



Exploring How Academic Experiences Shape Entrepreneurial Ambitions of BSBA Marketing Students at Gordon College

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Ambition, Academic Experiences, Entrepreneurship Education, BSBA Marketing Students, Phenomenological Study

Received : 25, June

Revised : 22, July

Accepted: 20, August

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how academic experiences shape the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing students at Gordon College. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were gathered from 15 third- and fourth-year Marketing students through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that classroom learning, experiential activities, faculty mentorship, and participation in entrepreneurship-related events significantly influenced students' entrepreneurial ambitions. Students developed entrepreneurial mindsets, confidence, and practical business skills through business simulations, product-selling activities, and collaborative projects. Family support, personal motivation, and financial aspirations also encouraged entrepreneurial interest, while fear of failure, financial constraints, and business risks emerged as common challenges. The study concludes that meaningful academic experiences play a vital role in fostering entrepreneurial ambition among Marketing students.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial ambition has become an important area of study in higher education because it influences students' willingness to pursue business opportunities and contribute to economic development. Previous studies indicate that entrepreneurship education, experiential learning, mentorship, and institutional support significantly influence entrepreneurial intention and the development of entrepreneurial competencies among students (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1986; Nabi et al., 2017).

Global literature suggests that academic experiences contribute to entrepreneurial development by enhancing students' confidence, opportunity recognition, and practical business skills (Riego de Dios & Asio, 2026). Experiential learning approaches, including business simulations, project-based learning, and real-world exposure, strengthen entrepreneurial mindset and readiness among university students (Kolb, 1984; Sánchez, 2013; Souitaris et al., 2007). In addition, supportive educational environments and institutional guidance positively influence entrepreneurial aspirations and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Ferreira et al., 2012; Urban & Kujinga, 2017).

In the Philippine context, studies emphasize that educational support and practical entrepreneurship experiences contribute to students' entrepreneurial attitudes and career intentions. Entrepreneurship-related academic activities help students develop competencies and preparedness for future entrepreneurial engagement (Laguador, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008; Uy et al., 2015). Despite these findings, limited studies have specifically examined how BSBA Marketing students in public higher education institutions interpret their academic experiences and how these experiences shape their entrepreneurial ambitions. Therefore, this study aims to explore how academic experiences influence the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing students at Gordon College.

This study aims to explore how business education influences the entrepreneurial ambition of College of Business and Accountancy (CBA) students at Gordon College. It seeks to understand how students perceive their academic experiences, exposure to entrepreneurship-related activities, and interactions with mentors in shaping their interest and motivation to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Rather than measuring variables statistically, this study seeks to understand and describe the lived experiences, insights, and perceptions of students regarding how their education affects their entrepreneurial mindset and goals.

1. What experiences within the CBA Marketing program influence students' entrepreneurial ambitions?
2. How do classroom learning, activities, and faculty interactions contribute to students' entrepreneurial mindset?
3. What personal motivations and challenges do marketing students encounter as they develop entrepreneurial ambitions?
4. How do external factors such as family background, peer influence, and community environment affect students' interest in pursuing entrepreneurship?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic experiences influence students' entrepreneurial ambitions by developing their knowledge, skills, and confidence toward entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education exposes students to business concepts and practical learning opportunities that strengthen entrepreneurial intention and interest in pursuing business careers (Souitaris et al., 2007).

Experiential learning also contributes to entrepreneurial development by allowing students to apply classroom knowledge through business simulations, projects, and real-world activities. These experiences help students develop entrepreneurial competencies and decision-making skills (Kolb, 1984).

In addition, faculty mentorship and supportive learning environments encourage students to build confidence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Guidance and academic support increase students' motivation to explore entrepreneurial opportunities and strengthen their entrepreneurial ambitions (Ferreira et al., 2012; Nabi et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991), which explains that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by attitudes, social influences, and perceived behavioral control. Students' entrepreneurial ambitions may be shaped by their perceptions of entrepreneurship, support from peers, instructors, and family, and their confidence in performing entrepreneurial tasks.

The study is also supported by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which emphasizes that learning occurs through direct experience. Activities such as business projects, internships, seminars, and simulations allow students to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Additionally, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) explains that behavior is influenced by personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Mentorship, institutional support, and exposure to entrepreneurial environments can strengthen students' self-efficacy and entrepreneurial confidence.

These theories suggest that academic experiences play an important role in developing entrepreneurial ambition by enhancing students' attitudes, skills, confidence, and intentions toward entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore how academic experiences shape the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing Management students at Gordon College. Phenomenology is appropriate for understanding individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Asio, 2021). According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research aims to describe the essence of participants' experiences through reflection and interpretation.

The participants consisted of fifteen (15) third-year and fourth-year BSBA Marketing Management students enrolled during Academic Year 2025–2026.

Participants were selected using purposive criterion sampling to ensure they possessed experiences relevant to the study. Purposive sampling enables researchers to obtain rich and meaningful data from participants who meet predefined criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions related to academic experiences and entrepreneurial ambitions. The responses were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework to identify and interpret recurring themes and patterns. Thematic analysis is recognized as an effective approach for organizing and interpreting qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Ethical considerations were observed through informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the participants regarding academic experiences, personal motivations, and external influences that shape the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing Management students at Gordon College. The data were collected through qualitative interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, ideas, and experiences.

The findings are organized according to the major themes that emerged from the data. Each theme is supported by participant responses and related literature to provide deeper interpretation.

Experiences Within the CBA Marketing Program

Table 1 presents the findings based on participants' experiences within the CBA Marketing Program and revealed themes explaining how academic and practical experiences influenced their entrepreneurial ambitions.

Table 1: Experiences within the CBA Marketing Program

THEME	SUB-THEME	CODES
Practical Exposure to Business	Experiential Learning	Hands-on selling; Real business exposure; Practice.
	Business Simulation Activities	Business planning; Idea development; Strategy application.
External and Co-curricular Influence	Entrepreneurial Exposure	Learning from entrepreneurs; Inspiration; Real-life insights.
	Limited Engagement	Lack of participation
Academic Influence on Entrepreneurial Thinking	Market-Oriented Thinking	Customer understanding; Strategic thinking.

Development of Entrepreneurial Identity	Entrepreneurial Self- Confidence/Mindset	Self-belief; Confidence; Identity formation; Future orientation.
Influence of Learning Environment	Supportive Learning Environment	Collaboration; Engagement.
Barriers and Reality Check in Entrepreneurship	Perceived Challenges	Difficulty; Stress; Doubt.
	Positive Reinforcement	Success experience.

The findings indicate that academic experiences and practical business **exposure** significantly influenced the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing students at Gordon College. Participants identified entrepreneurship-related activities, business simulations, product selling, and academic projects as experiences that strengthened business knowledge, confidence, and interest in entrepreneurial pursuits.

Students also reported that coursework and collaborative learning enhanced decision-making, communication, and problem-solving skills while exposing them to the realities and challenges of entrepreneurship. These experiences contributed to a more informed and realistic understanding of entrepreneurial practice.

The findings support Experiential Learning Theory, which suggests that entrepreneurial competencies are developed through active participation and reflection on experience rather than through theoretical instruction alone (Kolb, 1984). Similarly, entrepreneurship education and experiential activities have been shown to strengthen entrepreneurial intention, self-confidence, and business readiness among university students (Nabi et al., 2017; Law & Jaafar, 2024).

Overall, the results suggest that the CBA Marketing program contributes to entrepreneurial ambition by combining academic learning with practical experiences that promote entrepreneurial mindset, confidence, and preparedness for future business engagement.

Classroom Learning, Activities, and Faculty Interactions

Table 2 presents the analysis of participants' responses regarding classroom learning, activities, and faculty interactions and revealed themes explaining how these experiences contributed to the development of students' entrepreneurial mindset.

Table 2: Classroom Learning, Activities, and Faculty Interactions

THEME	SUB-THEME	CODES
Role of Classroom Learning in Entrepreneurial Development	Foundational Knowledge	Business basics; Marketing knowledge; Financial literacy; Business operations.
	Critical and Strategic Thinking	Problem-solving; Opportunity identification; Market analysis; Strategic thinking.
	Theory-Practice Gap	Learning by doing; Limited to theory; Need for application.
Experiential and Active Learning Approaches	Experiential Learning Activities	Product selling; Business simulation; Product launching; Field visits.
	Applied Learning Methods	Case studies; Business plan projects; Presentations; Role playing.
	Real-World Exposure	Interviews with businesses; Real-life problem solving.
Influence of Instructors and Mentors	Knowledge and Experience Sharing	Real-life examples; Personal experiences; Practical insights.
	Motivation and Inspiration	Encouragement; Confidence-building; Risk-taking mindset.
	Limited Instructor Impact	Lack of influence; Minimal engagement.
Role of Feedback in Idea Development	Constructive Feedback	Identifying strengths and weaknesses; Improvement suggestions.
	Reflective Thinking	Self-reflection; Idea evaluation; Critical analysis.
	Decision Guidance	Refining ideas; Making ideas realistic and practical.
Collaborative Learning and Team Dynamics	Idea Sharing and Diversity	Brainstorming; Different perspectives; Creativity.

Teamwork and Communication Skills	Coordination; Cooperation; Communication.
Leadership and Problem-Solving	Decision-making; Conflict resolution; Responsibility.
Challenges in Group Work	Unequal participation; Dependency on members.

The findings revealed that classroom learning, experiential activities, faculty guidance, and collaborative learning contributed to the development of students' entrepreneurial mindset and ambitions. Participants described classroom instruction as an important foundation for acquiring business knowledge, strengthening strategic thinking, and improving their ability to identify opportunities and solve business-related problems. At the same time, students emphasized that theoretical learning became more meaningful when combined with practical application and real-world business experiences.

Experiential activities such as business simulations, case studies, product-selling activities, presentations, and field exposure further enhanced entrepreneurial thinking by allowing students to apply concepts in realistic settings. Faculty interactions also emerged as influential, as instructors provided guidance, practical insights, and motivation that encouraged entrepreneurial confidence and decision-making. These characteristics are reflected on the past study of Asio and Riego de Dios (2019) where they describe what a well-qualified educator is about. Collaborative learning experiences strengthened communication, teamwork, leadership, and reflective thinking, although challenges in group participation were also observed.

These findings support the view that entrepreneurship education becomes more effective when theoretical knowledge is integrated with active and experiential learning approaches (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Likewise, classroom-based entrepreneurial education has been shown to strengthen entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking, and opportunity recognition among students (Wardana et al., 2020). The findings also align with experiential learning perspectives, which suggest that entrepreneurial competencies are developed through active engagement, reflection, and application of knowledge in authentic contexts (Kolb, 1984).

Overall, the findings suggest that classroom learning and faculty interactions shape entrepreneurial ambition by creating opportunities for students to connect academic knowledge with practical business experiences and entrepreneurial decision-making.

Personal Motivation and Challenges

Table 3 presents the analysis of participants' responses regarding personal motivation and challenges and revealed themes explaining how these factors influenced students' entrepreneurial ambitions.

Table 3: Personal Motivation and Challenges

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Personal Motivations for Entrepreneurship	Family Influence	Parents as inspiration; Early selling experience; Family business background.
	Desire for Independence	Being own boss; Decision-making freedom; Autonomy.
	Financial Aspirations	Financial independence; Steady income; Wealth; Stability.
	Personal Growth and Purpose	Ambition; Self-challenge; Dreams; Fulfillment.
	Uncertainty or Lack of Motivation	Unsure; Lack of clear motivation.
Entrepreneurial Strengths	Risk-Taking Ability	Willingness to take risks; Courage; Trying opportunities.
	Positive Traits and Work Ethic	Hardworking; Determination; Patience; Persistence.
	Cognitive and Creative Skills	Creativity; Problem-solving; Planning; Critical thinking.
	Growth Mindset	Willingness to learn; Adaptability; Self-improvement.
Perceived Challenges and Fears	Fear of Failure	Failure; Business not growing; Self-doubt.
	Financial Risks	Loss of money; Instability; Lack of resources.
	Responsibility and Pressure	Managing business; Decision-making; Stress.
	Competition and Uncertainty	Strong competitors; Unclear direction.
Moments of Doubt and Realization	Self-Doubt and Skill Concern	Lack of confidence; Questioning ability.

	Experience of Failure	Failed projects; Low sales; Rejection.
	Awareness of Business Difficulty	Realization of complexity; Risks.
	Resilience and Reframing	Motivation after doubt; Learning mindset.
Coping Strategies and Resilience	Positive Mindset	Optimism; Focusing on goals; Self-motivation.
	Learning from Experience	Reflection; Improvement; Learning from mistakes.
	Seeking Support	Advice from mentors; Guidance from others.
	Strategic Action	Planning; Problem-solving; Breaking tasks down.

The findings revealed that personal motivations, individual strengths, perceived challenges, and resilience played a significant role in shaping the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing students. Participants identified financial independence, self-development, achievement, and future business aspirations as key motivations for pursuing entrepreneurship. Students also recognized personal strengths such as creativity, determination, adaptability, communication skills, and risk-taking as factors that supported their entrepreneurial goals.

At the same time, participants reported challenges including fear of failure, financial uncertainty, competition, lack of experience, and doubts about their entrepreneurial capability. This is aligned with the study of Bautista et al., (2024) where students have some degree of depression, anxiety, and stress in their college lives. Despite these concerns, many students viewed setbacks as opportunities for reflection and improvement and described using positive thinking, planning, self-reflection, and seeking support to remain committed to their goals.

These findings support Social Cognitive Theory, which suggests that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by self-belief and the perceived ability to manage challenges (Bandura, 1997). Likewise, entrepreneurship education literature indicates that resilience and self-efficacy strengthen entrepreneurial persistence despite uncertainty (Nabi et al., 2017). Research also suggests that adopting a growth mindset enables students to interpret challenges and failures as learning opportunities that support entrepreneurial development (Dweck, 2006).

Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial ambition is shaped not only by academic experiences but also by students' internal motivations,

personal strengths, and their ability to adapt and remain resilient when facing entrepreneurial challenges.

External Influences (Family, Peers, Community, and Digital Environment)

Table 4 presents the analysis of participants' responses regarding external influences and revealed themes explaining how family, peers, community, and digital environments shaped students' entrepreneurial views and ambitions.

Table 4: Influences (Family, Peers, Community, and Digital Environment)		
Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Family Influence on Entrepreneurial Views	Entrepreneurial Background	Family; Business; Early exposure; Business environment.
	Values Formation	Hard work; Responsibility; Persistence.
	Support and Encouragement	Moral support; Advice; Motivation.
	Limited or Negative Influence	No influence; Discouragement; Lack of support.
Peer Influence on Entrepreneurial Ambitions	Positive Peer Support	Idea sharing; Encouragement; Collaboration.
	Competitive Motivation	Healthy competition; Inspiration from peers.
	Negative Peer Influence	Lack of trust; Discouragement; Criticism.
	Independence from Peer Influence	Self-reliance; Ignoring opinions.
Influence of Significant Individuals	Inspirational Figures	Parents; Mentors; Teachers; Successful individuals.
	Guidance and Role Modeling	Advice; Shared experiences; Real-life lessons.
	Mixed Influence	Both encouragement and discouragement.
	Absence of Influence	No significant individuals.

Community and Environmental Influence	Exposure to Local Businesses	Small businesses; Real-life examples.
	Socioeconomic Environment	Lack of business exposure; Economic background.
	Perceived Opportunities	Entrepreneurship as viable career.
	Environmental Limitations	Lack of support; Limited opportunities.
Digital and Social Media Influence	Exposure to Success Stories	Online entrepreneurs; Business success stories.
	Learning and Innovations	Marketing strategies; New ideas; Digital tools.
Family Influence on Entrepreneurial Views	Motivation and Inspiration	Encouragement; Aspiration; Influence.
	Limited or No Influence	No impact; Low engagement.

The findings revealed that family, peers, mentors, community exposure, and digital environments significantly influenced the entrepreneurial ambitions of BSBA Marketing students. Participants described family support and exposure to entrepreneurial activities as important factors that shaped their attitudes toward business and encouraged them to consider entrepreneurship as a future career path. Peer interactions and academic networks also contributed by providing motivation, shared experiences, and opportunities for collaboration.

Students further emphasized that observing entrepreneurs through social media, community activities, and real-life business environments influenced their perceptions of entrepreneurial success and strengthened their interest in entrepreneurial engagement. Exposure to external support systems helped students develop confidence and broaden their understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges.

These findings support Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that behavior and career aspirations are influenced by interactions between personal experiences and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Previous studies similarly found that social support and entrepreneurial environments positively influence entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among students (Nabi et al., 2017). In addition, exposure to entrepreneurial role models and social networks has been associated with stronger entrepreneurial ambition and greater willingness to pursue entrepreneurial careers (Ferreira et al., 2012). Asio (2025; 2023) and Riego de Dios and Guevara (2024) also showed that family relationships and parental self-efficacy contribute significantly on a students' overall outcomes.

Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial ambition is strengthened not only through academic experiences but also through social and environmental influences that encourage entrepreneurial confidence, aspiration, and long-term entrepreneurial engagement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings aligned with the research objectives, the study concludes that the CBA Marketing program effectively develops students' entrepreneurial ambition by integrating theoretical knowledge with practical and experiential learning. Hands-on activities and business-related tasks help students better understand real-world business operations. Classroom learning, when supported by interactive teaching methods and active faculty engagement, strengthens students' entrepreneurial mindset by enhancing their confidence, critical thinking, and ability to evaluate business ideas.

The study also concludes that students' entrepreneurial ambition is strongly influenced by personal factors such as motivation, strengths, resilience, and their ability to overcome challenges. Despite fears and uncertainties, students are able to persist due to their growth mindset and determination. In addition, external influences such as family, peers, community, and digital platforms play a significant role in shaping students' entrepreneurial perceptions by providing support, inspiration, and exposure to entrepreneurship.

Overall, entrepreneurial ambition among CBA Marketing students is shaped by the interaction of academic experiences, personal characteristics, and social and environmental influences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the study recommends that the institution further strengthen experiential learning by incorporating more real-world business activities such as live selling, business simulations, incubators, and partnerships with industry professionals to enhance students' practical skills in entrepreneurship.

Faculty members are encouraged to continue using interactive and experiential teaching strategies such as case studies, simulations, collaborative projects, and consistent constructive feedback to further develop students' critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making skills.

For student development, the study recommends strengthening support systems that promote resilience, confidence, and motivation through mentorship programs, guidance, and opportunities that help students overcome fear of failure and build entrepreneurial readiness.

In terms of social and environmental influence, the institution should expand exposure opportunities through seminars, workshops, networking events, and engagement with entrepreneurs, as well as encourage active participation in digital platforms and entrepreneurial communities to broaden students' awareness and inspiration.

For future researchers, it is recommended to explore additional factors such as access to capital, technological readiness, and cultural influences, as well

as conduct studies in different programs or institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial development.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study was limited to BSBA Marketing Management students at Gordon College and focused only on exploring how academic experiences shape entrepreneurial ambitions. Future researchers may expand the scope by including students from different academic programs or institutions and examining additional factors that may influence entrepreneurial ambition. Further studies may also use larger samples or different research approaches to provide broader and deeper insights into students' entrepreneurial development.

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