

A Study on the Importance of Work Experience in Developing Entrepreneurial Vision, Confidence, Decision-Making Skills, Passion, and Motivation Among Final Year Students Taking Entrepreneurship Course

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Accepted: 15 November 2021 | Published: 1 December 2021

Abstract: *This study was conducted to determine whether work experience can develop entrepreneurial vision, confidence, decision-making skills, passion, and motivation among final year students taking entrepreneurship course. The respondents were divided into two groups; one group with work experience, and another group with no work experience. This is a descriptive study that used a quantitative approach, whereby the questionnaire was chosen as the research instrument utilising the Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using the SPSS software, version 21. This study involved 134 respondents, who were selected using the simple random sampling approach, from the Faculty of Accounting and Faculty of Applied Sciences. The findings showed that there were differences between students with work experience and those without work experience, in terms of self-confidence [$t = -3.512$, $p = 0.001$], and $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents. Students with work experience showed greater self-confidence in developing entrepreneurial confidence (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.414) compared to students without work experience (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.518). In terms of entrepreneurial decision-making based on the t-test results [$t = -11.597$, $p = 0.000$], $p < 0.01$ of the groups of respondents, it was found that students with work experience were able to make the right decisions related to business issues (mean = 4.69, SD = 0.467) compared to those without work experience (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.612). The results of the t-test [$t = -3.681$, $p = 0.000$], $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents also showed that students with work experience were more capable of developing entrepreneurial motivation (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.326) compared to students without work experience (mean = 3.76, SD = 0.513). Therefore, based on these results, work experience is important in building self-confidence, in helping an individual make the right decisions, as well as developing entrepreneurial motivation to minimise the risks that exist in a business.*

Keywords: entrepreneurship course, work experience, self-confidence

本研究旨在探讨工作经验能否培养选修创业课程的应届毕业生的创业愿景、信心、决策能力、热忱与动力。受访者被分为两组：一组为有工作经验，另一组则是无工作经

验。这是一项采用了定量法，即运用李克特量表的调查问卷作为研究工具的描述性研究。本研究使用SPSS软件（第21版）对所收集到的数据进行分析。本研究所涉及的134名受访者，均从会计学院和应用科学学院随机抽样选出。研究结果显示，基于受访者的分组中，有工作经验的学生与没有工作经验的学生在自信心方面存在差异[t = -3.512, p = 0.001]，且p < 0.01。与没有工作经验的学生(平均值= 3.82, 标准偏差 = 0.518)相比，有工作经验的学生在培养创业信心方面更有自信(平均值= 4.11, 标准偏差 = 0.414)。在创业决策方面，根据t检验结果[t = -11.597, p = 0.000]，p < 0.01的受访者组，发现有工作经验的学生(平均值= 4.69, 标准偏差 = 0.467)比没有工作经验的学生(平均值= 3.53, 标准偏差 = 0.612)更能做出正确的商务决策。基于t检验[t = -3.681, p = 0.000]，p < 0.01的受访者群体结的果也显示，与没有工作经验的学生（平均值=3.76, 标准偏差 = 0.513）相比，有工作经验的学生（平均值=4.06, 标准偏差=0.326）更能够培养创业动机。基于这些结果显示，工作经验对于建立自信，帮助个人做出正确决策以及培养创业动机，并将企业存在的风险降至最低都是至关重要的。

关键字: 关键词：创业课程；工作经验；自信心

1. Introduction

Is work experience important in developing a person's entrepreneurial characteristics? Some people might think that 'ordinary' work experience, such as part-time and volunteer work do not carry much weight. On the contrary, work experience, even as a volunteer, is indeed very helpful and beneficial for job-seekers. Having work experience allows us to venture out and add our knowledge in various fields of employment, apart from giving us insight of our future career path or business options. We would also have the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of our chosen career field, as well as to build networks. In turn, we can cultivate our interest and passion for the field. We can also better understand our strengths and weaknesses, and strive to improve ourselves to the best of our ability.

The aim of this study was to determine whether work experience can develop entrepreneurial vision, confidence, decision-making skills, passion, and motivation among final year students who are taking the entrepreneurship course compared to those without work experience. The entrepreneurship course is offered to final year students at a higher learning institution in the state of Perak. The entrepreneurship course is mandatory for students to develop essential analytical skills and strategic competencies required in business. In this study, the respondents were randomly selected from two different faculties, namely, the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Accounting. Since entrepreneurship is beneficial for the students, including providing them with job opportunities once they graduate, this study was conducted to determine whether work experience can improve a person's ability, especially in developing his/her entrepreneurial characteristics.

2. Literature Review

What are the important factors in starting a business? According to Stella Morrison (2020), a business writer for the Business News Daily, the success of a business can be affected by several variables. According to Stella, it is crucial for a person to be knowledgeable of his/her business industry, to know the competitors, to understand the risks of the business industry, the amount of capital required, as well as carefully taking notes of any required expenses prior to starting a business. She has also imparted the importance of having a strong mission, delivering what the customer wants, networking, bringing in experienced professionals, the importance of proper planning, and making good decisions early can help ensure continued growth in business. Krista Hillis (2021) from Wisdom Times, said that any type of experiences, including business experience, industry-related experience, and even life experience can help improve one's business performance and profitability.

Marcin W. Staniewski (2016) studied the relationships between selected organisational predictors and entrepreneurial success in Warsaw, Poland. He examined 294 companies and used two types of questionnaires. By using the Multidimensional Business Data Sheet, he gathered information on the entrepreneurs and their companies. On the other hand, the Successful Entrepreneurship Scale was used to measure entrepreneurial success. He examined the data by using statistical analysis, with a parametric Student's t-test and a non-parametric U Mann–Whitney test. He employed stepwise regression to verify the predictive value of the variables. He found that entrepreneurs with managerial experience—who are effective entrepreneurs in the family, have unique knowledge, and whose employees have unique knowledge—would obtain higher mean scores in the general indicator of entrepreneurial success. In addition, entrepreneurs whose employees have unique knowledge would achieve greater entrepreneurial success. This study has shown that business experience and knowledge can contribute to successful entrepreneurship.

Nor Hafiza Othman et al. (2016) studied the influence of work experience and education on business performance among entrepreneurs in Kelantan. A simple random sampling method was used, and a total of 379 entrepreneurs were selected to participate in this survey. The researchers of this survey noted that work experience can help motivate the entrepreneurs and reduce the amount of uncertainty. Work experience can also encourage them to bear the uncertainty, if any. Education can help entrepreneurs develop critical thinking skills, and expose them to new business potentials, apart from benefitting from the era of globalisation. Hence, it is important to have work experience, in addition to knowledge gained at schools, before starting a business. This is because, both work experience and educational knowledge will affect the performance of the entrepreneur's business venture. This study found that work experience has a greater influence on business performance compared to formal education. Thus, students need to be exposed to real business experience, while taking entrepreneurship education course in institutions of higher learning so that they can become successful entrepreneurs in the future.

According to Shafqat et al. (2016), prior job experience is important while taking the initiative for any business activity. It provides a good guideline that helps entrepreneurs decide which businesses they would like to get involved in in the future. The researchers in this qualitative study used the narrative approach, with a sample of six entrepreneurs, for their research analysis. The factors used in this study were the aim of the job, getting help in starting a business, reasons for leaving the job sector, the need for job experience, the relevance of job

experience, and the role of past work experience. The element of ‘the aim of the job’ in this study was defined as to gain experience for business, or only for the sake of employment. In their narrations, the entrepreneurs from the sample explained how they started their businesses, and whether they received assistance from family, friends, or colleagues. They also discussed the relevance of their job experience, whether it was complete, partial, or having no relevance at all. From a thorough analysis of the narrations, the researchers discovered that job experience has a strong relationship with entrepreneurship. In addition, they found that all the previously mentioned factors may motivate a person having job experience to venture into entrepreneurship.

3. Discussion

Research Questions and Objectives

- 1) Is there a difference between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial vision?
- 2) Is there a difference between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial confidence?
- 3) Is there a difference between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial decision-making skills?
- 4) Is there a difference between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial passion?
- 5) Is there a difference between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial motivation?

This current study has focused on the final year students taking entrepreneurship course at a higher learning institution in the state of Perak. The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between students with work experience and students without work experience, with five entrepreneur characteristics that consist of vision, confidence, decision-making skills, passion, and motivation.

Significance of the Study

This study is important in examining whether work experience can develop entrepreneurial vision, passion, confidence, motivation, and decision-making skills among final year students who are taking entrepreneurship course compared to those without work experience. The results of this study are expected to help and benefit various parties:

- i. To create awareness among students regarding the importance of being exposed to and receiving training from work experience prior to starting their own business. With their work experience, students can improve their skills and increase their confidence in managing their own entrepreneurial and business matters;
- ii. To create awareness among parents on the importance of their role towards their children’s readiness to venture into entrepreneurship. Parental encouragement is needed so that students can increase their business knowledge, especially through work experience to produce successful young entrepreneurs. This, in turn, can contribute to the country's economic development and enables Malaysia to transition into a high-income economy as early as 2024;
- iii. To help educators train students to acquire good entrepreneurial characteristics and practice noble entrepreneurial values. Educators need to motivate their students towards developing positive entrepreneurial traits;

- iv. As a reference to other researchers, who are interested in the field of entrepreneurship to pursue studies in the same or similar fields.

Methodology

The respondents were divided into two groups, namely, the group with work experience and the group without work experience. This was a descriptive study that utilised a quantitative approach. The questionnaire method was selected as the study instrument, with the use of the Likert scale. Data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21. The respondents consisted of 134 final year students, who were preparing business plans for their entrepreneurship course in 2019. They were selected using the simple random sampling and were from two different faculties, namely, the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Accounting.

Findings and Results

Respondents' Profile

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Distribution (N = 134)

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
GENDER : MALE	48	35.8
: FEMALE	86	64.2
GROUP : WITHOUT WORK EXPERIENCE	51	38.1
: WITH WORK EXPERIENCE	83	61.9
PROGRAM: ACCOUNTING INFORMATION SYSTEM	28	21
: ACCOUNTANCY	61	45
: SCIENCE	45	34

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic distribution. The results of this study showed that most of the respondents were female, with 86 respondents (64.2%), while the remaining 35.8% (48 respondents) were male. The group profile showed that 51 respondents (38.1%) were from the group without work experience, while the remaining 83 respondents (61.9%) were from the group with work experience. The respondents were from two faculties and were studying different programs, whereby 28 students were from the Accounting Information System program, 61 students were from the Accountancy program, and 45 students were from the Science program.

Analysis of Differences Based on Groups

a) Vision

H₀₁ There is no significant difference for vision based on groups.

Based on Table 2, the results of the t-test analysis showed that there was no significant difference for vision [$t = -1.844, p = 0.068$], $p > 0.05$ based on the groups of respondents. Thus, Ho1 was accepted. These findings demonstrated that there is no difference for vision between students with work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial vision.

Table 2: T-Test Differences for Vision Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Vision	Without work experience	51	3.84	.418	-1.844	.068
	With work experience	83	3.98	.382		

b) Confidence

Ho2 There is no significant difference for confidence based on groups.

Based on Table 3, the results of the t-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference for confidence [$t = -3.512, p = 0.001$], $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents. Thus, Ho2 was rejected. These findings showed that students with work experience were more confident in developing entrepreneurial confidence (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.414) compared to those without work experience (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.518).

Table 3: T-Test Differences for Confidence Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Confidence	Without work experience	51	3.82	.518	-3.512	.001
	With work experience	83	4.11	.414		

c) Decision-making skills

Ho3 There is no significant difference for decision-making skills based on groups.

Based on Table 4, the results of the t-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference for decision-making skill [$t = -11.597, p = 0.000$], $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents. Thus, Ho3 was rejected. These findings showed that students with work experience can make the right decisions in resolving business issues to minimise existing risks (mean = 4.69, SD = 0.467) compared to students without work experience (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.612).

Table 4: T-Test Differences for Decision-making Skills Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Decision-making skills	Without work					
	experience	51	3.53	.612	-11.597	.000
	With work					
	experience	83	4.69	.467		

d) Develop passion for business

Ho4 There is no significant difference in developing passion for business based on groups.

Based on Table 5, the results of the t-test analysis showed that there was no significant difference for developing passion for business [$t = -1.696, p = 0.092$], $p > 0.05$ based on the groups of respondents. Thus, Ho4 was accepted. These findings showed that there was no difference in developing passion for business between students who have work experience and students without work experience.

Table 5: T-Test Differences for Developing Passion for Business Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Develop passion for business	Without work					
	experience	51	3.80	.448	-1.696	.092
	With work					
	experience	83	3.94	.451		

e) Increase motivation

Ho5 There is no significant difference in increasing motivation based on groups.

Based on Table 6, the results of the t-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference in motivation [$t = -3.681, p = 0.000$], $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents.

Thus, Ho5 was rejected. These findings showed that students with work experience were more capable of increasing their entrepreneurial motivation (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.326) compared to students without work experience (mean = 3.76, SD = 0.513).

Table 6: T-Test Differences for Increasing Motivation Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Increase motivation	Without work					
	experience	51	3.76	.513	-3.681	.000
	With work					
	experience	83	4.06	.326		

f) Overall

Ho6 There is no overall significant difference based on groups.

Based on Table 7, the results of the t–test analysis showed that there was an overall significant difference [$t = -12.144, p = 0.000$], $p < 0.01$ based on the groups of respondents. Thus, H_0 was rejected. These findings showed that students with work experience have higher potential in developing entrepreneurial vision, confidence, decision-making skill, passion, and motivation (mean = 4.15, SD = 0.169) compared to those without work experience (mean = 3.75, SD = 0.210).

Table 7: Overall T-Test Differences Based on Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. P
Overall	Without work					
	experience	51	3.75	.210	-12.144	.000
	With work					
	experience	83	4.15	.169		

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of this study, it was concluded that work experience contributes towards self-confidence in business and can help a person make the right decisions in business. Such a trait is important to minimise the inherent risks in the business. This study has also found that work experience can establish focus in business and motivates a person in daily work management. Therefore work experience programs (WEP), such as offered by workforce development agencies, MyASEAN Internship and Industry Placement Program are important not only for students but also young people, and others who aren't quite certain about their career path to participate in industry training. These programs will connect participants with employers and enable them to gain invaluable knowledge, experience and skills to improve their lives. Universities are recommended to provide guideline on industrial training practices and include industrial training in the academic curriculum to provide every student a feel of how their work environment will be when they get into the corporate world. In conclusion, it is clear that WEP will provide participants the opportunity to develop workplace competencies and ultimately result in career success. However, this study has certain limitations. In this study, the limitations were based on the research questions that became the core aspects in identifying whether there was any difference between students who have work experience and those without work experience in developing entrepreneurial vision, confidence, decision-making skills, passion, and motivation. The scope of research on entrepreneurship is wide but this study only focused on five entrepreneurial characteristics, namely, vision, confidence, decision-making skills, passion, and motivation.

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