

Understanding Efficacy of Workbook for Development of Entrepreneurial Mindset, Skill-set and practices

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Abstract - Workbooks have been utilized successfully in a variety of settings. The purpose of the study was to implement and examine the effectiveness of a workbook in Entrepreneurial mindset and skill set development. It targets a change in mindset essential to achieve this desired outcome. Despite challenges due to Covid-19 pandemic, the preliminary results of workbook with a group of learners at college level, suggest that workbooks may have potential in bringing about that mindset shift of becoming a 'job-giver' rather than being a 'job-seeker'.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Mindset, self-directed, workbook, Entrepreneurship, Skills, Futuristic job-creator, job-giver

1. Introduction:

Workbook as a self-learning tool gives adequate freedom to learners to learn at their time & pace and access some relevant material as and when required, as well as journal their learning effectively.

With the sudden outburst of Covid-19 in 2020-2021, a challenge was thrown upon us to effectively deliver the Entrepreneurial mindset and skills development course in colleges of Kamrup district of Assam. The program was reworked to be conducted in online mode but in some areas the challenge of poor connectivity was a bottleneck in conducting the program effectively. As a solution it was thought to introduce a workbook. This experiment was conducted to test the efficacy of such a workbook in bringing about the desired outcomes. For the experiment a group of students from J N College in Boko, Kamrup, Assam were offered to participate, where the challenges were felt most in terms of net connectivity and regularity of online classes. The group consisted of 15 students of various graduation degree level students in their 2nd and 3rd year of graduation.

The confidence for it comes from similar experiments done in two settings with a small number of children from underprivileged rural and semi-urban backgrounds done in the previous year. In these experiments some tasks were given to the participants which they had to complete in their own time. the results of that experiment were encouraging and this time a complete workbook was designed for the experiment. Participants' reflections were captured periodically and at the end a focused group discussion was done with all the participants to understand their experiences and views.

2. Purpose of the study:

To understand Efficacy of Workbook as a Self-learning tool for Development of Entrepreneurial Mindset & Skill-set and related practices

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3. Literature review:

Literature review about the efficacy of Workbook in learning showed that many researchers talk about the effectiveness of Workbook in learning Entrepreneurship and about their structure. *Utami et al, 2020* in their work on *Student workbook use*, reveal that the use of student workbook gives beneficial impact on students' learning.

Earlier researches with regard to relevance and practicability of properly structured workbooks (by Paul Burns, 1989) find that workbooks allow deeper engagement if the material is modular and it should constantly try to get the trainee to apply the skills to their business.

4. About the Workbook:

The workbook provides a foundation of ideas and understandings designed to shape learner thinking and behavior to better appreciate entrepreneurship as a viable career option, and to recognize and develop their own abilities in this regard.

The book provides an overview of the mindset and skill sets to be entrepreneurial and how they can think, plan and run a business to understand its basics.

The book lends completely experiential learning with 'to do' activities that will help learners to understand various concepts of entrepreneurship.

The workbook is divided into 11 modules and each module focuses on developing a mindset or skill as a major focus area. Each module has been designed on an experiential learning approach as proposed by Kolb (McLeod, 2017). In this approach Kolb suggests that, Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages: of

- (1) Having a concrete experience followed by
- (2) Observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to
- (3) The formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then
- (4) used to test a hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

The contents in the workbook has taken a modified approach to suit the requirements of self-learning and precautions

necessary at the time of covid 19 pandemic.

The present workbook is an initial step towards the learner's entrepreneurial journey.

5. Methodology:

It was designed to be a qualitative study. The participants were given the book in pdf format. They were also supported by small 2 to 3 minute videos on overview of the workbook and videos for each module was given, which explained what was to be done in the module and the tasks in it in their mother tongue (Assamese). Each module had a reflection tool (KWL tool) for them to fill up and they were instructed to share at least thrice during the experiment. During the course, they were asked to attend a contact program with their professor every fortnight, in which they were asked to share updates and get their queries resolved by the Professors and curriculum team members. At the end of Experiment a focused group discussion was done to understand their experiences and feedback. A similar discussion was also done with facilitators to understand their point of view.

The course design was such that it required them to plan and start a business and creation of business was one important pillar to consider the success of the program.

Process can be divided in 4 stages-

Stage 1 -

- Developing the Workbook
- Deploying with a cohort of 15 students in Boko College, Kamrup, Assam

Stage 2 -

- Learners were given Video based instructions on the various chapters and tasks
- Facilitators consolidated learning of students, only thrice in the whole program

Stage 3 -

- A self-reflection tool (KWL chart) was used to gauge learning

Stage 4 -

- Business Plan creation
- Running Actual business

For each module, there was a reflection tool given in the workbook in the form of a K-W-L chart. Participants were asked to fill in their responses/ reflections after completing the module. The participants had freedom to fill in their responses in a language they were most comfortable in expressing. Most of the chose to do it in Assamese. A few KWL Charts shared by Participants after the module on 'Being Entrepreneurial' read as:

I have learnt that mindset and skills like self-confidence, self-belief and patience are necessary for success - Participant 1

To become an entrepreneur we have to develop few set of skills: leadership, creativity, ambitious, goal focused, hardworking, risk taker. - Participant 2

I have learnt that to be successful we have to acquire the following qualities: honesty, accountability, values, problem solving, motivation and so on. - Participant 3

At the end of the program duration, a focused group discussion was done to review the complete program, share understanding, and reflect upon the program in parts and as a whole. The experiences and reflections by students were compared to their reflections and facilitators' sharing. A

comprehensive understanding of the program and learners were thus generated.

6. Outcomes:

The reflections by students and facilitators, the sharings in FGD and otherwise give an impression that the Workbook and the method -

- was effective, despite several challenges, as reported by Students and facilitators
- "Change in perspective was very important which this program did, overall confidence has increased" - shared by a Facilitator
- 4 students started their business.

7. Findings

Having analysed the interviews and reflections we found that the workbook has satisfactorily served the purpose. The participants reflected that:

- the activities were engaging and inspiring,
- The tasks presented were well understood with the aid of the video.
- It (the workbook) helped in thinking about business plans and some were able to start their businesses.

The focused group discussion and learner and facilitator feedback were encouraging and showed that the program had a positive effect on those who were actively engaged throughout the program.

It is useful in places where online training is difficult. It gives adequate flexibility to learners,

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9. Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the workbook has been effective as a self-learning tool with low-touch from facilitators.

From the reflections and sharing it is evident that

- Workbook as a self-learning tool is quite effective
- It gives adequate freedom and flexibility to learners to learn at their time & pace
- Learners independently access relevant material
- Learners recorded their learning in journals but there was a lack of regularity.

During the Program, at least 4 people were able to start their own businesses. The variety of businesses started shows that they were able to follow the core messages in modules like understanding self, understanding customers, identifying opportunities and creative ideation. The 4 learners and their businesses are-

1. Azhar Ali- started a Computer print, Xerox shop, learnt DTP from Youtube and is planning to expand his services
2. Dhritimoni - Bakery business Also helping her brother's business.
3. Amarjyoti - Started with Piggery plans to expand to duckery and goatery

4. Ratul Das - Started with a small scale Vermicompost unit, plans to scale it up.

10. Suggestions:

There were different constraints when this program was being done (mainly related to restrictions due to covid 19 pandemic), and although participants tried to but a good number of them could not join the program and from among who joined some could not share their reflections timely. In further iterations, emphasis can be placed on-

- more number of participants
- regular recording of experiences in Journal.

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