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Entrepreneurship Education as Life Challenges

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Abstract

Nowadays, entrepreneurship is believed to be part of the solution to poverty. Based on this, entrepreneurship education is encouraged to be implemented in many educational institutions in various countries. Entrepreneurship education is often viewed as activities to equip students to start up a business. However, it could be argued, entrepreneurship education is more than just teaching business skills. Entrepreneurship education deals with changing the mindset, attitude, and life skills of students which also serve as challenges to individuals' personal growth. This article will review the process of entrepreneurship education in a university in Indonesia. The article will also analyse the contribution of entrepreneurship education in stimulating personal growth process among students. Challenges students faced in the entrepreneurial project and their personal growth will also be explored in the article.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, life challenge, personal growth
Introduction

Entrepreneurship is believed to be a part of solution to poverty. Therefore, entrepreneurship education is now encouraged to be implemented in many educational institutions in various countries. Entrepreneurship education is expected to create higher number of entrepreneurs and lower the level of unemployment.

People normally discuss entrepreneurship education in the context of economic development. Most of the time, discussions on entrepreneurship education are more focused on business skills, such as starting up business, scaling up business, finance, management. It is still very rare that people discuss entrepreneurship education in terms of challenges for learners to achieve higher well-being and personal growth. It can be argued that entrepreneurship education will also involve processes which bring challenges to facilitate personal growth. Entrepreneurship education not only deals with business planning, finance, management. Katz (cited in Chell, 2008) even stresses that entrepreneurship education should also focus of psychological aspect of entrepreneurship.

Following Katz’ argument, the purpose of entrepreneurship education should be beyond developing the business skills. Entrepreneurship education should develop entrepreneurial mindset, attitudes, skills among students.

The aim of this article is to discuss how entrepreneurship education serve as challenges for personal and professional development of students to achieve growth in their life.

Well-Being And Personal Growth


According to Ryff and Keyes, healthy individuals are those who can accept good or bad part of themselves. They can have positive perceptions of themselves eventhough they face many different life courses. Individuals who have good well-being can build satisfying social relationships with others. It also involves the ability to build warm and intimate
relationships. They show concern to the welfare of others. They show empathy and affection toward others.

Further, high well-being individuals possess self-determination and personal authority. They know and are aware of their values and ideals and can direct their own behavior based on their internalized standards and values. They do not rely on other’s judgment. Those who have higher level of autonomy will have better well-being.

Healthy individuals understand their needs and be able to be proactive to take action to meet their personal needs from their environments. They can take control their environment to meet the personal needs.

Healthy individuals also have purpose in their life. They have direction in their life. They can have a sense of direction and purpose. Because of the life purpose, they can see their life as meaningful. Healthy individuals also seek opportunities to have personal development, developing their skills and talents. They are open to new experiences. They also show positive changes in their life. They are more self-knowledgable and effective.

Positive functioning of human beings which involves the above dimensions can also be considered as a sign of growth, the concept developed by Rogers. According to Rogers, every individual has a tendency to grow. However it needs situation that facilitate them to grow.

**a growth tendency, a drive toward self-actualization .... It is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life- to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, mature.... This tendency may become deeply buried under layer after layer of encrusted psychological defenses... but it is my belief that it exists in every individual, and waits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed. (Rogers, 1961, p.35, cited in Ryckman, 2008, p. 450-451)**

Looking at the above argument, it is possible that students experience and gain growth in entrepreneurship education, as long as the course provide proper conditions to facilitate the process of growth.

**Entrepreneurship 1 the Ground breaker: at a glance**

Entrepreneurship 1 the Ground Breaker is one of the series of entrepreneurship courses delivered in the university where this study was conducted. It was named as “the ground breaker” as this course is designed as a foundation for the following entrepreneurship courses in the university. The course were expected to change old mindset, attitudes, habits
and characters into more entrepreneurial. This course was addressed to students who are in the first semester in their university career.

The goals of the course are to help students to develop means to understanding self and personal vision. Secondly, this course aims to develop the selling skills among students which also focuses on the satisfaction of customers and supplier. Thirdly, the course aims to develop students’ intention to be an entrepreneur.

The duration of the course was 16 weeks. In the first week, students were introduced with the concept of entrepreneurship. In the following week, they learnt about entrepreneurial characters. They were encouraged to have entrepreneurial mindset, by focusing on entrepreneurial role model. Students discussed the characteristics of the entrepreneurial role models to understand the main characteristics of entrepreneurs. They had to reflect on themselves which entrepreneurial characteristics were their strengths and weaknesses.

Having exploring entrepreneurial characters, students were facilitated to explore their life including their strengths, weaknesses, their passion, and values. Students were facilitated to explore themselves deeper with Personal Business Model or Business Model You (Clark et al., 2012). Using this model, students were helped to explore they personal key resources which can bring value for others. With this model, students also learn to determine their life goals which bring values for others (Setiawan, 2012b).

In the two following weeks, students were introduced with selling skills, including selling cycle, selling techniques, finding potential customers, and winning the sales. They were also presented with basic financial and operation skills. Students were also introduced with the selling project. They were asked to choose one of available business partners to facilitate their selling project. They were encouraged to choose business partner according to their passion or their life goals that have been explored in the previous weeks.

Students were also equipped with product knowledge from their business partner and ethical principles in selling. They were then asked to plan their selling and start selling. The duration of the selling project was 6 weeks. During the selling project, students had weekly mentoring with facilitators. In addition to consultation with the facilitators, there were also times that successful students were encouraged to share their experience in front of other students. Sharing success stories were aimed to build self-efficacy of the successful students and to inspire and motivate other students.

The learning process was facilitated with facilitators which consisted of academics and business practitioners. They could consult their selling project with their facilitators. The combination of academics and business practitioners are advantageous to students as they can
complement each other. Business practitioners can also improve the entrepreneurship education as they have practical experience, while the academics can help with learning tools (Green and Rice, 2007; Katz, 1995 in 2007; Setiawan, 2012a).

To facilitate the learning process, students interviewed a number business owners for several weeks. In order to learn more about entrepreneurial characteristics, students compared and analysed entrepreneurial characteristics of the business owners. Additionally, there were also weekly selling reflection forms to fill in. Students reflected on their selling process week by week; mindset, skills, and characters that they have learnt in the past week; the progress that they have achieved in that week in terms of mindset, skills, characters; their weaknesses in terms of skills and characters, their action plan for the coming week to make things and situation better; targets to achieve at the end of project and for the week advance, and value to be created through selling project.

At the end of the course, students were reminded the topics and processes they have pass through during the entrepreneurship course. Students wrote down lessons learnt in the Entrepreneurship course. This process was aimed to help students to crystallize things that they have learnt, so that they can find ‘pearls’ in their life resulted from the entrepreneurship course. In this processes, students reported the changes that they see in their life, in terms of mindset attitude, life skills, and characters.

**Discussions**

**Experiential learning**

According to McMullan and Gillin (cited in Chell, 2008), it is difficult to develop entrepreneurial capability through traditional method of teaching. They argue that real project is required to facilitate students to experience the entrepreneurial process. Chell (2008) adds that the real-life project will help students to sharpen their skills heuristically and experientially.

Beard and Wilson (2006) define experiential learning as the sense-making process of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment. Experiential learning is opposed to formal or traditional education which is said as separating learning from the world. Kolb (cited in Beard and Wilson, 2006) argue that experiential learning offer the critical linkages among education, work and personal development, offer the linkages between classroom and real world. Experiential learning can
promote the personal development of the learners to be their full potential as citizens, family members, and human beings.

In this entrepreneurship course, students obtained actual experience in selling. With real experience in selling projects, students also face real challenges, difficulties, failures and successes. It can be argued that these experiences have created various emotions which serve as important links among the education, work and personal development. According to Kolb, learning cycle in experiential learning involves 4 components including experiencing/noticing, interpreting/reflecting, generalizing/judging, and applying/testing. This is similar to Lewin's feedback process which involves concrete experience, observations and reflections, formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, testing implications of concepts in new situations (Beard & Wilson, 2006).

According to Beard and Wilson (2006), individuals can learn from their experience at different times. They can learn at the time when the experience occurs, at the time they do the reflection, at the time of analysing the future scenarios. Thus, experiential learning brings many opportunities for individuals to learn. However the learning process will be more effective if the learners do the reflection.

In this selling project, students obtained actual experience in selling. They did not only learn theoretically. They could learn from selling experience while the experience occurred. They could also learn from the weekly selling reflection. It be argued that this weekly selling reflection help students maximise their learning process eventhough they might not realise the purpose of the reflection sheets. These sheets will also drive students to put their conscious brains to reflect on their experience, as much of human behavior are normally driven by habits.

People can learn from their experience. They even can learn from their mistakes. According to Beard and Wilson (2006), the true learnt people are those who only makes mistake once and learn from it so that they do not make the same mistake again. With the weekly selling reflection, students can learn from their mistakes. They can also plan to act differently in the other time.

Sharing success stories

In the entrepreneurship course described above, there were times that successful students were asked to share their success stories in front of others students. It can be argued that sharing success stories are important method to develop self-efficacy among students.
Bandura (1995) mentions that there are four sources of efficacy beliefs, including mastery experiences, vicarious experiences provided by social models, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states in judging their capabilities. In parallel with that, Chell (2008) mentions that people can learn about entrepreneurship through observational of others’ behaviours. It can be argued, that the method of sharing success stories by students can serve as a media for students to observe and learn from others. Students can be inspired by their peers. This peer model can also raise their self-efficacy.

Around 30% students reported that sharing success stories are very useful for them.

(I have) the urge to hit the target because I saw my friends can ... I have to be.

This repeated the effectiveness sharing success stories method in the previous study. Based on her study, Setiawan (2012a) recommended that sharing session is helpful to enhance the learning process.

Entrepreneurship education and challenges

Various life challenges have been reported by students as involved in the selling project. The challenges reported by students can be classified into 2 groups, personal development and professional development. In terms of personal development, selling project in the entrepreneurship course was reported as presenting situations that challenged them to manage their own life and regulate their emotions. Students reported that in selling they faced difficulties in facing new people. There were also feelings of fear, anxiety, shyness. They also sometimes received criticisms and rejection from others. Feelings of pride, embarrassment, boredom, and laziness also served as stumbling blocks. This project was considered as offering challenges for students to regulate their own emotion in order to be successful. Additionally, the selling project was also considered as insisting students to go beyond their comfort zone and grow. Moreover, the selling project was reported as challenging students to change their negative ways of thinking into positive ones. The selling project has been reported as challenging students to adopt new characters such as independent in making decisions, hardworking, persistent.

In terms of professional development, students reported that the selling project presented situation that challenged them to learn how to manage their time, to be responsible, and to develop their skills such as selling skills, and financial skills. A number of students reported that the project has challenged them to be able to share their social vision to others.
Entrepreneurship education and growth

Katz (cited in Chell, 2008) argues that entrepreneurship education cannot be limited to developing business skills only. Entrepreneurship education should also emphasise on opportunity recognition and the psychological aspects of entrepreneurship. Katz also contends that entrepreneurship education should be conducted beyond the training in business planning, finance and management. He even emphasises the importance of the development of self-awareness among students.

With the tools of Personal Business Model (Business Model You), students in the course were helped to develop their self-awareness. This was also reported by students.

*I learned a lot from the BMU and Getting to know yourself. Because it made me explore who I am and my life purpose.*

I would argue the Entrepreneurship course has also helped students to be aware of their habits, characters which are limiting their performance and achievement. Some of reports are as follow.

*I was less persistent in trying*

*I was lacking the courage to face others*

*I was lazy. I was still like high school students*

There are changes reported by students. In the area of mindset, students reported that they now had a new way of thinking, such as valuing time, thinking to have their own business, valuing the innovation and creativity, put the importance of action, having high self-efficacy. Some of the quotations regarding change in mindset were as follows.

*We have to strive for something we want and we can’t depend on our parents all the time.*

*Everybody can be an entrepreneur, it is not limited by age, and it can be started anytime.*

*You need to try first. If not, you will never successful.*
If we want to make a change in our life, we need to act.

Mindset “I may not be able” has changed into mindset “I am sure I can”.

I used to feel that I am still very young. People will look down at me. Having had Entrepreneurship course I learnt that if I have determination, everything can be done.

I used to think only about assignment, movie and play, but now I think about long lasting business.

Failure is not important. The most important thing is to rise from failure, keep trying, trying until successful.

Students also reported changes in their attitude toward life and toward others, such as more optimistic, more diligent, more efficient in terms of money, more decisive, do not procrastinate. The following are some quotations from students’ report.

I become more enthusiastic to spend the day.

The attitude of my old lazy now has been more diligent.

I became someone more disciplined, and independent, because in college I trained entrepreneurship to live like that and now it becomes a habit for me.

I used to be extravagant in shop, now start saving

I became more mature and have positive thinking in my action, and more understanding toward the attitudes of people we will encounter.

I am more friendly.
I am now firmly in catching an opportunity and act.

I have more leadership, assertive and high responsible.

I am more confident, responsible, my embarrassment was reduced. I am more confident and daring facing consumers.

Changes in attitudes that occurred to me are that I become more confident in expressing my opinions

I appreciate time and dressing procedures

Changes in life skills achieved by students that have been reported involves skills in selling and in dealing with others, such as persuasion skills, communication skills, maintaining relationship skills, including emotion regulating skills.

I feel that my selling skill was improved, also my skills to communicate with others are more systematic. Additionally, I am better now in handling people. I used to be inferior and unable to talk.

I can be more persuading others.

Skills to regulate emotions so I am not nervous in front of many people

I was able to negotiate in offering products that I have, even though at first I was not convinced and optimistic that I could, but over time I can develop these skills into value-added

Ability to provide solutions, offering things that customers need, act honestly in the transaction process, patience in facing naughty customers
Better social skills, know more about yourself, problem solving skills are better, to know what to do and not for the better.

Recognize their own potential and skills through BMY companies and bmc

The ability of the sales, the ability to speak in front of customers who do not know, the ability to manage time, the ability to act consistently

Here I learned how to innovate in sales.

Students also reported the changes in terms of their characters, especially in entrepreneurial characters which were fostered in the course, such as passion, risk taking, creative innovative, persistent, independent, high ethical, market sensitivity.

(I) become more resilient in doing a job and not give up in the face of all sorts of problems.

Creative and innovative. I feel more and more developed in terms of creativity. especially since selling project. I practice to continue to innovate and create new ideas in running selling creative project.

I learnt to be an entrepreneur with good ethics and continue to strive to achieve success

I become more confident and willing to try hard from below or start from scratch. Constantly innovate and think differently

The excavated passion for being an entrepreneur. Persistent in facing rejection, independent in selling project, does not rely on parents, growing awareness of the need for creativity and innovation to make a sale, ... Dare, to make a decision and accept challenges as a lesson, do not be afraid to fail. If you open a business, you should work and think in a professional manner.
(I) strive always to understand consumer desires

(I) dare to take risks.

Looking at the experiences reported by students, it can be seen that the entrepreneurship education also helps students to improve their well-being, especially in the components of positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. The report also shows that the course, especially via selling project, has helped students to develop their relationship with others. By determining their weekly selling target, students were facilitated to exercise self-determination and personal authority to achieve autonomy. By exercising Personal Business Model (Business Model You) and determining values to be created through selling projects, students were also encouraged to have purpose in their life so that their life is more meaningful. As reported by students, the course has helped students to have better self-awareness. Additionally, selling project has stimulated them to obtain new life skills. This is part of the personal growth that students experienced in the course. Thus the Entrepreneurship course has helped students to promote their well-being.

Similar study has been conducted to see the outcomes of entrepreneurship course on the entrepreneurial characteristics (Setiawan, 2012a). It showed that of Entrepreneurship course had a positive impact on the strengthened of perceived entrepreneurial characteristics, especially market sensitivity, innovative creative, persistent and high ethical standard.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Looking at the experience reported by students, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education actually not only helps to improve business skills, but also offers important challenges to promote the well-being and personal growth of the students. Entrepreneurship education facilitates the personal and professional developments of students. Experiential learning is a very important method of learning as this learning method involves the learning cycle. Students can learn while they do/experience the project. Students also can learn from the reflection. Reflection help students to crystallize their learning experience.
References


