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Stakeholder overload and Organizational Change Fatigue in Design of Entrepreneurship Curriculum in Universities of Pakistan

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to figure out the ingredients of curriculum to create enterprising graduates in universities of District Swat. The study with a qualitative onto-epistemological view, collected data from 20 university faculty to decipher the ingredients of curriculum through in-depth interviews with a big "Q" approach. The empirical data collected is analysed with help of grounded theory three coding stages of analysis to arrive at substantive level theoretical discussion for value creation in curriculum. The findings of study indicate the phenomenon of stakeholder overload exerted on universities in regards to curriculum planning due to multiple directives issues to HEC, HED, PM office, Parliament Standing Committees, Patron office, CCI, Accreditation council and courts. Consequently, organizational change fatigue or lethargy in terms of compliance is reported which adversely impact curriculum laden value creation in universities due to faculty overload and fatigue. Another factor associated with such overload results in lack of horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum. The prevalent model of entrepreneurship education in public sector universities is IE model as against business generation models used in private HEIs. The graduates due to rural backgrounds lack the soft skills to manage themselves and others. The study concludes that training companies and business plans development are needed. A university wide approach to integration of CA, CCA and ECA is needed. The study recommends that CA be domain of Science Faculties, CCA be developed by Social Sciences faculties and ECA by Arts, Management and Sports Sciences faculties to create enterprising graduates in District Swat. The study contributes by offering a substantive level theory in the form of a logic diagram to offer propositions with regards to designing curriculum which develops the mind (CA-Sciences), Heart (CCA-Social Sciences) and Action (ECA-Sports) corresponding to Cognitive, Affective and Conative/Psychomotor domains.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of curriculum-oriented value has gained much traction since the beginning of new curriculum. Although there is a common misconception to use curriculum and syllabus synonymously (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006). This is due to the fact that there is no formal teacher training for PhD faculty joining universities apart from the newly launched program by National Academy of Higher Education NAHE to train the fresh PhDs before their interim placement in universities. It goes without saying that curriculum is broader concept than syllabus which merely refer to course contents. According to (Lackéus, 2017) the concept of curriculum is broader than a syllabus and course contents. The teaching of entrepreneurship education is not a linear process due to its context specific nature especially due to the fact that value

is a dynamic process. Curriculum is a multifaceted concept as planned curriculum sometimes differ from the received or actual curriculum. Pakistan as country is obsessed with uniformization of curriculum, processes and regulations. The curriculum at the class room level is called Micro curriculum, at the state level it is called macro curriculum and at the institutional level curriculum is known as meso curriculum (van den Akker et al., 2003).

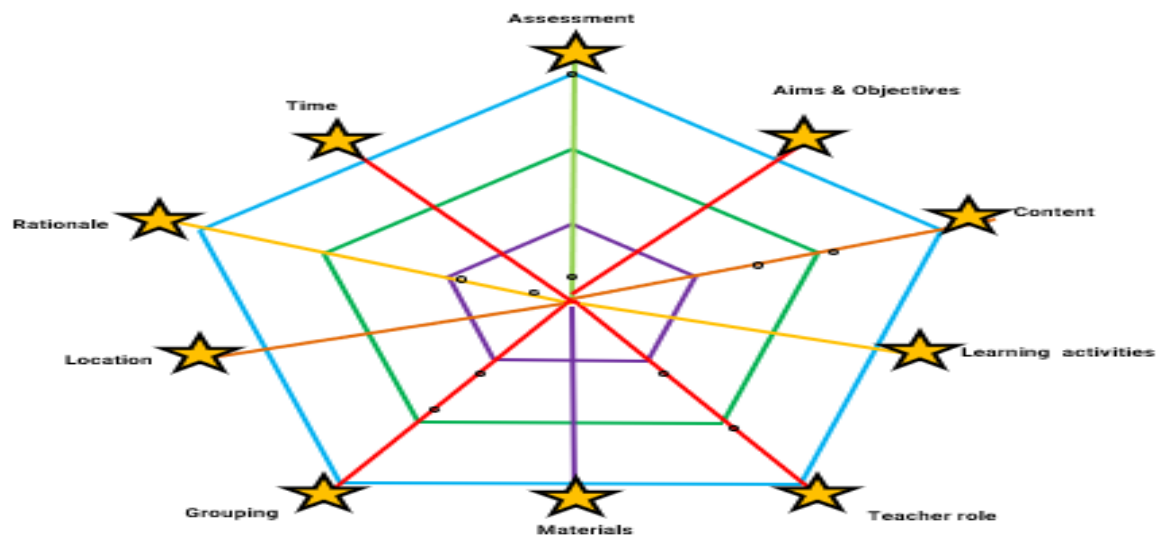


Figure 1.

Spider Web Framework for curriculum

Source: Adapted from van den Akker et al., 2003)

According to (Mpofu-Hamadziripi et al., 2022) the whole-sale adoption of white men curriculum by colonial countries is an issue requiring attention. This is more important in the context of entrepreneurship education (Casellato, 2023). These translocation of curriculum based on Fortune 500 based industries had resulted in educational inflation, credentialism (Tariq, 2018) due to which interest in university level education has been reduced driving the way for corporatization, commercialization of universities.

The concept of stakeholder overload and organizational lethargy has become more conspicuous due to emergence of New Public Management that uses private sector criteria to evaluate the performance of public sector universities (Berg & Seeber, 2016). The university faculty and staff members have experienced academic and administrative acceleration due to additional burden of workload and stakeholder expectations and dried up funding for universities. Throughout the universities are repositioned (Yousafzai et al., 2017) due to the fact that universities are now positioned as self-sustainable commercial entities. The main product of universities due to advent of technological advancement is missing as short-cuts of artificial value creation are used in unsystematic manner (Roth et al., 1994). Hence, the universities that are promulgated to examine the "universe" have turned into vocational schools due to existing Take a job approach in Pakistan and particularly in the resource strapped province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Higher Education Commission, Islamabad has made "National Curriculum review committees" NCRC to improve curriculum for dozens of disciplines. On the similar analogy, the Higher Education Department of KPK also formed "Curriculum Standardization Review Committees (CSRC)". It is worthy to note that uniformization of entrepreneurship education across the curriculum at various locations is not

appropriate as it is a context specific field as well in-exact science in nature that differs from one place to another (Ullah et al., 2025). It is pertinent to note that horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum is needed for entrepreneurial education the (Barkley & Major, 2020). Due to policy saturation as evident from excessive policy churn by HEC, the universities are bound to feel the organizational change fatigue also known as organizational lethargy (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2021). Organizational lethargy or organizational change fatigue is defined as, "a state of exhaustion, apathy, and cynicism that employees experience when faced with constant or poorly managed organizational changes" (Drasin & Holliday, 2024). Therefore, there is need for serious stakeholder consultation in order to imbue the best practices in curriculum.

In this study we have framed the following research questions guided by the problem statement which was situated in prior literature to achieve the aim of study.

(1) What type of curricular activities produces entrepreneurship-oriented value creation in graduates? **(2)** What co-curricular components creates entrepreneurship readiness in Graduates of business? **(3)** In what ways curriculum-based inputs can be infused to germinate value creation capacities in universities of Swat?

Moving ahead, in the same continuation, it is important to examine the various models of teaching and training for entrepreneurship education. The entrepreneurship model in vogue at universities of Pakistan can be termed as Individual entrepreneurship IE model (Laukkanen, 2000). The model comprises of institutional and external parts (Laukkanen, 2000). Majority of the business schools develop the students in the institutional arena leaving the students to find their own path to become entrepreneurs or owner managers autonomously. In contrast to this approach a business generation model guides the students through a systematic and well-planned processes which account for availability of mentors, prototypes, munificent environment as well as systematic pathways with external world (Laukkanen, 2000). In pakistan this business generation model is used in some private universities such as GIKI and "Pak-Austria Fachhochschule" The BG model teaching entrepreneurship also goes in sync with Government aspired models of NPM.

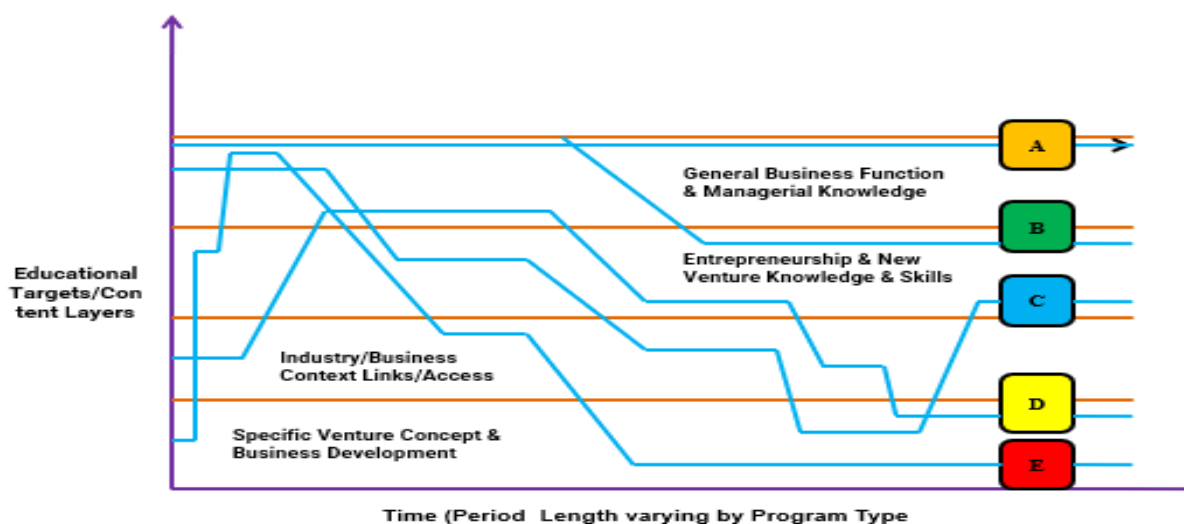


Figure 2.
Levels of EE Education Taught at Universities
Source: Adopted from (Laukkanen, 2000).

As evident from figure (2) above, the universities can teach at various levels from merely teaching general business functions, inclusion of entrepreneurship courses to touch base with industry. Finally, some universities as part of their teaching pedagogy require the creation of specific venture development as part of degree programs. However, in Pakistan there is little systematic provision of such curricular and co-curricular arrangements in universities especially in the public sector.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses an inductive qualitative research approach which is suitable when there is no apriori theories available regarding a certain topic (Creswell and Poth (2016); Savin-Baden and Major (2023)). The research design for these purposes uses semi-structured interviews such as Philosophical paradigms, Methods and Strategy of inquiry with a social constructionist lens (Mbanaso et al., 2023). The interview guide was used for data collection sample chosen. The interview guide was recursively refined in the pilot phase of the study which helped in the collection of data during the full-fledged second phase of data collection. Overall, the sample size was determined by the point of theoretical saturation which is a characteristic of grounded theory (Khalid et al., 2025).

The data was analyzed with the help of three level of coding analysis. We followed the abridged version of Grounded theory having open, axial and selective coding stages of analysis to arrive a particular patterns and themes in relation to study topic. The study uses a big "Q" research design by adhering the values of qualitative research as against the small "q" qualitative approaches of "COREQ" and "SRQR" (O'Brien et al., 2014). Finally, ignoring ethics of research is unethical practice in itself. Hence, proper approval from relevant review board of university was attained and alias names were used for participants of study in order to maintain their privacy and adhere the requirements of implicit informed consent (Iqbal et al., 2018).

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is done with the help of Grounded Theory as a strategy of inquiry. Grounded theory comprises of three types of coding analysis as show in figure (3)

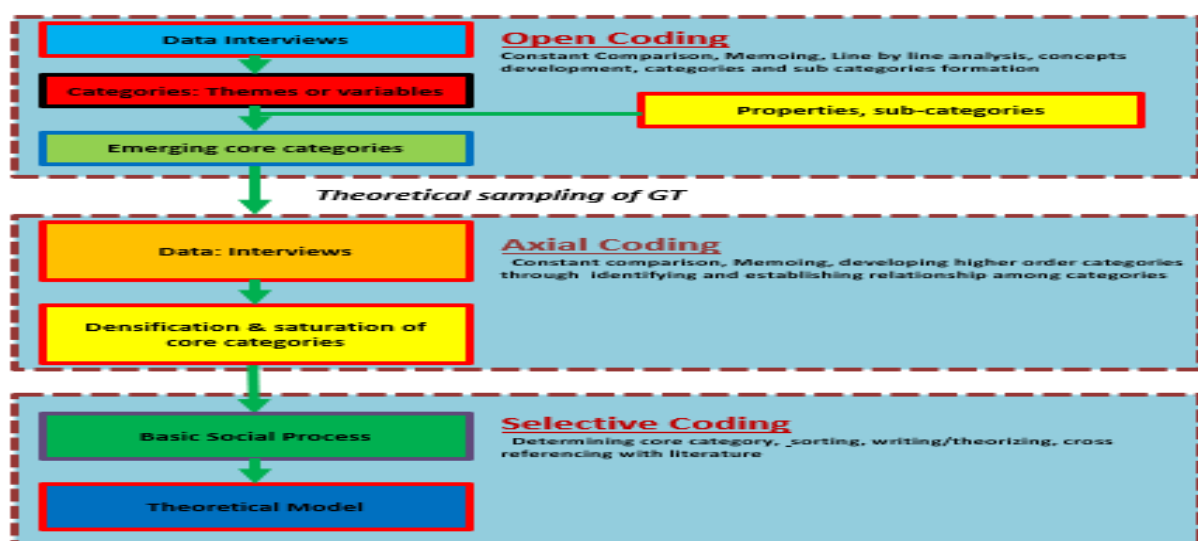


Figure 3.
Stages of GT Coding Analysis
Source: adopted from (Ullah et al., 2024)

Curricular activities for entrepreneurship-oriented value creation in graduates

The first research question pertains to the curricular activities and the second to extracurricular and third relating to ways through which to infuse value creation in curriculum of universities. A recurrent pattern which emerged during the analysis (open axial and selective coding) of RQ1 pertains to the fact that curriculum is main emphasis in the universities but not the curriculum design. The faculty members are overburdened with teaching and administrative workload which had created organizational lethargy due to a variety of reasons including acceleration of academic life in universities. This acceleration is partly attributed the advent of neo-liberal policies in academia such as new public management which focuses on financial sustainability.

In the same vein, another recurrent pattern which emerges from empirical data collected (open axial and selective coding) refers to the fact that university curriculum is replete with foreign content and is mostly past oriented. At the time of graduation most of the skills learnt are already obsolete due to lack of futuristic learning in domains of hard skills. The curriculum is neither vertically nor horizontally integrated due to a number of incessant directives. The curriculum related directives have been coming from PM office, CM-the Patron office, HEC, HED, Accreditation councils, Senate standing committee-Parliament, Accreditation councils and NCRC. This has resulted in excessive pressure on the curriculum development in universities due to policy saturation and lack of freezing periods to assess the efficacy of curriculum in a systematic manner.

Co-curricular components of entrepreneurship Education

There is lack of robust linkages with catchment industry. In fact, the largest industry by virtue of employment creation is the education industry in itself. There is need to touch-base with corporate sector but at the same time there is a pressing need to bridge the university-to-university gaps in order to achieve even greater impact in regards to conduct of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The analysis indicates that there are opportunities for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities but most of the time there is no systematic schedule of activities. Part of the issue is due to the calamity prone nature of area where summer and winter holidays are announced on varying dates of the calendar year. The student bodies lack funding and most of the times majority of student activities happen during the admission periods in order to attract freshmen. There is no provision of Student council for academic learning and enhancement in public universities which leaves behind severe gaps in students grooming. There is also lack of student's exposure due to cash strapped nature of universities as a result students seldom develop their full potential by starting their own ventures in District Swat.

The empirical evidence suggests that the dominant model of teaching entrepreneurship education is the IE model which leaves finding career paths to students. There is need for a more structured approach of Business generation models proposed by (Laukkanen, 2000). The business Generation model is practiced in other universities such as GIKI and Pak Austria fachhochschule in Haripur. There is also absence of training companies and the business incubation centers are present but their impact is negligible. There is no concept of entrepreneurial universities as universities operate on the basis on colonial model of bureaucracy although some efforts are underway for digitization of universities. The empirical evidence suggests that universities operate on the basis of paper based bureaucratic models and

general financial rules of the Government which has stifled the entrepreneurship prospects by acting as a straightjacket of rule-based governance.

To infuse curriculum-based value creation educational ecosystem of Swat

The analysis of empirical evidence suggests that there is a serious dearth of local business models as businesses operate on borrowed business models. The environment of the area is becoming more business repellent due to lack of ease of business in area. Based on the analysis of open, axial and selective coding it is observed that universities should focus on the whole individual focusing in the mind, heart and body of the students through a fine blend of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in order to imbue a spirit of innovation and germinate entrepreneurship spirit in students of universities. There is a recurrent pattern which suggests that students who are super active in co and extracurricular activities tend to outperform those whose sole focus is on the curricular learning. The universities which provide Training based companies in their curriculum are likely to be more successful in giving entrepreneurs to the market. Moreover, there is a lack of diversity in student body and majority of the students were reported to be full time students but due to their rural nature were involved in daily chores of households, part time jobs as well as agriculture subsistence related activities.

DISCUSSION

The concept of curriculum laden value creation has gained much traction in recent years. For instance, (Yousafzai, 2019) conducted a study to use curriculum laden value creation as foundation for infusing entrepreneurship education in curriculum. However, the concept of value creation is of interdisciplinary nature. This requires a university wide value creation orientation whereby various university faculties or departments should contribute to the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the students. This study calls for an interdisciplinary and university wide approach to design of entrepreneurship curriculum through integration of CA, CCA and Extra Curricular activities corresponding to heart, mind and action dimensions of students to be developed through various specialized faculties or departments of universities as discussed in the ensuing logic framework. Such an approach will help combat the policy churn and resultant organizational change fatigue experience by universities due to stakeholders' overload on universities in Pakistan.

Logic Diagram of Grounded theory Analysis

On the basis of the GT analysis of empirical findings reported the following logic diagram also known as storyline has been developed guided by data as shown in figure 4. The study on the basis of grounded theory-based data proposes the above-mentioned story line diagram to infuse entrepreneurship spirit in curriculum of universities. The basic idea of Grounded theory methodology is to use data to generate substantive level theories, frameworks, propositions, logic diagrams or storyline to act as stepping stone for theory testing in future. The study findings inform that curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities can be best infused in the university curriculum by adopting a university wide perspective. For instance, to develop a wholesome individual as shown in figure 4. The main proposition or thesis here is that cognition is best developed by the faculty of sciences in a university and focuses on the mind of students. In the same vein, the heart dimension corresponds

to the affective domain and can be best developed by the Social Sciences faculties in the university with a focus on the co-curricular activities.

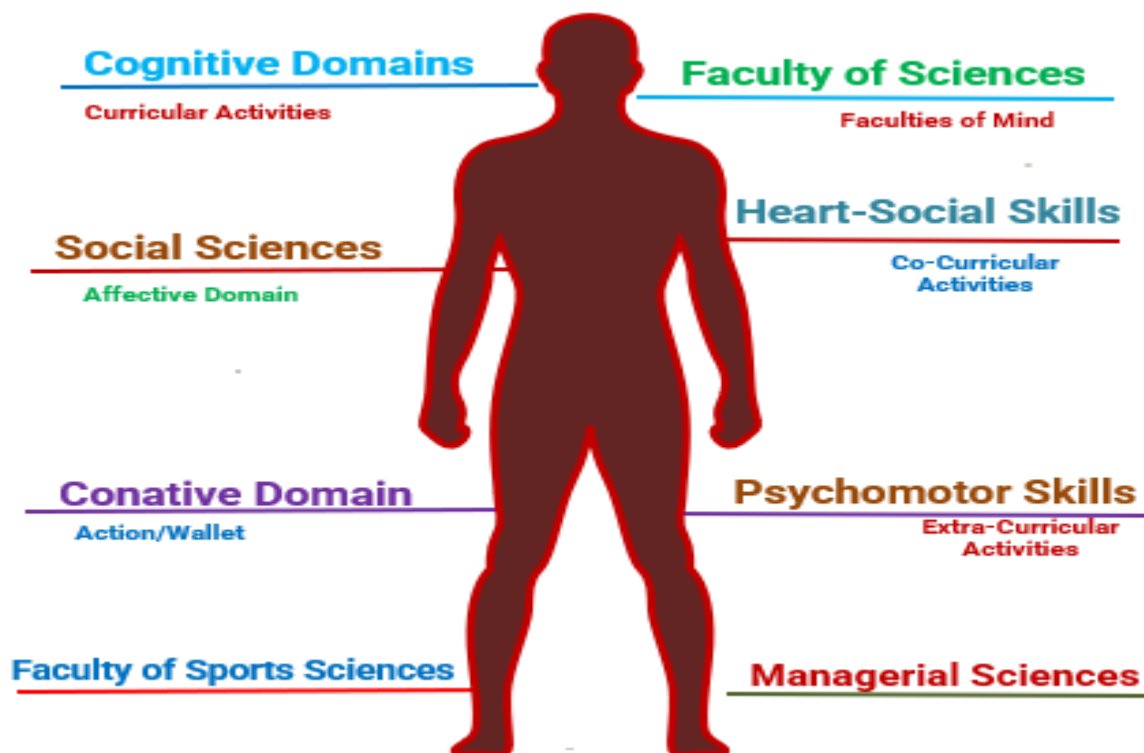


Figure 4.

Development of Enterprising Students through CA, CCA and ECA-A holistic view

Source: Crystallization of empirical evidence

Likewise, the conative domain/psychomotor domain corresponds to extra-curricular activities which can be best taught by Faculty of Sports Sciences and Managerial departments. These ingredients if infused in curricula leads to balanced individual whose propensity to start new ventures is higher.

CONCLUSION

The importance of entrepreneurship education is widely accepted idea throughout the world amidst the fact that universities have hitherto achieved little understanding to infuse it into curriculum. This study offered a holistic perspective of designing entrepreneurship curriculum through analyzing the various components of curriculum such curricular activities, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The study based on the three-tier grounded theory-based analysis indicates that universities have hitherto hard times to catch up with incessant policy churn by HEC, HED, NCRC, CSRC, CM office, PM office, Parliament, CCI, Courts and Accreditation councils. There is evidence to suggest the existence of stakeholder overload which has caused organizational change fatigue or organizational lethargy in regards to design of curriculum in general and entrepreneurship education in this particular instance. The study concludes that students' soft skills need to be developed further in the public universities of District Swat through exposure opportunities, training companies and sports. The study contributes by offering a substantive level theory in the form of a logic diagram to offer propositions with regards to designing curriculum which develops the mind (CA-Sciences), Heart (CCA-Social Sciences) and Action (ECA-Sports) corresponding to Cognitive, Affective and Conative / Psychomotor domains. The

study calls for adoption of business generation models to fulfill the demands of New Public Management-Oriented sustainability as well argues for horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum through freezing of curriculum and then assessing its performance after graduation of at least one batch of students. Finally, no study is perfect in all aspects as there are always limitations (Ellis & Levy, 2009). The study acknowledges the limitations of jurisdiction of study i.e., District Swat and recommends the conduct of further studies with longitudinal studies using mix methods research design to further improve the findings of the study by increasing the sample size, securing funding for conduct to detailed data collection and analysis to combat the issue of designing curriculum for grooming entrepreneurs.

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Consent to Participate: Yes

Consent for publication and Ethical approval: Because this study does not include human or animal data, ethical approval is not required for publication. All authors have given their consent.

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