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LEVEL OF PERCEIVED ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS AT THE WESTERN PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY, PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, PALAWAN

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Abstract: In the context of the ASEAN Economic integration, the market for professionals becomes more competitive. ASEAN member nations strive to make the region stronger to be able to compete with other super power regions on the global scale. But with it comes greater aspiration to encourage graduates not just to become employees but entrepreneurs; thus the need for graduates to possess entrepreneurial skills, regardless of degree, becomes essential.

With the idea that not everyone who engages in business are business graduates, the importance of incorporating entrepreneurial skills development in the curriculum of non-business related courses is now becoming a trend on the international arena. With these in mind, this study assessed the level of perceived entrepreneurial skills of BS in Entrepreneurship BS in and Secondary Education students of the Western Philippines University in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan in terms of competitiveness, competencies and values.

Results revealed that the respondents have high levels of perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness, competency, and values. Students' course and gender were found to have significant relationship with their perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness. Further, the students' course presently enrolled in was found to more likely affect their perception towards their entrepreneurial competencies and values; while, gender was found to more likely affect their perceived entrepreneurial values, holding all other things equal. Recommendations concerning policy development and revision of the University's curricula in relation to the improvement of the students' entrepreneurial skills were also given.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skills, Competitiveness, Competencies, Values, Western Philippines University

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Entrepreneurship and the Philippine Education System

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defined entrepreneurship comprising of three components: Entrepreneurs,

Entrepreneurial Activity and Entrepreneurship; thus: *Entrepreneurs*, those persons (business owners) who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets; *Entrepreneurial activity* as the enterprising human



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action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets; and *Entrepreneurship* is the phenomenon associated with entrepreneurial activity.

The Philippine education system has seen radical changes as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) implemented the K to 12 program in 2016. To better equip the Filipino students with the needed business skills and competencies, curricular offerings were revised, integrating several subjects to different programs, aimed at developing the students' entrepreneurial mind and attributes of entrepreneurship. At the dawn of the ASEAN Economic Integration, the ASEAN business world becomes an open arena for those who are equipped to compete and survive; and this is where delivery of education system becomes crucial.

The Department of Education implemented the K to 12 program in 2016. The 10-year basic education curriculum was redesigned to include an additional two-year senior high program intended to teach and train the students technical-vocational skills which will make them readily employable after they finish their 12th grade (Cruz, 2014).

The economic growth of a country depends on the economic activities of its entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs that all begin as young individuals who got what it takes to transform almost anything into an opportunity and had manifested entrepreneurship skills even while they were still students. But to adapt to changing circumstances, honing these skills becomes imperative not only for parents but most especially to the education system (Eraslan, 2011; Polat and Aktop, 2010; Erdoğan, 2000; Lall, 2011).

1.2 Gender and Entrepreneurship

In the context of the Philippines where Filipinos are relatively entrepreneurial in nature, it was found that regardless of gender, entrepreneurship is seen more as a necessity entrepreneurship than otherwise (Velasco, 2013).

This claim is supported by the 2014 Philippine GEM Survey (Velasco et.al., 2016) report that businesses in the Philippines is dominated by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) totaling 944,897 establishments in 2012. At 99.6% of the total registered business in the country, MSMEs increased by 14% compared to 2011 and generated a total of 4,930,851 (64.97%) jobs in the country.

On the propensity of an individual to become entrepreneurs, studies have shown that gender is an inevitable factor. Studies suggest that the motives and decisions that drive female entrepreneurship are because of obligation, since the limited supply and market access opportunities for paid employment, than by vocation. Even if females tend to have high scores on knowledge about entrepreneurship, their willingness to start their own tend to be lower than that of their male counterpart, (Suárez-Ortega & Gálvez-García, 2017; Velasco, et al., 2016). Further, even if role-based theories emphasize that gender differences in behavior should be expected to change along with other social changes (Bula, 2012) and despite the rapid increase in women's business ownership with a growth rate greater than that of private firms as a whole (IFC, 2006), still entrepreneurship is considered an activity associated with men (Bird and Brush 2002), because they still constitute the majority (about two-thirds) of business owners worldwide (Allen, Langowitz, and Minnitti 2006).

1.3 Entrepreneurship Skills

1.3.1 Entrepreneurial Competencies

Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) defined entrepreneurial competence as a concept that has many faces and applications. Further, the terms "skills", "expertise", "acumen" and "competency" are all interrelated and are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature (Smith and Morse, 2005 in Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2010). Entrepreneurs must have certain entrepreneurial competencies or skills to become successful. Hisrich (2008) presented entrepreneurial skills as composed of technical, business management and personal



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skills. The first two mainly focused on the entrepreneurial competency of an individual while the third one focused mainly on the personal values system of the entrepreneur (Fitriati & Hermiati, 2010).

The importance for entrepreneurs to have the needed skills should be done while the students are still studying. But for the students' entrepreneurial skills to be beneficial, Kucel, et.al (2016) stressed the significance of adapting a stronger correlation between the need for entrepreneurial skills training in higher education institutions and the policies that promote innovation at the micro and macro levels in countries' economy.

1.3.2 Entrepreneurial Values

It is not enough that one has plain entrepreneurial competency, instead, one should also have – the entrepreneurial moral competencies: the entrepreneur's moral values depicted in his adherence to high ethical standards, dealing fairly, honestly and responsibly with the stakeholders. In the same manner that propensity to being an entrepreneur is inherent to an individual, moral values cannot be forced to an individual. It must be supported by integrated moral value system, which doesn't permits entrepreneur to behave unethically and use ethics in situations which might be advantageous (Hrehová and Ilečko, 2016).

Enterprise education has been proven to have a positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude (Packham, et. al, 2010). Social factors such as education and gender, are found to be effective in the development of entrepreneurial skills (Aytaç & İlhan, 2007).

1.3.2 Entrepreneurial Competitiveness

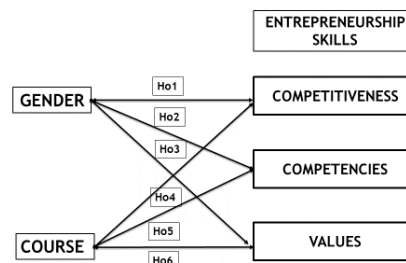
Competitiveness and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education policies and programs must focus on developing these entrepreneurial competencies and skills, which are transferable and beneficial in many work contexts (MSMED, 2011).

Competitive education policies and programs are needed in entrepreneurship education because it will create a new breed of academic entrepreneurs who will later become part of an entrepreneurial university (Velasco, 2013)

Given the above literature, this paper focused on the students' course and their gender and how these variables affected their level of perceived entrepreneurial skills in terms of competitiveness, competencies and values. The output of this research will be used as one of the basis of the curriculum revision activity of the University.

1.3.4 Research Hypotheses

1. There was no significant relationship between the students' gender and their level of perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness.
2. There was no significant relationship between the students' gender and their level of perceived entrepreneurial competency.
3. There was no significant relationship between the students' gender and their level of perceived entrepreneurial values.
4. There was no significant relationship between the students' course and their level of perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness.
5. There was no significant relationship between the students' course and their level of perceived entrepreneurial competency.
6. There was no significant relationship between the students' course and their level of perceived entrepreneurial values.



2. METHODOLOGY

Data were gathered from 70 students enrolled in BS in Secondary Education and BS in Entrepreneurship at Western Philippines University



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in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. For the purpose of this study, gender and course will be the independent variables and the entrepreneurial competitiveness, competency, and values as dependent variables.

STATA11 was used to analyze the data gathered. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of the students perceived entrepreneurial skills. Differences of means between variables were tested using T-test, while Logistic regression was used to describe data and to explain the relationship between variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After due analysis, the following were found to be true: Majority of the respondents are female ($M = .69$, $S.D. = .47$), enrolled in either BS Entrepreneurship or BS in Secondary Education ($M = .5$, $S.D. = .504$). Respondents were found to have high levels of perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness ($M = 3.72$, $S.D. = .69$), competency ($M = 3.69$, $S.D. = .54$); and values at ($M = 4.11$, $S.D. = .61$).

In terms of competitiveness, result showed a significant difference in the scores for students of BSED ($M=3.89$, $SD=.77$) and BSE ($M=3.56$, $SD=.69$), conditions; ($p = 0.046$). No significant differences were also found for competencies, of BSED ($M=3.60$, $SD=.55$) and BSE ($M=3.79$, $SD=.512$), conditions; ($p = 0.145$); and entrepreneurial values of students of BSED ($M=3.99$, $SD=.68$) and BSE ($M=4.22$, $SD=.505$) conditions; ($p = 0.115$).

The paired-samples t-test result used to compare the perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness to the gender of the respondents showed that there was no significant difference in the scores male ($M=3.60$, $SD=.74$) and female students ($M=3.78$, $SD=.67$) conditions; ($p = 0.332$).

As to the differences in the perceived entrepreneurial competencies and gender of the respondents, result showed that there was no significant difference in the scores for male students ($M=3.86$, $SD=.52$) and female students ($M=3.62$,

$SD=.53$) conditions; ($p = 0.084$); and entrepreneurial values scores of male students ($M=3.92$, $SD=.74$) and of female students ($M=4.19$, $SD=.52$) conditions; ($p = 0.084$).

In terms of the likelihood of change in the perceived entrepreneurial skills of the students, the 'odds ratio' for entrepreneurial competitiveness coefficient is .118 with a 95% confidence interval of [.032, .439]; their perceived entrepreneurial competencies has an 'odds ratio' coefficient of 1.753 at 95% confidence interval of [.551, 5.572] and their perceived entrepreneurial values has an 'odds ratio' coefficient of 7.627 at 95% confidence interval of [1.912, 30.435].

The likelihood that entrepreneurial skills will be affected by the respondents' gender are: for entrepreneurial competitiveness, the odds ratio coefficient is .815 with a 95% confidence interval of [.296, 2.245] and entrepreneurial competency coefficient is .158 with a 95% confidence interval of [.040, .621]. Further, their perceived entrepreneurial values has an 'odds ratio' coefficient of 6.100 and a 95% confidence interval of [1.260, 29.534].

Based on the statistical analysis conducted to evaluate the relationships of variables, and at .05 level of significance, the following are hereby found: The students who served as respondents were mostly female, half of whom are enrolled in BSED or BS in Entrepreneurship, who were found to have high levels of perceived entrepreneurial skills.

Although the paired-samples t-test results, BSED students tend to have higher entrepreneurial competitiveness score compared to BSE students, however the latter gave higher scores for entrepreneurial competencies and values. The null hypothesis of no relationship between course and perceived entrepreneurial competitiveness is rejected, but accepted in terms of competencies and values.

The paired-samples t-test results conducted to compare the perceived entrepreneurial



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competitiveness have no significant difference in the scores of male and female students. The null hypothesis of no relationship between the two variables is hereby accepted.

Further, the t-test results found to have no significant difference in the scores of both male and female students. The null hypothesis of no relationship between gender and perceived entrepreneurial competencies and values and the students' is also accepted.

Logistic regression results show that perceived entrepreneurial values increases depending on their gender, while their perception towards their entrepreneurial competencies and values are likely to be affected by the course they are presently enrolled in, all other things equal.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Not all successful entrepreneurs have entrepreneurship or business degrees. They are individuals with inherent entrepreneurial skills which they honed to propel their respective businesses to success. Cognizance of scenarios such as this should enthrust other education institution to integrating curricular or co-curricular activities related to entrepreneurship in order to develop the inherent entrepreneurship skills of their students and this study has proven that the gender of and course enrolled in by students can affect how they perceive their level of perceived entrepreneurial skills.

Given the result of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. School policies that may help encourage and support students' entrepreneurial activities should be made or adapted in order to convert their high level of perceived entrepreneurial skills into something tangible.

2. Revision of the curricula of BS in Entrepreneurship and BS in Education to include additional subjects and practical activities, following the new CHED-Policies Standards and Guidelines for program offerings (as soon as available) be done to make them Kto12 compliant and further develop the students' entrepreneurial skills.
3. Considering the significance of the entrepreneurship skills across fields in relation to gender and course, similar studies involving other socio-demographic variables and students from other programs of the University is also suggested.

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