

Effects of Collaborative Learning in a Japanese Higher Education Entrepreneurship Course: Developing Self-Efficacy and Confidence

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ABSTRACT

Diversity and entrepreneurship are key drivers for a better society. Many business schools emphasize entrepreneurship education using diversified class profiles. Entrepreneurship education in Japan is under development and the effects of diversity have received little attention. This study examines how entrepreneurship education influences MBA students and their groups with diverse members in developing a business plan. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 students from diverse backgrounds. The results revealed the following. (1) Over 80% of the international and Japanese students improved their entrepreneurial awareness and over 86% considered becoming an entrepreneur. (2) The course helped students recognize the importance of intercultural communication and global perspectives in group work. (3) Students in successful groups had equal duties and autonomy, maintained cooperation with group members on the project, and appreciated each other. They also developed self-efficacy and confidence in preparing business plans with international members. Entrepreneurship education with diversified class profiles seems to be effective, although further research is required.

Keywords: Diversity, Entrepreneurship education, MBA, Collaborative learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic and social development by fostering economic efficiency, innovation, and employment (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Teachers and students in business schools recognize the importance of entrepreneurship education, and by offering this, educational institutions are able to enable students to become entrepreneurs and use entrepreneurial skills in their careers (Konig, 2016).

The global business marketplace is open. A global society requires professionals to manage diversity in meeting the needs of various cultural customers (Leask &

Bridge, 2013; Killick, 2006). In addition, internationalization and diversity in education is expanding (Teichler, 2004). In many countries, the backgrounds of students in higher education enhance cultural diversity (Banks, 2007). The demand for entrepreneurship education and student diversity in business schools has grown (Deuchar, 2004; Keogh & Galloway, 2004; Tan & Ng, 2006; Vos, Celik & Vries, 2016). It is important for students to develop cultural awareness in a diverse setting (Avramenko, 2012; Fournier & Ineson, 2014; Nga & Mun, 2013). As such, interaction in multicultural teams is important for entrepreneurship programs in higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 DIVERSITY

MaGrath, Berdahl and Arrow (1995) define diversity as demographic differences, such as gender, race, ethnicity, or nationality among group members. These differences are what constitute one's cultural identity. In other words, people who share a cultural identity have the same language, communication style, rules, and perceptions (Larkey, 1996).

Groups that are racially, ethnically, and/or nationally diverse produce both positive (Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991; Fiedler, 1966; Ruhe & Eatman, 1997; Watson, Juma & Michaelsen, 1993) and negative results (Fiedler, Meuwese & Oonk, 1961; Shaw, 1983; Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992). Ely and Thomas (2001) state that there is limited empirical research on how diversity is actually considered in work group functions. However, in a recent study, Hajro, Gibson and Pudelko (2017) studied 48 teams from 11 companies and found that engagement-focused diversity groups in organizations enhance work processes. This assumes that cultural differences increase diverse knowledge, perspectives, and insights.

2.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

The definition of entrepreneurship is two-fold. First, entrepreneurship includes personal development, creativity, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and dynamism—all are necessary to becoming *entrepreneurial* (Lackéus, 2015). Second, it applies to recognizing opportunities, business development, self-employment, creative ventures, and growth as an entrepreneur (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Mahieu, 2006; QAA, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education has become widespread among higher education institutions since the entrepreneurial market has been expanding (Dao, 2018; Kuratko, 2005). In 1985, there were 210 business schools with entrepreneurship courses in the US. This grew to 351 by 2011—an increase of 67% (Zhang, 2011). Inada (2018a)

analyzed entrepreneurship educational programs, courses, and incubation centers in the top 10 business schools, as ranked by the Financial Times Global MBA, 2017. It is not surprising that all of the top business schools, including INSEAD; Stanford Graduate School of Business; University of Pennsylvania: Wharton; Harvard Business School; University of Cambridge: Judge; London Business School; Columbia Business School; IE Business School; University of Chicago: Booth; and IESE Business School, have entrepreneurship educational programs. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship in their brochures and websites and all have entrepreneurship incubation centers.

Mwasalwiba (2010) conducted a systematic journal review on entrepreneurship. He found that most entrepreneurship programs include the following nine subjects: marketing, finance, idea generation, managing growth, organization and team building, new venture creation, risk and rationality, small and medium enterprise management, and business plan creation. Creating a business plan is one of most common subjects in entrepreneurship education (Honing, 2004; Solomon, 2007), and requires various skills, such as marketing, finance, and management. Many business schools encourage students to join business plan competitions organized by their business schools, governments, incubators, and companies. Group work in collaborative learning is one teaching method that is widely recognized in many disciplines as an important educational tool for teaching graduate students (Drake et al., 2006; Gatfield, 1999; Hughes & Jones, 2011; Lejk & Wyvill, 2001; Sharp, 2006). Learning in groups allows learners to take advantage of their fellow members' strengths (Snyder, 2009; Waters-Hasler & Napier, 2002), while testing their own abilities in a safe educational environment. Entrepreneurship education needs to include a practical component for actual business markets.

2.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN JAPAN

A survey conducted by the Nihon Keizai Shinbun newspaper (Nikkei Weekly, 1999) shows that approximately 25% of 350 Japanese private and public universities offer entrepreneurship courses and more than one hundred courses are currently in development. Inada (2018a) reveals that only 7 out of 23 Japanese business schools (30%), from the professional business school list of the Japanese Ministry of Education in 2017, offer an entrepreneurship program. Entrepreneurship education in Japan is under development and receives little attention. Moreover, only 11 business schools in Japan, representing 48% of the MBA schools, offer the course in English and are open to international students. It is clear that there has been little entrepreneurship education involving diverse student groups in English language

MBA schools, even though the World Bank (2018) ranked Japan as having the world's third largest gross domestic product (GDP). One possible reason could be that the effects of entrepreneurship education are not clear.

2.4 THE EFFECTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Research on the effects of entrepreneurship education in higher education is scant (Cox et al., 2002; European Commission, 2012; Hill & O'Connell, 1998). Many researchers recognize the importance of assessing the effects of entrepreneurship education (Block & Stumpf, 1992; Curran & Stanworth, 1989; Gibb, 1987; Konig, 2016; Storey, 2000; Young, 1997). Lejk and Wyvill (2001) insist on the need for an in-depth understanding of how entrepreneurship education contributes to students' entrepreneurial behavior, and how effective education inspires students to pursue careers in entrepreneurship.

Inada (2018b) examined the effects of entrepreneurial competency (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) in entrepreneurship education in a business school in Spain. The school offers entrepreneurship education for international students from over 70 countries. Twenty-six MBA graduates participated in a questionnaire survey. Results revealed statistically significant differences in skills and attitudes before and after the entrepreneurship program. However, there was no significant difference in knowledge. In another study, Inada (2019) found that 4 out of 26 students (15%) chose to become entrepreneurs after completing an entrepreneurship program in a business school. This suggests that entrepreneurial education does encourage students to become entrepreneurs.

Cattaneo et al. (2015) insist that when international and local students work together, they become equipped to work in teams, although some experience difficulties interacting with different cultures. Minola et al. (2016) added that higher international standards help students' progress on the entrepreneurial ladder. Inada (2018c) analyzed the effect of entrepreneurship education on diverse members of graduate business schools in Japan using the KH Coder text-mining tool. This tool visualizes concepts in a large text dataset and creates a collocation network of linear connections. Results showed that class participation and teamwork are important. Both Japanese and international students tend to engage more in class discussions and participate more in group work. However, perception of the sessions, aspirations to become an entrepreneur, and course objectives differed by nationality. International students focused only on certain sessions, such as business models, marketing, and entrepreneurship, while Japanese students focused on a larger variety of sessions. International students thought that being an entrepreneur is difficult, while Japanese students thought that becoming an entrepreneur would be a career option.

Furthermore, international students focused on gaining employment in Japan, whereas Japanese students focused on international collaborative learning experience and improving their English language skills. Despite the progress on empirical research in Japan, the effects of entrepreneurship education with diverse members remain an under-researched area.

2.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The purpose of this study is to examine how entrepreneurship education influences students and their groups with diverse members to prepare a business plan.

H1. Entrepreneurship education with diverse members affects students' learning.

H2. The influence of group members affects students' perceptions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participants have taken an entrepreneurship course in an MBA program offered by a Japanese Business School. The aim of the course was to help groups of students with diverse members create a business plan and participate in business plan competitions, and also inculcate in them an entrepreneurial mindset and behavior. They formed five separate groups and developed business plans for the following: 1) lunch box service, 2) dating service, 3) AI medical service, 4) Thai travel agency, and 5) communication incubator. The participants were made up of twenty-two students (61% male, 39% female) enrolled in entrepreneurship courses. They were from 11 countries, aged 20 to 40 years old. The age distribution was: 20s – 68%, 30s – 18%, 40s – 14%. Five Japanese students had more than 10 years of work experience, and 17 international students (of 11 nationalities) had never worked full-time or had fewer than 3 years of work experience. The regional affiliations were: Asia–68%, North or South America – 14%, Europe – 9%, and Africa – 9%. The nationalities were: Japan – 24%, China and Thailand–14%, Indonesia and United States 9%. Philippines, Commonwealth of Dominica, Denmark, France, Liberia, and Cameroon each comprised 5% of the sample.

3.2 MEASURES

Semi-structured interviews were conducted from June to July 2017. The MBA students were asked to provide personal background information regarding education and careers, and their purpose and expected outcome for attending classes. Before beginning the interview, the author explained to each student that the interview would not affect the student's grade. He/she then received permission from each interviewee

to record and transcribe the interview for analysis. After making brief notes and highlighting keywords from the transcript, a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013) was done to examine social, personal, and other factors. Osgood (1974a, 1974b) and Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) conducted comparisons of cultural commonalities and differences across the globe. In this study, the data is coded into different categories, the commonalities and differences across participants are examined, and insights are identified. In addition, the interview transcripts were analyzed using the modified grounded theory approach (M-GTA), developed by Kinoshita (1999, 2003, 2007). This method emphasizes the importance of human viewpoints. An analytic worksheet includes concept names, definitions, variations on specific examples, and theoretical memos. It aims to discover general concepts of the minimum unit without coding data word by word. Then, the relationship between the generated concept and the category is clarified. Finally, a diagram is created which includes descriptions of concepts and categories. Thus, the M-GTA assists researchers to analyze participants' manuscripts and sort the concepts derived from the analysis.

4. RESULTS

Results reveal that 1) over 80% of the students believed that the class increased their entrepreneurial awareness and over 86% considered becoming an entrepreneur as one of their future career options after taking the course, 2) the course helped students recognize the importance of each member's role in a diverse group, enhance cross-cultural communication skills, and achieve language efficiency, 3) students in successful groups have equal duties and autonomous actions, maintain cooperation with group members on the project, and appreciate group members. They then develop self-efficacy and confidence in preparing business plans with international members.

As shown in Table 1, the percentage and number of local (Japanese) and international students before and after the course are described for each question. All Japanese students have work experience, but only 29% of the international students in the course have more than three years work experience. In terms of language ability, only 20% of the Japanese students have advanced English skills. The Japanese business school provides MBA courses in Japanese, which the Japanese students generally enroll in, except for collaborative courses with international students, which are in English. Therefore, it is challenging the Japanese students to participate in an English entrepreneurship course. On the other hand, international students take all courses in English. Although most international students are not native English

speakers, they have sufficient English language abilities. Moreover, about half of the international students passed the official Japanese examination at advanced level, considered trilingual.

Only one Japanese student with experience as an entrepreneur had written a business plan before the MBA program. Half of the international students had experience creating a business plan as undergraduates. However, those plans were more focused on the business concept, and did not include a deep dive into marketing, finance, and entrepreneurial awareness. Only 12% of the international students had participated in a business competition before the course. About 20% of the Japanese and international students had some entrepreneurial experience. The majority of the classmates had not taken an entrepreneurship course, including writing and presenting a business plan in a competition.

Since this English-based entrepreneurship course was this Japanese business school's first attempt, most of the students (80% of the Japanese students and 35% of the international ones) attended the course based on recommendations by their professors. Some were interested in the course after checking the course syllabus (20% and 53% of the Japanese and international students, respectively), while 12% of the international students wanted to receive credits for the course. Regarding their expected future careers after finishing the MBA program, most Japanese students (80%) did not consider a career change; only one person aspired to become an entrepreneur. With regard to international students, 71% wanted to work in Japan, while the remaining 29% wanted to go back to their home countries and work at a Japanese company or in a job related to Japan.

After the course, all international students and most Japanese students (80%) felt that they would be comfortable constructing a business plan. Moreover, most international students (88%) and some Japanese students (60%) recognized that their awareness of entrepreneurship had increased. In other words, over 80% of the international and Japanese students increased their entrepreneurial awareness. All international students considered becoming an entrepreneur as one of their career options, however, only 40% of the Japanese students thought of themselves as entrepreneurs in their future careers. That means over 86% of the international and Japanese students wanted to be entrepreneurs.

Table 1: LOCAL STUDENTS (JAPANESE) AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE COURSE (THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS)

	() number of students	
Before the course	Local students (Japanese)	International students
Work experience	100% (5)	29% (5)
High Language ability (English/ Japanese)	20% (1)	47% (8)
Making a business plan	20% (1)	47% (8)
Business plan competition experience	0% (0)	12% (2)
Entrepreneur experience	20% (1)	18% (3)
Reason for taking the entrepreneurship course	80% (4) recommendation by professors 20% (1) interest in course syllabus	53% (9) interest in course syllabus 35% (6) recommendation by professors 12% (2) course credits
Expected future career after MBA program	20% (1) entrepreneur 80% (4) no change	71% (12) work in Japan 29% (5) work in home country, but something related to Japan

After a course	Japanese students	International students
Making a business plan	80% (4)	100% (17)
Entrepreneurial awareness	60% (3)	88% (15)
Entrepreneur as a career option	40% (2)	100% (17)

Table 2 presents the differences and similarities between local students (Japanese) and international students. Both groups had difficulty in discussions and group work. For Japanese students, asserting their opinions and interacting with international students was difficult because their regular courses were normally offered in Japanese and only with Japanese classmates. They limited English language comprehension. Japanese felt the international students were actively involved in the discussions. Although the Japanese students had more work experience, they faltered in negotiations at group meetings. On the other hand, the Japanese students thought that

when they discussed with international students, they felt more diverse and closer to the world. They noticed the commonalities between Japanese and international students—that all are human with similar ways of thinking about world issues and solutions.

International students realized that communication styles were quite different. Western students tended to describe the conclusion first, while Japanese students explained the details first and arrived at conclusions at the end. Since most international students did not have work experience, they could not imagine or explain the details of how a company would begin making a product or provide a service when creating a business plan. Sometimes they lost confidence in their ideas. In addition, some international students realized that although they were representatives of their countries, they did not understand their own culture and society. As a result, they started studying the culture and local businesses of their countries.

An entrepreneur from Europe who had launched his business in Japan presented in a course. The international students showed him respect as he started his business from scratch and overcame some legal issues with a Japanese partner. Both the international and Japanese students thought about their own efficacy, saying: “If he can launch his business in Japan, so can I.” Japanese students already had work experience in Japan but they wanted to learn more about the financial aspects to understand his business. After taking the course, both Japanese and international students learned the meaning and importance of intercultural communications and the diversity perspective, entrepreneurial awareness, and confidence. Furthermore, the Japanese students showed stronger motivation to learn English since speaking English became less complex. It was also found that composition of the group and time management are key factors for accomplishing tasks, and international students were found to be making compromises when the amount of time was limited, which influenced the quality of the output.

Table 2: DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN LOCAL STUDENTS (JAPANESE) AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

	Local students (Japanese)	International students
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Group work • Presentation Ex. Assert own opinions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with international 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Group work Ex. Adopt a different communication style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with members

	students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand a speech in English • Negotiate tasks in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without work experience • Explain one's own country • Trust members
Learning	Diversity, similarity	Leadership, self-understanding
Entrepreneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show interest • Self-efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Self-efficacy
After the course: self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve English • Understand intercultural communication • Develop entrepreneurial awareness and confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice importance of group members • Compromise on issue • Understand intercultural communication • Develop entrepreneurial awareness and confidence

Figure 1 illustrates the successes and challenges of the five groups and the appendix shows participant's comments. Group 1 was composed of students from Europe and Asia and got first place in the business competition. Group 2 included students from North America and Asia (including Japan) and received second place. Their success factors were cooperation and project confirmation, equal duties, autonomy outside of the course, and trust in and appreciation of group members. During the process of developing a business plan, they were all responsible in terms of delegating tasks and discussing problems and issues together. The leaders of each group confirmed the direction of their plans with the other members and stated whether they accepted member's opinions and feelings. To achieve their goal of creating the best business plan, they devoted many hours outside class, especially on weekends. During the interviews, many students expressed appreciation for their group members and indicated they would like to have the same group in other assignments.

Group 3 included students from North America, South America, and Asia. All members had strong leadership qualities and were assertive with their opinions, instead of compromising or negotiating for a better solution. As time passed, they stopped talking about the issues with the other members. Most members did not trust each other. However, one student who proposed his idea first, continued to emphasize his opinion and developed a business plan with another member who had a finance background. In the business competition, he demonstrated strong presentation skills and his group received third place. Members in group 4 (a group that both included Japanese and European students) and group 5 (an Asian group included Japanese

students) realized there was a lack of communication in their groups. The Japanese in group 4 were afraid to speak in English, and most of time, the European spoke more Japanese during the project. However, to some extent, some members knew the European led the group on while the European pushed his idea and others did not feel comfortable with his attitude. At the same time, he felt he had not received enough feedback from the members. Group 5 seemed to be very active and planned their schedule well in advance. However, two members disagreed about the business idea and had time constraints in the last stage. Even though both wanted to take advantage of the business plan, they did not discuss the issue face to face due to time constraints. Their business plan was very advanced, but it did not win.

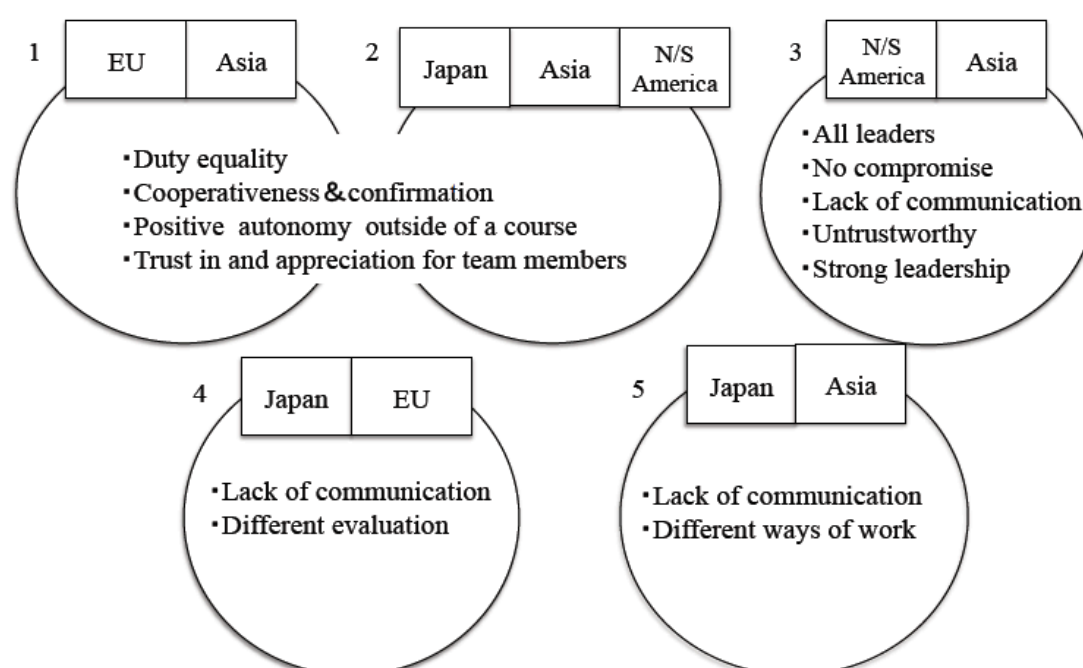


Figure 1: SUCCESS AND CHALLENGE FACTORS OF THE FIVE GROUPS

Figure 2 illustrates the flow of successful groups (groups 1 and 2). The entrepreneurship course offers a business opportunity, research, a business plan, and business plan competition, which are required to understand venture creation. Important qualities for a successful group project include (1) individuals' passion for achieving goals; (2) good communication, teamwork participation, and good relationships with group members; all members being responsible for the project status, choosing a role in the group, and appreciating members; (3) class participation, which practices sharing opinions, helps students be open minded, and experience empathy with classmates and a guest speaker. These attendant challenges foster self-efficacy, which leads to improvement in self-confidence.

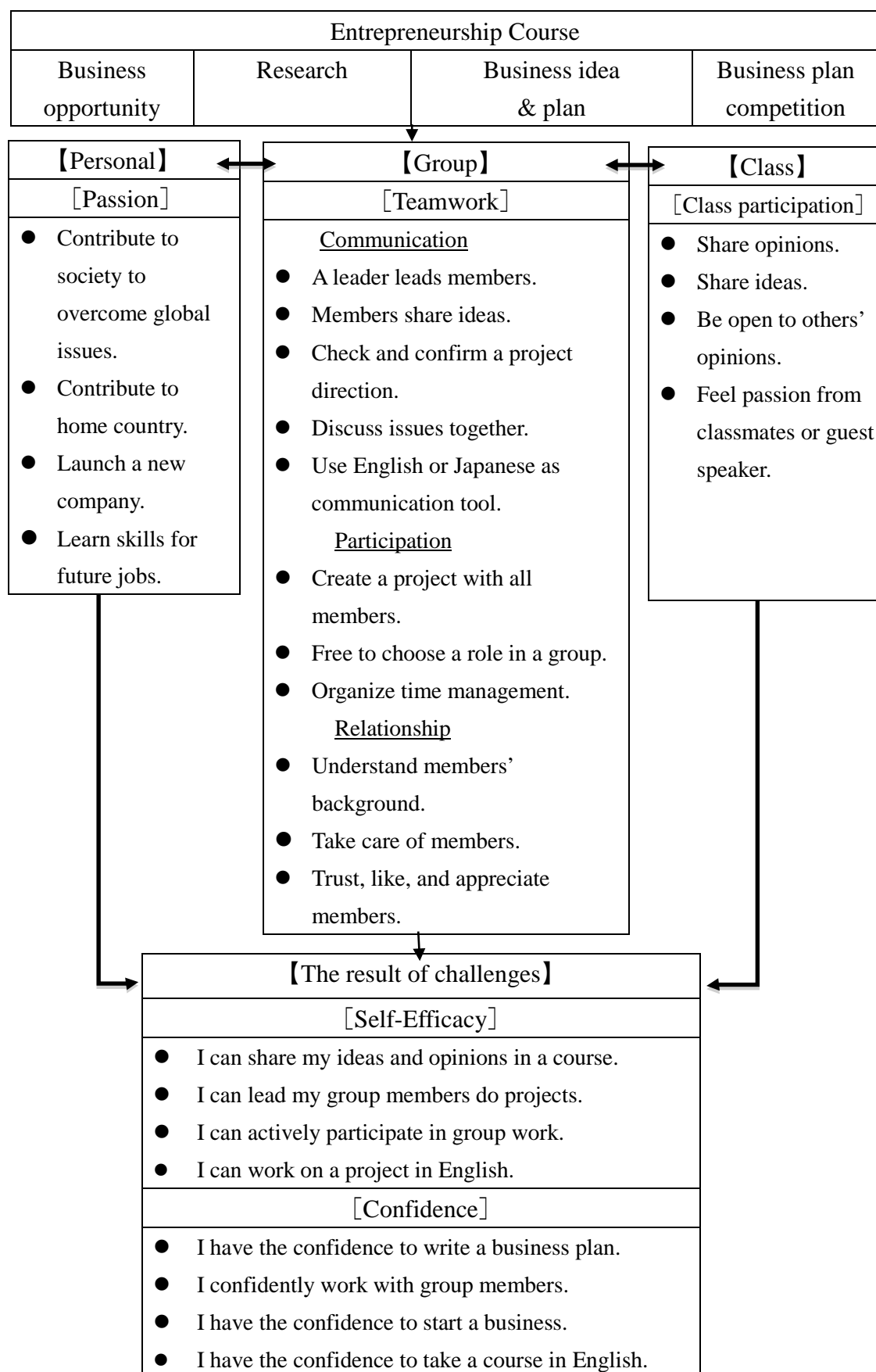


Figure 2: FLOW OF SUCCESSFUL GROUPS (GROUPS 1 AND 2)

5. DISCUSSION

Those in higher education have become increasingly aware that entrepreneurship education with team diversity influences students and encourages them to become entrepreneurs. Firstly, the results show that over 80% of the students believed that the course increased their entrepreneurial awareness, and over 86% of them considered becoming an entrepreneur as one of their future career options after taking the diversified entrepreneurship course. An entrepreneurship course with diverse members could be the first step to becoming *an entrepreneur* (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Mahieu, 2006; QAA, 2012). This supports the research conducted by Inada (2019). In an interview, some students clearly mentioned that he/she wants to become an entrepreneur after taking the entrepreneurship course. After listening to stories of entrepreneurs, students felt they could also become entrepreneurs. Students are passionate about different things, which could lead them to becoming entrepreneurs. This might include being able to provide solutions, contributing to society, and bringing people happiness. Clearly, interacting with entrepreneurs and diverse classmates has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship educators may consider including a session of entrepreneurs' stories. On the other hand, most Japanese students do not lean towards being entrepreneurs. Rather, they would prefer to keep their current jobs. Some reasons may be a preference for stable employment (due to age), or a desire to be "intrapreneurs," individuals who perform entrepreneurial activities within established organizations and companies, at their current company. One Japanese participant had a very clear vision of creating a new business within an already existing company. It would be worthwhile to conduct longitudinal research in the case of Japanese participants. Furthermore, as Cattaneo et al. (2015) and Minola et al. (2016) mention, international environments with diverse members are effective because students face challenges and learning opportunities. Both Japanese and international students learned the importance of intercultural communications and the diversity perspective in discussions and group work. Communication and negotiation styles between Japanese and international students were different. In addition, the Japanese students were struggling more with English as a communication tool. However, such experiences highlight the importance of a language skill. The outcome of the project is influenced not only by individual performance but also by team activities.

Secondly, as found in a previous study, groups that are racially, ethnically, and/or nationally diverse, performed positively in this study. Successful teamwork in higher education occurs through team collaboration and cooperation (Riebe et al., 2010;

Scott-Ladd & Chan, 2008; Yazici, 2005), and groups 1 and 2 demonstrated this in the group assignment. Their success factors were cooperativeness and project confirmation (sharing the project progress in a group), sharing duties equally, autonomy in the course, as well as trust in and appreciation of other group members. During the process of developing a business plan, all members expressed clear goals for creating the best outcome. They all had the responsibility of delegating tasks, but no one forced others to do it; i.e., group members had autonomy. Each group leader initially had business ideas. They consulted with other members regarding the nature of their plans and determined whether to act on members' opinions and feelings. Leaders and members appreciated differences in cultural perspectives and behaviors in group discussions, paying attention to each other's viewpoints. When issues came up, they discussed problems together. It seems certain that communication skills are required to establish successful team management. Both leaders and members were happy to devote many hours outside of class, especially on weekends. Ultimately, they were satisfied with their business plans. Many expressed appreciation for their group members. This indicates that they liked and respected their group members.

In addition, members realized the effectiveness of their collaborative performance, and expressed the value of group work. They began to analyze the differences between successful and unsuccessful cooperation in a business context. Interacting with students from different countries and backgrounds, some international students, who were leaders of the project, realized that they did not know their own culture. One international student was surprised at her lack of knowledge about her home country. However, the experience provided a good opportunity to assess it and increase awareness. It was possible for her to lead group members since leadership skills can be practiced in a group. In other cases, the Japanese indicated that other students' perspectives were different, but the way international students suggested their opinions, engaged with members, and accomplished the same goal, were similar to their own. Japanese students realized their similarities as human beings while they spent time with the international students in this course. With those experiences, students develop self-efficacy and confidence. Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their performance capabilities, based on personal experiences (Bandura, 1994). Entrepreneurship education in a diverse environment provides opportunities to achieve self-efficacy. Students with self-efficacy typically perform better and evaluate themselves positively. Before taking the course, few students had the confidence to write down a business plan and manage a group. However, they built their confidence in their ability to create a business plan, work with group members in English, and become an entrepreneur by collaborating with diverse teams.

On the other hand, some groups (3, 4, and 5) did not work well together. The groups performed poorly in the course. Most members were uncomfortable in their groups due to a lack of communication and trust. The concern about language proficiency, especially for Japanese students in the English MBA program, was a challenge since many Japanese students were afraid to speak English in a course. However, students learned the value of teamwork in developing a business plan. Moreover, some students came to understand the importance of communication styles and approaches. Researchers emphasize that this comprehension requires developed interpersonal skills, as well as problem solving and critical thinking skills required in actual work environments (Mutch, 1998; Riebe et al., 2010; Sotto-Ladd & Chan, 2008). In developing business plans, students conflicted with each other on issues such as expressing opinions, presenting ideas, and communicating in English. Nevertheless, they tried to overcome problems and improve themselves. It was a good opportunity to be challenged in a safe international environment and collaborate with international students. Some students mentioned this experience as one of the triggers to continue experiencing intercultural communication, studying English and engaging with diverse students in group work in another programs. Brunner (1983) advocates the scaffolding theory, which posits that students require appropriate support (scaffolding) to improve learning abilities. Although the barriers students need to overcome are high, scaffolding supports them in taking small steps. In collaborative learning, it is helpful to provide some advice and utilize useful materials when students have difficulty with tasks. Students can thus move ahead, solving issues step-by-step. In the end, they overcome barriers to reach higher levels of comprehension. In other words, students can complete tasks without assistance. The overall findings provide important insights, which relate to how students recognize their areas of improvement and challenges in their skills, while working with international group members in an entrepreneurship course.

6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Japanese business schools have just begun implementing entrepreneurship education utilizing diverse group settings. In the education field, studies on diversity and global business have accelerated. Accordingly, educators may consider a session that illustrates why cross-cultural communication is important, and how groups can work effectively and collaboratively. A student-centered approach to entrepreneurship and educational diversity is quite important. The course design could be developed based on the participants' goals. This study illuminates differences in goals between Japanese students and international students. For example, international students

would like to work in Japan after an MBA program. As Japanese students have ample work experience, they can share their experiences in a course. As for the Japanese, better English language ability may be necessary to improve the quality of communication. The business school does offer some English language courses. It might be possible to collaborate with an English language teacher and include some of the contents of entrepreneurship education as part of the English instruction. This may be a practical way of presenting (in English) jobs and companies, which represent Japan. Moreover, it is an effective way to discern classmates' knowledge of, skills in, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Likewise, international students may introduce their countries' business customs. Such diffused knowledge and skills may lead to advanced international business plans.

Another proposal is to offer more entrepreneurial courses. If the entrepreneurship course were to be extended by another semester, it could include additional practical activities such as collaborating with Japanese companies. Many international companies in Japan have established and expanded their businesses globally. If Japanese business schools are connected to those companies, they can interface with actual company issues and have the opportunity to implement a business plan. Also, they can learn how Japanese and Japanese companies do business and overcome some of the barriers to this issue in a practical way.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Two possible limitations regarding this research study are the small sample size (22) and the few number of students represented. There are limited opportunities for this type of case study in Japan. It is difficult to say the result has reached a universal conclusion. Further, the number of Japanese and international students was unbalanced, and the results may have been different if the numbers were more balanced. Future research may be able to address these limitations.

8. CONCLUSION

The business marketplace has expanded globally. This study contributes by extending the effect of entrepreneurship education with group diversity in the case of Japanese business schools. Currently, not many business schools in Japan offer entrepreneurship programs in English. This study suggests factors to consider in improving entrepreneurial awareness, developing an entrepreneurial mindset among students, and motivating students to choose entrepreneurship as one of their career development goals. The course helped Japanese and international students understand

intercultural communications and the importance of global perspectives in diversity teamwork. Furthermore, students in successful groups have equal duties and autonomy, maintain cooperation with group members on the project, and appreciate members. As a result, they improved their self-efficacy and confidence about managing a business with diverse group members. As such, it is important to develop cultural awareness and teach diverse management in entrepreneurship education. Educators may contemplate the strong impact of this type of education on students' future entrepreneurial awareness and diverse perspectives. Despite controversy surrounding the effects of entrepreneurship education, this research represents an exciting development. The author hopes that the present work will help expand and enhance the fields of diversity and entrepreneurship education.

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

1. Entrepreneur or entrepreneurial

Japanese students

- "I want to be an entrepreneur in the field of sports. I will do it next year."
(Group 2)
- "If he can launch a company, so can I." (Group 2)
- "I would like to use the learnings from this course in my company as an intrapreneur. I would like to make premium Japanese chocolates and export them to Europe." (Group 4)

International students

- "I am thinking more about potential ideas. One day I am going to try them. I am less afraid of starting a business plan. That's how I have changed. I have changed my mindset too." (Group 1)
- "You can solve the problem. It is not necessarily my problem. They are people's problems." (Group 1)
- "I would like to start my business in Japan. I will make efforts. I was inspired by this course." (Group 1)
- "I want to be an entrepreneur. I love green tea so I want to set up this business in my country." (Group 1)
- "I want to have something that I made myself. I studied hospitality. I like to serve people. I want to make people happy and do something really valuable."
(Group 2)

- “I would like to be a coordinator between my country and Japan because I really like Japan and I would like to work in Japan.” (Group 2)
- “You are Japanese. You went to Spain. You bring something from Spain to Japan. I want to do something motivating. I will graduate next year. I want to find something I can bring back to Thailand or create something in Thailand. Something similar. I want to find more and explore more.” (Group 2)
- “I respect him because he launched a company. I feel I can, too.” (Group 2)
- “Most importantly, I would like to influence other people's lives. I will try to help individual families. I will make contributions to others. As an entrepreneur, I offer service to society and employ people. I have a contribution to make. Secondly, I can actually test my own idea.” (Group 3)
- “Even though an entrepreneur had difficulty doing his business, he kept his passion. I felt I could do it too. I need to launch a start-up company in Japan.” (Group 3)

2. Group

Japanese students

- “This time I followed the group project, but I would like to implement my business plan.” (Group 2)
- “When I listened to my classmate's opinions, I noticed that not only Japanese, but also people from all over the world, think the same way.” (Group 2)
- “I am confident because I participated in a group work and did time management well.” (Group 2)
- “I could not insist on my opinion due to weak language ability. Unfortunately, we could not communicate well enough.” (Group 5)
- “I have more confidence. Even though I had a difficult time in group work, I noticed things would work out.” (Group 5)

International students

- “I was a leader in the group. I know I talk a lot. We have an Asian woman in the group, so I need to pay attention and not talk too much. I focus to share ideas and confirm the direction of our project. In finishing a project, I am confident to be a leader.” (Group 1)
- “We have a friendly atmosphere in the group because a member who is shy can spontaneously say that she would like to present in a business competition.” (Group 1)
- “If I do another project, I would love to work with this group again.” (Group 1)

- “I like this group.” (Group 1)
- “I was a leader in a project about my country, but I realized that I did not know enough about my country. I researched a lot about it.” (Group 2)
- “I took an initiative and group members are interested in my idea and they helped me. Some members were so busy and could not make it to the meeting a lot of times. Finally, it was good, but I learned it is difficult to do the project with members who cannot speak English.” (Group 2)
- “I really appreciate my group. I was so happy to be a member of the group.” (Group 2)
- “I was afraid to participate in a course, but I am confident to present my idea in front of an audience.” (Group 2)
- “I learned a lot. One step back and two steps forward. I really appreciate the experience. Sometimes push and sometimes pull. A group needs to handle different personalities. For me it was not difficult to step back. No one stepped back. The most difficult thing was how group members stepped back. Even though ideas are different, I think communication is important. Everybody criticized each other’s opinions and just insisted on their own. Only negative opinions made us uncomfortable” (Group 3)
- “Group members had different goals. I wanted to learn from this project. But other members did the project for course credits. Other successful groups had clear goals.” (Group 3)
- “I learned the importance of group work. It was a big challenge for me to work with other people with different values” (Group 3)
- “From the first session to the last, my confidence has improved.” (Group 3)
- “People who do not have experience in society think that there is nothing to say. They are very shy, not expressing their opinions. People with social experience tend to think that their opinions are the best. By joining other people's inputs and group projects together, the idea gets better. You can become a group member, or you can lead your group as a team manager.” (Group 4)
- “I am confident to write a business plan after the course.” (Group 5)
- “Working with Japanese students was challenging because the cultural perspective and communication style were different. I reported a conclusion first and then explained the points. But the Japanese would say some points and then talk about something different before reaching a conclusion. It takes too much time.” (Group 5)

3. Language

Japanese students

- “I cannot explain what I think in English. International students are young and we are more mature. About the finance aspect of a business plan, we thought the plan was too optimistic, but international students strongly insisted on their opinions. The language was very different. While checking the vocabulary, time flies. I need to follow the international student’s ideas.” (Group 2)
- “I wish I could share my opinions more during the first part of the course. Later, I got used to speaking up even though I had a hard time. I think I can do much better.” (Group 2)
- “At first, I thought I could not tell the international students about my idea. But I could present my ideas in front of my classmates. I have avoided speaking English for such a long time but I realize I need to do it from now on.” (Group 2)
- “I could not express my opinion again and again. I was not comfortable in a group.” (Group 4)
- “Apart from whether my English proficiency has improved, the barrier to speaking English has lifted. I am more confident compared to the first day of the course. I want to see the world. That was my key driver.” (Group 4)

International students

- “The Japanese talked a lot in Japanese in our group work. They explained well in English, but I realized Japanese seemed uncomfortable speaking in English, just as we are not confident of speaking in Japanese.” (Group 2)

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