life, soft, technical, and business (LSTB) competencies alongside entrepreneurial aspirations. Furthermore, donors and development collaborators recognize its importance in cultivating innovation and enhancing employability.

Nevertheless, various challenges impede its efficacy. Many public universities are devoid of formal entrepreneurship curricula, and the existing academic programs predominantly emphasize theoretical insights rather than the development of practical competencies.

Faculty members typically possess minimal industry experience, and the predominance of foreign textbooks renders the educational content less pertinent to local exigencies. In addition, there exists a deficiency of structured co-curricular initiatives designed to facilitate experiential learning.

Systemic challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, constrained financial resources, governance issues, and the lack of supportive policies, further obstruct advancement. Although informal initiatives undertaken by educators and volunteer organizations are prevalent, they cannot generate a significant impact on a broader scale.

Maximizing the potential of entrepreneurship education in Bangladesh requires comprehensive reforms in curriculum design, teaching strategies, and institutional support, with a strong emphasis on practical learning tailored to local economic needs.

4. Findings from Literature Review

The literature on entrepreneurship education highlights its transformative role in developing entrepreneurial competencies, fostering business intentions, and shaping positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Its effectiveness depends on factors such as curriculum design, teaching methods, student demographics, and socio-economic context.

Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool for economic growth, social development, and youth employment, particularly in developing countries. Governments, educational institutions, and development agencies are embedding entrepreneurship in educational reform and policy initiatives.

A key trend is the shift from traditional lecture-based teaching toward experiential, action-oriented learning. Practical methods—including starting ventures, simulations, games, and collaborative projects—enhance entrepreneurial thinking and life skills such as creativity, resilience, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Challenges remain, including outdated curricula, limited real-world application, resource constraints, poor business integration, weak support systems, and insufficient mentoring. Social and psychological factors—gender disparities, fear of failure, and cultural norms—can also hinder engagement, especially for women and students from underprivileged areas.

Early exposure to entrepreneurship, even at school levels, can shape long-term entrepreneurial identity and skills. Interdisciplinary approaches, integrating entrepreneurship into non-business fields such as engineering, technology, and the arts, enable students to innovate and apply knowledge across industries.

Institutional support, aligned with national economic goals and local entrepreneurial ecosystems, is crucial. Collaboration between educators, industry, policymakers, and communities ensures programs remain effective, relevant, and sustainable.

In summary, entrepreneurship education significantly enhances personal development, employability, and economic advancement. When implemented through learner-centered, inclusive, and practical approaches, it can drive both individual success and national progress through innovation, enterprise creation, and societal empowerment.

5. Conclusion

In Bangladesh, entrepreneurship education is instrumental in developing students' entrepreneurial intentions and skills, thereby advancing economic growth and fostering innovation. However, its effectiveness is constrained by traditional, theory-heavy curricula, limited practical exposure, and insufficient institutional support.

This review highlights that experiential learning, mentorship, networking opportunities, and policy-driven support are essential to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice. Context-specific, hands-on programs, coupled with strong faculty competence and industry collaboration, can significantly enhance entrepreneurial skills and mindset among students.

Early interventions, such as skill-based initiatives, further strengthen entrepreneurial identity and motivation. To maximize impact, higher education institutions must integrate innovative teaching methods, foster practical engagement, and collaborate with stakeholders to create a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem. Strengthening these dimensions will not only enhance employability but also contribute to broader socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

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