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Student Entrepreneurs: Motivation, Sustainability, Challenges, and Future Plans

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a key driver of economic growth and innovation. This qualitative study explored the entrepreneurial journey of student entrepreneurs who graduated from Altavas National School between 2020 and 2023. Using a phenomenological approach, the research focused on individuals aged 20 to 23 who ventured into business after completing their Senior High School (SHS) education, having been exposed to entrepreneurship subjects. Fifteen participants were selected through snowball sampling, and data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis and Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. The study was guided by four key research questions examining their motivations, sustainability strategies, challenges, and future plans. Findings revealed that financial constraint was a major barrier to business initiation, with many participants relying on family support or personal savings. Despite this, the primary motivations for pursuing entrepreneurship included economic necessity, the influence of SHS entrepreneurship education, and the desire for practical business experience. To sustain their ventures, participants employed strategies, such as digital marketing, product diversification, and strict financial discipline, leveraging social media as a key promotional platform. A common challenge was managing academic responsibilities alongside business activities, which students addressed by utilizing time management techniques such as task prioritization and delegation.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a key driver of economic growth and innovation. Among various entrepreneurial demographics, student entrepreneurs represent a unique and increasingly significant segment. These young individuals often juggle academic responsibilities alongside their entrepreneurial ventures, contributing to economic development while fostering their personal and professional growth. Understanding the motivations, sustainability strategies, challenges, and plans of student entrepreneurs is crucial, as these factors influence their success and the broader economic impact they can achieve. Katrodia *et al.* (2018) highlighted the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs entering the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector in Rajkot, Gujarat, India. These challenges include financial instability, lack of experience, and difficulties in market penetration, which are similar to the challenges faced by student entrepreneurs.

Recent literature underscored the importance of examining the socio-demographic profiles of student entrepreneurs. Studies suggest that factors, such as age, gender, duration of business engagement, and ownership types, play a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial motivations and outcomes (Koe *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, exploring what drives students to embark on entrepreneurial journeys can provide insights into the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that fuel their ventures. For instance, previous research highlighted that motivations often range from financial independence and career aspirations to personal passion and social impact (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015).

Sustaining a business is another critical aspect that demands attention. Student entrepreneurs employ various strategies to maintain and grow their enterprises, yet the effectiveness of these strategies can vary widely based on individual and contextual factors. Understanding these strategies, therefore, is essential for developing support mechanisms that enhance entrepreneurial resilience and success. Bragmankar *et al.* (2022) found that engaging student entrepreneurs during the pandemic required encouraging and enabling them to develop their startup business ideas. This study underscores the importance of support systems in fostering entrepreneurial initiatives among students.

Challenges faced by student entrepreneurs are multifaceted, encompassing financial constraints, time management issues, and limited access to resources (Karimi *et al.*, 2016). Addressing these challenges is imperative for creating a conducive environment that nurtures entrepreneurial potential. Furthermore, exploring the plans of student entrepreneurs can reveal their long-term aspirations and the potential trajectories of their businesses, which is valuable for policymakers, educators, and support organizations aiming to foster sustainable entrepreneurship.

Despite the growing interest in student entrepreneurship, several gaps persist in the existing body of research, highlighting the need for further investigation. A knowledge gap exists due to the lack of a comprehensive understanding regarding the specific experiences and challenges faced by student entrepreneurs, including their motivations, sustainability strategies, challenges, and future plans. While general entrepreneurship research is extensive, there is a distinct underdevelopment in the nuanced understanding of student entrepreneurs.

Filipino students, despite facing financial difficulties,

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support themselves by working hard and selling products. They continue to work diligently, not just for their own benefit but also for their families, with the primary purpose being to secure a better future. The reality today is that many hardworking students face struggles and stress from balancing their studies with earning extra income to meet school needs. These students must manage their priorities and responsibilities effectively to maintain their roles as both students and entrepreneurs, ensuring they are not late for lessons and can keep up with their studies. Ramento (2021) emphasized that there is a gap in the low educational attainments of the students due to low salary, which can lead students to combine working and studying. Lollydaskal (2020) also emphasized that new student entrepreneurs often struggle to find customers because they are new to the market and face difficulties in making sales decisions, initially earning little or no income.

This study aligned with the research agenda of the College of Education of Capiz State University – Main Campus, particularly in the areas of Applied Technology and Knowledge Transfer and Transformative Collaboration and Lifelong Learning, as it examined how student entrepreneurship can be nurtured through motivation, sustainability practices, and adaptive future planning. It is also related to Curriculum Innovation and Advanced Pedagogy by providing insights on how entrepreneurial competencies can be integrated into classroom instruction and experiential learning activities, enabling students to develop real-world skills relevant to modern economic demands. Furthermore, the study contributes to Research and Reflective Professional Practice by encouraging educators to assess and enhance instructional strategies that support student-led enterprise development within the academic environment.

In addition, this research supports the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4: Quality Education, by promoting inclusive, relevant, and skills-based learning opportunities that prepare learners for lifelong success. It is also aligned with SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, as it explores student entrepreneurship as a pathway toward employment generation, financial independence, and sustainable economic participation.

This study aimed to determine the student entrepreneurs' motivation, sustainability, challenges, and future plans. This study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening entrepreneurship education, enhancing institutional support mechanisms, and fostering a culture of innovation and resilience among learners in the Philippines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Enterprises founded by students and graduates contribute significantly to knowledge transfer to the market and employment creation, complementing universities' typical technology transfer activities (Ferrante *et al.*, 2019). At the early stages of their careers, students have a broader range of employment options, with entrepreneurship being a viable path for future graduates. Exposure to entrepreneurial education during their studies instills an entrepreneurial mindset and skills, providing students with greater career flexibility (Rippa *et al.*, 2020). According to a study by Alkaabi and Senghore (2024), entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial competencies, innovative thinking, and opportunity recognition skills. Their findings revealed that students who actively participate in entrepreneurship courses demonstrate higher levels of entrepreneurial mindset, particularly in terms of creativity, adaptability, and confidence in business decision-making. Similarly, a study by Wang (2021) found that entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention, with entrepreneurial mindset and self-efficacy acting as mediating factors that strengthen students' likelihood of engaging in business ventures. These findings confirm that structured entrepreneurial learning environments play a vital role in developing future entrepreneurs.

Moreover, research on factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions and motivations among students highlights the importance of psychological, educational, and social determinants. According to Listyaningsih *et al.* (2023), entrepreneurial intention among university students is strongly influenced by entrepreneurship education and personal motivation, which together shape students' interest in starting a business. In addition, a study by Mensah *et al.* (2023) emphasized that attitude, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial exposure significantly affect students' entrepreneurial intentions, as explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior. These studies suggest that students are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship when they are motivated, confident, and exposed to entrepreneurial role models and learning experiences.

In relation to challenges faced by student entrepreneurs in balancing academic and business responsibilities, several studies have identified time management, academic workload, and stress as major difficulties. Student entrepreneurship shapes entrepreneurial consciousness and attitudes toward entrepreneurial careers during this formative stage of life (Shirokova *et al.*, 2016). Pazer (2025) suggested that academic background significantly influences entrepreneurial behavior. The study recommends tailored educational programs to enhance self-efficacy and risk readiness, especially in non-business fields, to promote social entrepreneurship across disciplines. According to Basu (2023), motivation increases organizational productivity in addition to raising staff morale.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodological Perspectives

This study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of student entrepreneurs regarding their motivations, sustainability strategies, challenges, and future plans. Phenomenology allowed for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of individuals, aligning with the study's aim to uncover the nuanced personal and contextual factors influencing student entrepreneurs. The descriptive research design answered questions about who, what, when, where, and how in a specific research context.

Qualitative methods are uniquely suited for exploring new phenomena from multiple perspectives and uncovering complex causal relationships that cannot be meaningfully quantified (Altinay *et al.*, 2024; Kegler *et al.*, 2018).

Thematic analysis was employed, which involved describing shared experiences, categorizing meanings, and connecting them to form themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2020), six phases are as follows: (1) getting familiar with the data and taking notes; (2) systematic data coding; (3) generating initial themes from coded data; (4) developing and reviewing themes; (5) refining, defining, and naming themes; and (6) writing the report. The researcher identified and defined themes related to the research questions. Analyzing interview data involved comparing, categorizing, interpreting, and creatively using the materials.

Locale and Context of the Study

The research was situated at Altavas National School, located in the rural Municipality of Altavas in Aklan, which offers senior high school students a variety of academic and technical-vocational strands designed to equip them with practical knowledge and employable skills. Among these, the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track empowers students with hands-on training in fields such as cookery, electrical installation, dressmaking, and small business management skills that many students are beginning to use as a foundation for entrepreneurial ventures.

In this rural context, where employment and income-generating opportunities can be scarce, student entrepreneurship has emerged as a practical and meaningful option. Many students at Altavas National School are engaging in small-scale businesses, often home-based or school-supported, to support their education, help their families, or pursue their personal interests. Their ventures are shaped not only by their skills but also by the realities of limited access to capital, technology, and markets. At the same time, strong family ties, community involvement, and the entrepreneurial content of the Tech-Voc curriculum provide valuable support.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were mostly young entrepreneurs, with the majority aged 23 years old (5 participants or 33.33%), followed by those aged 21 years old (4 participants or 26.67%). There were equal counts for ages 20 and 22, each comprising 3 participants (20.00%). In terms of sex, an overwhelming proportion were females, totaling 14 participants (93.33%), while only 1 participant (6.67%) was a male. Regarding civil status, most respondents were single (11 or 73.33%), whereas 4 (26.67%) were married. As to years engaged in business, more than half had been operating for 1–3 years (9 participants or 60.00%), while 4 participants (26.67%) had less than a year of experience, and smaller groups reported 4–6 years (1 participant or 6.67%) and 7–10 years (1 participant or 6.67%) of engagement. All participants operated under a sole proprietorship business ownership type (100%).

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was an interview guide to gather detailed and meaningful insights from Senior High School graduate students engaged in entrepreneurial activities. It was reviewed and validated by a panel of experts, the advisory committee and the examining committee to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure began with securing a formal request letter and a research permit. This ensured that all institutional protocols and ethical requirements were properly observed before the conduct of the study. Once the necessary permissions were granted, the researcher proceeded with participant recruitment through university entrepreneurship programs, student organizations, and social media platforms. An invitation detailing the purpose, scope, and procedures of the study was disseminated to encourage voluntary participation.

Following the approval, the research instrument was subjected to validation to ensure its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness in gathering the required data. This process helped establish the content validity of the interview guide before its actual administration. After validation, interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through video conferencing platforms, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The researcher also took field notes during and after each interview to capture non-verbal cues, contextual details, and initial insights that enriched the interpretation of the data.

Data Analysis Procedure

This study employed interpretative phenomenological and thematic analyses to thoroughly examine the qualitative data collected. The interpretative phenomenological analysis, as described by Smith *et al.* (2009), involved a detailed process where audio recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim, followed by a comprehensive review of the transcripts through reading and re-reading to gain familiarity with the content. Detailed notes focusing on descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments were made to identify key themes, which were then clustered into emergent themes by looking for patterns within the data. These themes were organized into higher-order concepts to reflect the core aspects of participants' experiences. The final narrative incorporated direct quotes from participants to illustrate these themes, providing a rich, contextualized account of the phenomena under study.

Complementing interpretative phenomenological analysis, thematic analysis followed the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2020): getting familiar with the data, systematic data coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining, defining, and naming themes, and writing the report. This approach helped in identifying significant features across the dataset, organizing them into coherent themes, and ensuring clarity and consistency in the final report. Both the interpretative phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis together ensured a rigorous and in-depth examination of the qualitative data, yielding profound insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Ethical Consideration

The study prioritized informed consent as a key ethical principle, ensuring that all participants were thoroughly informed about the research's purpose, methods, and their rights before participating. Written consent was obtained, emphasizing their right to withdraw anytime without consequences, ensuring voluntary participation. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and data were securely stored, fostering trust and encouraging openness during interviews. Participants were informed that their involvement is optional, with no pressure to join and the ability to decline specific questions. Minimizing harm was also a priority, achieved through careful wording of interview questions. The study maintained transparency by informing participants how their insights would contribute to understanding student entrepreneurs. Cultural sensitivity guided the research process, framing questions inclusively to respect diverse backgrounds. Finally, responsible data management practices were ensured to secure the disposal of raw data after the study, maintaining confidentiality. Overall, the study was committed to ethical standards aimed at enhancing student entrepreneurs and improving educational outcomes for students and families.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Entrepreneurs' Motivation in Starting a Business

Understanding what drives student entrepreneurs to start their own businesses is crucial for comprehending their experiences and success factors. Motivations often reflect a combination of personal aspirations, economic conditions, and social influences. In this study, the analysis revealed several major themes that encapsulate the key motivating factors behind why student entrepreneurs engage in business activities alongside their academic pursuits, such as economic necessity and financial goals, personal passion and hobby-driven ventures, influence from role models or mentors, situational triggers and crisis response, entrepreneurial mindset and aspirations, influence of educational exposure, and spiritual and divine intervention. These themes imply the interplay of financial, personal, and contextual factors shaping entrepreneurial intentions and actions.

Many participants shared that financial needs, whether to support their education, contribute to family income, or achieve personal financial independence, strongly influenced their decision to start a business. For these students, entrepreneurship served as a practical means to address immediate economic challenges and pursue financial goals. This implies the drive to earn income and secure financial stability, which emerged as a fundamental impetus behind their entrepreneurial initiatives.

Another significant motivation that emerged from the study was the role of personal passion and hobbies in driving entrepreneurial ventures. Several student entrepreneurs indicated that their businesses originated from interests or activities they genuinely enjoyed, which made managing their enterprises more fulfilling and sustainable. This implies that intrinsic motivation not only fosters creativity and innovation but also helps students remain committed despite the challenges of balancing academics and business. Turning a hobby or passion into a source of income provides a meaningful connection between personal satisfaction and entrepreneurial success.

The influence of role models and mentors also played a crucial role in motivating student entrepreneurs to start their businesses. Many participants credited family members, teachers, or successful entrepreneurs as sources of inspiration and guidance. These role models not only provided practical advice and encouragement but also helped shape positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship. This implies that the presence of mentors fostered confidence and offered a support system that students relied on throughout their entrepreneurial journey, reinforcing their commitment to sustaining and growing their ventures.

Situational triggers and responses to crises also emerged as key motivators for student entrepreneurs. Many students reported that unexpected events, such as financial hardships, family emergencies, or changes in their academic or personal lives, prompted them to start a business as a coping mechanism or survival strategy. These crisis-driven motivations often accelerated their entry into entrepreneurship, compelling them to find immediate solutions to pressing problems. Such experiences imply the resilience and adaptability of student entrepreneurs in navigating challenges through business initiatives.

The development of an entrepreneurial mindset and long-term aspirations was another motivating factor for student entrepreneurs. Many participants expressed ambitions beyond immediate financial gains, aiming to build sustainable businesses, achieve personal growth, and contribute positively to their communities. This mindset encompassed traits such as innovation, risk-taking, and pro-activeness, which inspired students to pursue entrepreneurship as a viable career path. This implies that aspirations for independence, leadership, and creating lasting impact fueled their commitment to overcoming obstacles and continuously improving their ventures. Some participants were introduced to entrepreneurship via classmates or school-based activities, which implies that educational environments appear to encourage small-scale entrepreneurial experimentation.

For some student entrepreneurs, spirituality and belief in divine intervention served as a significant source of motivation. Participants shared that their faith provided strength, guidance, and hope during challenging times, reinforcing their perseverance in business. This spiritual dimension offered a sense of purpose beyond material success, helping students maintain optimism and resilience. This implies that trusting in a higher power often influenced their decision-making and commitment, making spirituality an integral part of their entrepreneurial journey.

The findings were consistent with Brixiová *et al.* (2015), who found that in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, micro-entrepreneurship is often a response to unemployment and poverty. The phenomenon was further supported by Alvarez *et al.* (2014), who asserted that young entrepreneurs frequently pursue self-employment due to the unavailability of stable jobs, especially in emerging economies. Female participants in this study underscore how gendered expectations intensify this drive (Brush *et al.*, 2019). Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2014) posited that behavior is learned through observation and imitation. Nowiński and Haddoud (2019) confirmed that mentorship significantly contributes to entrepreneurial intention, especially in university students.

Student Strategies for Business Sustainability

Sustaining a business alongside academic commitments requires effective strategies that enable student entrepreneurs to adapt, grow, and maintain profitability. This study identified several key approaches that students employed to ensure the continuity and resilience of their ventures, such as strategic business operations and time management strategies. These strategies reflect practical responses to the dynamic challenges faced in balancing studies and entrepreneurship.

A central strategy highlighted by student entrepreneurs was the implementation of strategic business operations. Participants emphasized the importance of planning, efficient resource management, and consistent monitoring of business performance. They adopted tactics, such as cost control, inventory management, and customer relationship building, to optimize daily operations. Strategic scheduling and prioritization allowed them to align business activities with academic calendars, ensuring neither area was neglected. This implies that pro-active operational approach contributed significantly to the sustainability of their businesses. Entrepreneurs demonstrated adaptive strategies, notably digital engagement, and sound financial practices. Most discussants and key informants emphasized the significance of online selling and social media marketing, particularly via Facebook, as primary tools to reach a broader market.

These insights aligned with Alam and Hoque (2020), who found that e-commerce and digital platforms significantly enhance the market reach and competitiveness of small enterprises, especially during disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Entrepreneurs who leveraged digital tools adapted more quickly and sustained their businesses longer.

Effective time management was a critical strategy employed by student entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses while fulfilling academic responsibilities. Participants shared that organizing their daily schedules, setting priorities, and creating routines helped them balance the demands of school and business. Techniques, such as using planners, allocating specific time blocks for business tasks, and avoiding procrastination, enabled them to meet deadlines and maintain consistent business operations. This implies that developing discipline and flexibility in managing their time was essential to preventing burnout and ensuring steady progress in both areas.

Student entrepreneurs also emphasized the importance of sustaining business practices that promote long-term viability. These included maintaining product or service quality, fostering customer loyalty, and continuously seeking feedback for improvement. Many participants highlighted the need to innovate and adapt to changing market demands, such as introducing new offerings or adjusting pricing strategies. Building strong relationships with suppliers and customers was seen as vital to ensuring consistent support and repeat business. This implies that such practices helped create a stable foundation for growth despite the uncertainties and challenges of running a business while studying. This study revealed that student entrepreneurs demonstrated remarkable adaptability, discipline, and creativity, balancing academic obligations with enterprise responsibilities. This implies that they strategically employ digital tools, financial literacy, customer engagement, and support networks to sustain their businesses. These findings were consistent with global and local empirical studies, reinforcing the relevance of contextual, tech-driven, and community-anchored entrepreneurial models for youth (Alam & Hoque, 2020; Velasco & De Vera, 2020).

Challenges Encountered by the Student Entrepreneurs to Start their Business

Starting and managing a business while pursuing academic studies presented a unique set of challenges for student entrepreneurs. These obstacles could affect their ability to successfully launch and sustain their ventures, impacting both their academic performance and business growth. The study identified several critical challenges that students faced at the onset of their entrepreneurial journeys, such as financial constraints, time management challenges, limited experience and knowledge, market and customer barriers, social and family support limitations, logistical and supply chain issues, and resilience and strategic coping mechanisms. This implies that student entrepreneurs operate within a dual-pressure environment where the demands of academic study and business management intersect, creating compounded challenges that can hinder both educational attainment and venture sustainability.

A predominant challenge faced by student entrepreneurs was financial constraints. Many participants reported limited access to startup capital, difficulties in securing funding, and managing cash flow during the initial phases of their businesses. The lack of sufficient financial resources often delayed business launch or limited the scale of operations. For many, balancing educational expenses alongside business costs intensified the pressure, making financial management a constant concern. This universal challenge implies the need for effective financial planning and support mechanisms to assist student entrepreneurs.

Balancing multiple responsibilities, such as academic work and entrepreneurship, requires effective time management strategies. Setting a clear schedule, prioritizing tasks, and allocating specific time blocks help manage both roles efficiently. Delegating tasks, like having family assist in business operations, can ease the burden. This implies that maintaining discipline and flexibility is essential to meet deadlines and business demands without compromising either role's quality. Proper time management reduces stress and enhances productivity in juggling dual commitments.

Another significant challenge experienced by student entrepreneurs involved market-related issues, particularly in acquiring and retaining customers. Many participants struggled to establish a foothold in competitive markets due to limited brand recognition, lack of marketing skills, and difficulty identifying target customers. The challenge of attracting consistent customer traffic often led to slow sales growth, affecting business sustainability. Additionally, some students faced challenges related to pricing strategies and adapting their offerings to meet evolving customer preferences. Overcoming these market-related hurdles required creativity, persistence, and strategic marketing efforts.

Student entrepreneurs also faced emotional and psychosocial barriers that impacted their ability to start and manage businesses effectively. Feelings of stress, anxiety, and self-doubt were commonly reported, often stemming from the pressures of balancing academic demands with entrepreneurial responsibilities. Fear of failure and uncertainty about business outcomes sometimes led to hesitation or reluctance to take risks. Additionally, some students experienced a lack of social support or understanding from peers and family, which further compounded these emotional challenges. Addressing these psychosocial barriers is vital for fostering resilience and confidence among student entrepreneurs. The psychosocial toll of entrepreneurship was revealed in statements about lack of familial support, social pressure, and internal doubts.

Student entrepreneurs encountered various external environmental constraints that hindered their business startup efforts. These included bureaucratic obstacles, such as complex registration processes, high taxes, and regulatory compliance requirements that were difficult to navigate without prior experience or guidance. Additionally, limited access to reliable suppliers, inadequate infrastructure, and competition from established businesses created further challenges. This implies that economic fluctuations and market uncertainties also affected the stability and predictability necessary for new ventures. Such external factors often pose significant barriers beyond the control of student entrepreneurs, requiring adaptive strategies and external support to overcome.

Student entrepreneurs demonstrated strategic adaptation and resilience as essential approaches to overcoming challenges and sustaining their businesses. They actively adjusted their business models, product offerings, and marketing strategies in response to changing market conditions and unforeseen obstacles. Resilience was evident in their ability to recover from setbacks, maintain a positive outlook, and persist despite difficulties. This implies that a pro-active mindset enabled them to navigate uncertainties and continuously seek opportunities for growth and improvement, contributing significantly to the longevity and success of their ventures. Despite these challenges, many respondents showcased resilience and creativity, leveraging social media marketing, offering delivery services, and tapping into religious or spiritual motivation.

Student entrepreneurs frequently encountered operational and logistical setbacks that complicated the management of their businesses. Challenges, such as inconsistent supply chains, delays in product delivery, limited access to reliable transportation, and inventory management difficulties, disrupted smooth operations. These setbacks often resulted in customer dissatisfaction and lost sales opportunities. Additionally, juggling business logistics alongside academic schedules added complexity to timely execution. This implies that overcoming these hurdles required careful planning, problem-solving skills, and the ability to coordinate resources efficiently under pressure. Practical workshops on inventory systems, product shelf life management, and e-logistics can reduce operational inefficiencies. Operational issues, particularly for food-based businesses, were also prevalent.

The findings mirrored studies by Koe *et al.* (2014) and Fatoki (2014), which emphasized that youth entrepreneurs often lack credit histories, collateral, or access to formal lending institutions. Adom *et al.* (2018) further asserted that student entrepreneurs, especially in developing contexts, tend to rely on informal financing due to institutional gaps in student-accessible funding mechanisms. Otuya *et al.* (2013) argued that the dual-role dynamic can lead to burnout and diminished academic performance unless clear time-allocation strategies are developed. Salami (2019) noted that successful student entrepreneurs often delegate business tasks or employ digital tools to automate parts of their workflow. Time management training and academic flexibility may foster improved outcomes for student entrepreneurs, balancing these dual demands. Neneh (2019) reported that student-run businesses often lack brand recognition and consumer trust, both of which are vital for startup growth. Inexperienced pricing strategies and limited marketing budgets also limit customer acquisition.

Student Entrepreneurs Plan for their Business

Planning for the future is a critical component of entrepreneurial success. Student entrepreneurs often develop clear visions and strategies aimed at growing and expanding their businesses beyond the initial startup phase. These plans reflected their ambitions to increase market presence, enhance product or service offerings, and secure long-term sustainability. The major themes that emerged were business growth and expansion, financial goals and asset acquisition, brand recognition and reputation, business sustainability and continuity, and social and personal impact goals. This implies that student entrepreneurs are not only focused on overcoming immediate startup challenges but are also actively envisioning and strategizing for long-term success. Their planning reflected ambitions to move beyond survival toward business growth and expansion, setting financial goals and asset acquisition, and building brand recognition and reputation.

A primary focus among student entrepreneurs was setting goals for business growth and expansion. Many participants expressed intentions to scale up operations by increasing production capacity, reaching new customer segments, or entering new markets. Strategies included leveraging digital platforms for wider outreach, forming partnerships, and diversifying products or services. These growth-oriented goals demonstrated the students' commitment to transforming their ventures into viable, sustainable enterprises that could generate greater impact and profitability over time. A dominant theme among respondents was their strong drive toward expanding their market reach, improving product visibility, and establishing a larger customer base. Many student entrepreneurs viewed growth as a sign of legitimacy and business viability.

These aspirations were rooted in the Entrepreneurial Orientation Framework, which emphasizes innovativeness, risk-taking, and pro-activeness as drivers of strategic firm-level growth (Wales, 2015). Institutions may provide mentorship and entrepreneurial incubation spaces that foster not just idea generation but also support tangible scaling mechanisms like digital platforms and marketing training.

Student entrepreneurs also prioritized financial goals and asset acquisition as key components of their business plans. Participants aimed to increase their income, build capital reserves, and invest in acquiring essential assets such as equipment, inventory, or workspace to support business operations. These financial objectives were driven by the desire for economic stability, business scalability, and long-term independence. This implies that careful financial planning and reinvestment strategies were viewed as critical steps toward strengthening their ventures and securing their future entrepreneurial endeavors. Many participants have clear financial targets that reflect both business sustainability and personal economic security. Their goals included acquiring vehicles, saving capital, and generating daily income for reinvestment.

Building brand recognition and a positive reputation was a vital goal for many student entrepreneurs. Participants recognized that establishing a strong brand identity could differentiate their businesses in competitive markets and foster customer loyalty. Efforts to enhance brand awareness included consistent marketing, delivering quality products and services, and maintaining excellent customer relations. This implies that developing a trustworthy and reputable brand was seen as essential for attracting repeat customers and achieving sustainable business success. For some student entrepreneurs, gaining trust and visibility within the community is essential for business success. This theme is connected with the psychological and emotional aspects of entrepreneurship, where recognition builds identity and customer loyalty.

The findings resonated with theories of Subjective Norms and Behavioral Control, where social influence and recognition reinforce entrepreneurial action (Makai & Dőry, 2023). Establishing a strong brand can lead to repeat patronage, customer referrals, and long-term business viability. Hence, entrepreneurship programs must integrate branding and customer engagement modules, equipping students to build reputational capital.

Ensuring the sustainability and continuity of their businesses was a key focus among student entrepreneurs' future plans. Participants emphasized strategies to maintain steady operations despite challenges, such as adapting to market changes, innovating products and services, and managing resources efficiently. Long-term continuity involved planning for succession, establishing reliable customer bases, and building resilience against economic fluctuations. These plans imply a commitment to not only survive but thrive in the competitive business environment beyond their academic years. For schools to offer post-graduation support programs, alumni incubators, and mentorship continuity to ensure young entrepreneurs can scale their ventures after university. Several respondents emphasized their desire to maintain their businesses beyond academic life, reflecting long-term commitment and resilience. This aligned with research suggesting that entrepreneurial education and early exposure to business activities foster enduring commitment and greater risk tolerance (Pham *et al.*, 2022).

Beyond financial success, many student entrepreneurs expressed aspirations to create positive social and personal impacts through their ventures. These goals included contributing to their communities by providing employment opportunities, supporting local suppliers, or promoting sustainable practices. On a personal level, entrepreneurs aimed to develop skills, gain confidence, and achieve a sense of fulfillment through their business activities. This implies that such impact-driven objectives highlighted the broader purpose behind their entrepreneurial efforts, reflecting values that extend beyond profit.

The narratives of these student entrepreneurs revealed an entrepreneurial ecosystem grounded in goal orientation, resilience, and social consciousness. Their visions spanned from profit-driven strategies to community-centered aspirations. This multidimensional intent aligned with entrepreneurial intention models that integrate educational support, psychological readiness, and socio-environmental context (Villegas-Mateos & Amann, 2025).

A Proposed Business Plan as Output of the Study

This proposed business plan was developed based on the need to understand how student entrepreneurs initiate, manage, and sustain small-scale snack businesses while balancing academic responsibilities. The output is grounded on the analysis of students' entrepreneurial experiences, particularly their motivations for starting a business, the strategies they employ to ensure sustainability, the challenges they encounter, and their future business plans. By examining these key areas, the study provides a basis for designing a practical and sustainable student-led snack enterprise model that reflects real-life conditions and supports student entrepreneurship within an academic setting.

A Sustainable Student-Led Snack Enterprise: A Proposed Business Plan on the Motivation, Sustainability, Challenges, and Future Plans of Student Entrepreneurs

Executive Summary

This business plan proposes a Student-Led Snack Enterprise that is a school-based food service business designed to provide nutritious snacks, affordable, high-quality, and accessible food products within the school campus while serving as a practical training ground for students enrolled in entrepreneurship. The business aims to integrate theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience in managing a small enterprise while generating income to support their educational needs. The venture focuses on sustainability, efficient operations, and scalability for future expansion.

A Sustainable Student-Led Snack Enterprise comes from the Students Technologies and Entrepreneur of the Philippines (STEP) Fund in order to be able to introduce its products and services. As the projects of the organization SY 2026- 2027 under the leadership of Mrs. Chrislyn B. Inocencio, the Enterprise will have a start-up capital of at least ₱4,500.00, the funding proceeds will be used for the raw materials, supplies, equipment and monthly utilities.

Business Objectives

1. To serve affordable and nutritious snacks to students, faculty, and staff.
2. To provide students with real-life training in culinary and food service management.
3. To promote the values of entrepreneurship, teamwork, and responsibility.
4. To support school activities through enterprise revenue.
5. To provide healthy and budget friendly food options to the school community.
6. To promote good eating habits among students.

Description of the Business

Campus Bites is a new food avenue inside the campus. It is a School-based food service industry business that is food retail or in a snack stall. It will be consisting of Entrepreneurship Students operating in a school canteen within Altavas National School. It will be managed by the TVE Department, supervised by school administrators, the school principal, department head of TVE department and TVE Teachers stated on the Manual of Operations for Technical Vocational Public Secondary on the Article 2, section 1: Administration and Supervision & Articles 2: Duties and Responsibilities of School Officials and Employees.

Article 5 Programs and Projects, Section 2: Entrepreneurship Program states 2.1 Skills development are considered the twin pillars of economic progress; hence aside from developing the child into a skilled individual, schools also aim to develop the child into being productive entrepreneur.

Section 3: Income Generating Project encourages the students to have their practicum on the services and products they learned in the different specializations or application of skills and theories through earning while learning. The main goal of this enterprise is to provide quality services and serve nutritious snacks and lunch supplements, which are affordable to the students while empowering them with entrepreneurial skills. It will also serve as a food laboratory for the students for their hands-on activity for them to become a leading student-managed food business that promotes sustainability and innovation. The primary target market are the students, teachers, and non-teaching staff within the school and those visitors during school events. It is located in TVE Laboratory Canteen and will be open from 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM (School Days Only).

Table 1: The IGP sharing as stated in Section 3 of 3.1 of the Manual of Operation.

PARTICULARS	PERCENTAGE
Trust Fund for Projects	20%
Students	45%
Production, Marketing and Supply Coordinators	30%
School Head	5%
TOTAL	100%

Description of the Products and Services

The Campus Bites will serve Snacks (e.g., sandwiches, biscuits, pastries, local delicacies); Beverages (e.g., juices, coffee, water); and Special items (e.g., student-friendly meals, project-based offerings). The Student-Led Snack Enterprise will offer affordable, safe, and nutritious meals, quick, and convenient service.

Marketing Strategies

Definition of the Market

The target market for the Student-led Enterprise will consist primarily of students, faculty members, and non-teaching personnel within the school or campus. This includes both the junior and senior high school departments, particularly those enrolled in TVE-related strands such as Home Economics, Food Trades, Cookery, Bread and Pastry Production, Food and Beverage Services and Entrepreneurship. These students will not only serve as consumers but also as active participants in the enterprise operations as part of their hands-on training.

The secondary market includes visitors, parents, and guests during school events, as well as nearby community members who may have access to the canteen during specific times or school programs.

Key characteristics of the market

1. **Age Group:** Primarily 12–18 years old (students), and 25–65 years old (school staff).
2. **Frequency of Purchase:** Daily, during recess, lunch, and after-school hours.
3. **Consumer Needs:** Affordable, nutritious, safe, and appealing food and beverages.
4. **Preferences:** Quick-service meals, snacks, healthy food options, and student-friendly pricing.

The enterprise will operate as both a business and a learning laboratory, allowing TVE students to apply their skills in a real-world environment. This dual function creates a unique value proposition that supports both educational goals and consumer satisfaction.

Determination of the Market Share

To assess the potential success and sustainability of the enterprise, a market analysis within the school environment will be conducted. This includes estimating the total potential market and determining the share we aim to capture during the first year of operation.

Target Market

The enterprise will serve students, teaching and non-teaching personnel, and occasional visitors within the school campus. Based on current school enrollment and staffing records:

1. **Students (Junior & Senior High):** 1882
2. **Teachers & Staff:** 115
3. **Estimated Daily Visitors (e.g., parents, suppliers):** 20

Total Target Market: ~ 2017 individuals per day

Estimated Daily Spending

Based on survey results and previous canteen data, the average spending per person per day on food and beverages is:

1. **Students:** ₱50
2. **Staff:** ₱100
3. **Visitors:** ₱50

Weighted average estimated spending:
= [(1882 × 50) + (115 × 100) + (20 × 50)] / 2017
= (94,100 + 11,500 + 1,000) / 2017
= ₱52.85 average spending per person per day

Total Market Value

Assuming all individuals spend daily

1. Daily Market Value = 2017 × ₱52.85 ≈ ₱106,598.45
2. Monthly Market Value (20 school days) = ₱106,598.45 × 20 = ₱2,131,969.00
3. Annual Market Value (10 months) = ₱2,131,969.00 × 10 = PHP 21,319,690.00

Projected Market Share

The Enterprise aims to initially capture 25% to 35% of the market during its first year of operation.

1. Conservative Estimate (25%) = PHP 21,319, 690.00 × 0.25 = ₱5,329,992.50
2. Optimistic Estimate (35%) = PHP 21,319, 690.00 × 0.35 = ₱7,461,891.50

These projections will guide our pricing, production, and marketing strategies to ensure viability and growth.

Competitive Advantage

The Enterprise expects to gain market share due to the following factors:

1. Convenient location within the school premises
2. Affordable and student-friendly pricing
3. Menu based on student preferences and nutritional standards
4. Real-world service training provided by Entrepreneurship students, promoting quality and professionalism

Conclusion

Based on enrollment data and spending patterns, the Enterprise has the potential to capture a significant share of the school canteen market. With a projected 25%–35% market share in Year 1, the business can generate strong revenue to support both educational objectives and operational sustainability.

Positioning Strategy

Altavas National School is a Technical-Vocational Public Secondary School, thus the students were composed of different socio-economic status. Students nowadays were enjoy eating combo meals and quick to serve foods yet it also needs to consider healthy meals. In that reason, the campus bites are expected to offer affordable snacks that is ideal for the students. It will offer lower prices due to reduced overhead cost.

The school had already three canteens except for the private vendors outside and along the walls of the first gate. Unlike the usual canteen and carinderia around the school, the Student-led Enterprise will be operated inside the school (convenient and accessible) and is expected to be the practical training ground of the students enrolled in Technical-Vocational Education, specifically in Food Trades, Cookery, Food and Beverages and Entrepreneurship. They will help to prepare the food in the area and serve to the customer that is learning-focused service promotes student involvement and innovation.

Aside from the meals and snacks to offer, the proponents also plan to display some groceries such as cooking ingredients, school supplies even internet connectivity and photocopier is being consider once the business is materialized to cater all the needs of the students.

Pricing Strategy

The Campus Bites will follow the demand pricing method in determining the goods/products prices. The method of pricing where the firm sets prices will be based on buyer desires. The range acceptable to the target market is determined.

Distribution Strategy

It refers to the process of moving goods and services from the firm to the buyers. The distribution channel that will be adapted are Direct Sales where producer move goods to the ultimate users and in retail which sell directly to consumers.

Promotion Strategy

he Campus Bites products will be promoted by securing that the product is well-packaged, clean and well-decorated food displays; use sales promotions like word-of-mouth, promotional bundles and discounts; Menu boards and posters in strategic locations and announcements during homeroom; Social media promotion (Facebook group/ pages); Active feedback mechanism through suggestion box or digital form for menu ideas and student recommendations.

Operations and Management

Organizational Structure

1. School Head and Department – Supervise and give technical assistance overall enterprise.
2. Manager (TVE Faulty-in-Charge) – Oversees overall and coordinates with school administration and teaching staff.
3. Assistant Manager / Operations Supervisor - Assists the manager in day-to-day operations, supervises kitchen and service areas, prepares schedules and task assignments and monitors inventory and purchasing.
4. Finance and Records Officer - Handles cash flow, pricing, and financial reporting, keeps sales and expense records and prepares budget reports for evaluation.
5. Kitchen Supervisor / Head Cook - Oversees food preparation and kitchen cleanliness, ensures quality control and portioning, trains students in food handling and cooking techniques, plans daily menus with nutrition considerations
6. Service Crew Leaders (Student Leaders) - Supervises fellow student workers during shifts, handles customer service and counter operations, ensures cleanliness and order in the dining area.
7. Student Workers (TVE Learners)- Assigned roles in: food preparation, cooking, cashiering, service and sanitation, rotate tasks for comprehensive skills training.
8. Procurement and Inventory Officer -Sources supplies and ingredients, maintains inventory logs, coordinates with local suppliers, checks expiration and storage compliance.

Table 2: Analysis of the Competition

Key Assets and Skills	Campus Bite	Competitor A	Competitor B	Competitor C
Superior Product	strength	strength	strength	weakness
Good Business Location	weakness	strength	strength	strength
Strong Sales Team	strength	strength	strength	weakness
Strong financial Capacity	strength	strength	weakness	strength

Operations Plan

Student entrepreneurs will prepare the snacks before break time and sell during recess and dismissal, and supply goods for sale from local markets and grocery stores. Students rotate roles to maximize learning across areas of the business.

Operating Expenses

The following are the projections of operating expenses:

1. Raw Materials
2. Supplies
3. Miscellaneous
4. Equipment
5. Maintenance and repair

Capital Requirements

The Enterprise requests an amount of at least ₱4,500.00, the funding proceeds will be used for the following:

1. Initial Inventory – ₱3,000.00
2. Equipment Purchases (cooking materials, tools, utensils, equipment) – ₱1,500.00

Investment made through the school's STEP funds and generated fund from the income generating projects in the later part of the implementations. The funds will be needed if possible this 1st Quarter of school year 2026-2027 in order to start purchasing supplies and equipment. In return for a ₱4,500.00 investment, offering a 30% shares based on the Manual of Operations for the Technical Vocational Public Secondary Schools, Article

5, section 2 known as "Entrepreneurship Program" and Section 3 which is the "Income Generating Projects".

Financial Plan

Table 3: Start-up Cost (Estimated)

Item	Amount (₱)
Ingredients (initial stock)	2,000
Packaging materials	500
Basic equipment (fryer, utensils)	1,500
Miscellaneous	500
Total Capital	4,500

Table 4: Daily Sales Projection

Product	Price (₱)	Estimated Units Sold	Total (₱)
French Fries	25	20	500
Sandwiches	30	15	450
Juice Drinks	15	20	300
Milk Tea	40	10	400
Total Daily Sales			1,650

Table 5: Daily Expense Estimate

Expense	Amount (₱)
Ingredients Replenishment	900
Packaging	150
Miscellaneous	100
Total Daily Expenses	1,150

Daily Profit

Profit = Sales - Expenses
₱1,650 - ₱1,150 = ₱500 per day (estimated)

Return on Investment (ROI)

ROI Formula:
ROI = (Net Profit / Total Capital) × 100
Estimated Monthly Profit (₱500 × 20 days) = ₱10,000
ROI = (10,000 / 4,500) × 100 = 222% (per month)

Break-Even Analysis

Break-even point = Total Fixed Costs / Contribution Margin

Assumptions

1. Fixed Costs (equipment, initial setup): ₱2,000
2. Average Selling Price per item: ₱27
3. Average Cost per item: ₱18
4. Contribution Margin per item: ₱9

Break-even Units = 2,000 / 9 ≈ 223 items
Estimated break-even period: within 1–2 weeks of operation

Sustainability and Evaluation

1. Use of eco-friendly packaging
2. Proper waste segregation
3. Reinvestment of profit for business growth
4. Monthly review of operations and income
5. Feedback surveys from customers
6. Continuous improvement based on evaluation
6. Integration of lessons into classroom activities and student portfolios
7. Intensive monitoring of the operation of the laboratory canteen.

Challenges and Risk Management

Possible challenges face by student entrepreneurs may include difficulties in time management due to balancing academic responsibilities and business operations, limited capital for sustaining and expanding their ventures, and strong competition within the market.
These challenges will be addressed through implementing a schedule rotation among members, conducting regular budget monitoring, and applying product differentiation strategies to enhance competitiveness.

Future Plans

The future plans of the student entrepreneurs include expanding their product offerings, introducing an online ordering system to improve accessibility and efficiency, and opening additional stalls within the school to increase their market reach.

Conclusion

The proposed Student-Led Snack Enterprise is a practical and sustainable business model that reflects the motivations, challenges, and aspirations of student entrepreneurs. It provides valuable experience while generating income and fostering entrepreneurial skills.

CONCLUSION

Student entrepreneurship emerges as both a practical response to financial realities and a pathway for personal fulfillment and future success. The sustainability of student-run businesses depends largely on the ability of students to apply effective management strategies while balancing academic responsibilities. The use of digital platforms, proper financial planning, customer-centered approaches, and consistent product improvement are essential for business continuity. Time management, family support, and continuous learning contribute significantly to maintaining operations. Hence, successful student entrepreneurs demonstrate adaptability, discipline, and resourcefulness in sustaining their ventures. Student entrepreneurs face multidimensional challenges that may hinder business growth and academic performance. Limited capital, lack of entrepreneurial experience, market competition, and logistical problems remain common barriers. At the same time, balancing studies and business responsibilities creates stress and time pressure. Despite these constraints, student entrepreneurs exhibit resilience and determination by seeking alternative solutions and adapting to changing circumstances. Thus, overcoming these challenges requires both personal perseverance and institutional support. They possess strong long-term visions for their ventures, focusing on growth, financial security, brand development, and sustainability. Many aim to expand operations, acquire assets, and continue their businesses beyond graduation. Their future plans also extend beyond profit, as they aspire to support their families and contribute positively to their communities. Therefore, student entrepreneurs are not only income-seekers but also future-oriented individuals with aspirations for economic advancement and social impact. The proposed student-led snack enterprise is an appropriate and responsive output based on the findings of the study. It translates the real-life experiences, needs, and aspirations of student entrepreneurs into a concrete program that promotes entrepreneurship, skill development, and financial responsibility. The business plan not only provides opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience but also supports the school community through affordable food services and potential revenue generation. Therefore, the proposed output demonstrates that entrepreneurship can be effectively integrated into the educational environment as a sustainable learning and income-generating initiative.

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