ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITIES: CURRENT TRENDS AND GAPS (THE CASE OF DILLA UNIVERSITY)

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of the study was to identify current trends and gaps in imparting entrepreneurial education in Ethiopian Universities. This descriptive study adopted mixed methods – quantitative approach on issues like course delivery trends, knowledge-skills-attitudes attained, and motivation created, and qualitative approach as to issues like factors influencing course delivery, and measures to overcome negative factors. Entrepreneurship course was delivered by 4 instructors to about 15 batches of students. The researcher took census study for instructors, and applied stratified random sampling for students. Taking each batch as a stratum, a random sample of 10 students from each batch was taken. A cross-section of alumni in various positions was also considered for this study. Major findings included: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curriculum on Entrepreneurship; Current Trends and Gaps in Course Delivery; Current Trends and Gaps in Course Resources; and Serious Lacunae observed and its implications. Detailed recommendations to Educational Managers and to Instructors were given. Though the study had been an in-depth one, it was restricted to only one University in Ethiopia. Because of this limitation, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the whole of the country.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Ethiopian Universities, Dilla University, Entrepreneurship Curriculum Evaluation.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION
Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include the willingness to take calculated risk—in terms of time, equity, or career; the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal needed resources; and fundamental skill of building solid business plan; and finally, the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion. (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004) The quality of entrepreneurial education in any country determines the quality of entrepreneurs of that country. Especially for developing countries, quality of entrepreneurship is vital for it provides
sustainable solutions to major issues like unemployment, industrial growth, and foreign exchange earnings. It also directly impacts the growth of small and micro enterprises – which are the backbones of any rurally-dominant-country.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Commission for Africa emphasizes the importance to development of the establishment of small enterprises with particular emphasis on young people and women. This implies that all Higher Educational Institutions should incorporate the skills, knowledge and attitudes for entrepreneurial activity across the curriculum and some should develop programs in the extension program to enable students to work up a business plan and to understand matters such as cash flow, pricing and costing and cost control as well as developing programs in the languages of geographically close trading partners.

Article 7 (d) of World Declaration in the development of higher education in Ethiopia, puts the significance of entrepreneurial education in developing economies thus: “developing entrepreneurial skills and initiative should become major concerns of higher education in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers but also and above all to become job creators.” (Ghelawdewos Araia, 2012)

Dugassa Tessema (2012), who studied the entrepreneurship education in 16 public universities in Ethiopia, found that the entrepreneurship education was in its early phase of development. Traditional teaching and evaluation methods were dominant in teaching and assessing the course. He commented that the Ethiopian Public Universities were characterized by a dearth of entrepreneurship promotion centers. However the study did not consider the perception of students. It was confined to analysis of curricula and syllabi of various universities. Seeing this gap, the researcher intended to study the issue in depth taking into account the curriculum, the resources, the delivery and the participants of the entrepreneurship course.

Nisha & Jayashree (2012), in their study on the entrepreneurial intention among students, found that desirability and feasibility, role models, personal motivation and institutional support have the positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial intentions among the professional course students at one percent level of significance – thus highlighting the significance of role played by higher institutions in imparting entrepreneurial education.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of the study is to identify the current trends and the gaps in imparting entrepreneurial education in Ethiopian Universities, with particular reference to Dilla University.

The specific objectives are (i) To explain the strengths and weakness of the curriculum on entrepreneurship course offered in Dilla University; (ii) To identify the current trends and the gaps in delivery of the course on entrepreneurship; (iii) To describe the current trends and gaps in the resources (human, knowledge and external) pertaining to the course; (iv) To ascertain the attitudes, skills, and knowledge imparted through the course; (v) To evaluate the motivation created by entrepreneurship course on the students in becoming real-life entrepreneurs; and (vi) To forward suggestions to key stakeholders of the issue to improve the quality of course delivery and to overcome the lacunae observed.
The study was confined to Dilla University – one of the Public Universities in Ethiopia – known once for its ability to handle teacher education and currently for its faster growth in the Higher Educational Map of the country.

METHODOLOGY
This descriptive study adopted mixed methods – quantitative approach as to issues such as trends in course delivery, knowledge-skills-attitudes attained, and motivation created by the course in becoming real-life entrepreneur, and qualitative approach as to issues like factors influencing course delivery positively and negatively, and the measures to overcome the negative factors. Data triangulation was ensured through collection from different stakeholders, viz., curricula, instructors, and students. Survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions were adopted as major instruments of data collection.

SAMPLING FRAME AND DESIGN
The course on “Entrepreneurship” is delivered by instructors affiliated to the School of Business and Economics either in the first or in the second semester of the academic year. It is offered to freshman, sophomore or graduating students of various programs including but not limited to accounting, management, economics, public administration, chemistry, computer science, and educational planning management. In all there were 4 instructors who handled the course to about 15 batches of students (with each batch of having a class size varying from 23 to 45). The researcher took census study as far as instructors are concerned, and applied stratified random sampling as far as students are concerned. Each batch of students (who underwent or undergoing the course) is taken as a stratum and a random sample of 10 students from each batch was taken up for study. A cross-section of alumni of the university who are in various positions is also considered for this study.

SOURCES AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
The primary sources of data for this study included: (i) Instructors of the University who deliver the course on Entrepreneurship; (ii) Students who took or currently taking the course; and (iii) Alumni who are in various positions. In-depth interviews were conducted with the instructors of the university and their views on various issues pertaining to the research were also obtained through a structured questionnaire. A survey questionnaire was developed and administered to students of the course. In all 150 questionnaires were distributed (to 15 batches of students of 10 each representing a group/stratum), and finally 141 were found to be in order and were considered for analysis. Focus Group Discussion was held with a cross-section of alumni who graduated from this university in the recent past and who currently occupy various positions in business and institutions. The curriculum developed for the Program of Management by the School of Business and Economics is taken as a major secondary source of data. In addition to that, the standard texts and reference materials were also used as secondary sources.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
Attitude scale measurement was used to evaluate the views of students on various aspects pertaining the course delivery and benefits obtained. Data thus obtained and those from the instructors by interviews and structured questionnaire were analyzed using various descriptive statistical tools. Results were presented in the form of tables, graphs and pictures.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are discussed under the following headings:

- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curriculum on Entrepreneurship
- Current Trends and Gaps in Course Delivery
- Current Trends and Gaps in Course Resources
- Serious Lacunae observed and its implications

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curriculum on Entrepreneurship course:**

The syllabi for Entrepreneurship course was found as part of the curriculum on Management Program offered by the School of Business and Economics. Interview findings proved that the same syllabus was followed for all the students belonging to various programs.

Upon careful analysis and clarifications obtained from the course instructors, the strengths of the curriculum were presented thus:

- The course code and the full title of the course were stated.
- The course description was smart and emphatic.
- The course objectives were well-stated in 13 points, without probably skipping anything that needed to be attained through the course.
- The credit hours, prerequisites, delivery time, status of the course, teaching and learning methods, attendance requirements, and evaluation scheme – all clearly prescribed.
- The course outline was clearly spelled out. It contained seven chapters that needed to be delivered in 45 contact hours in a Semester.
- The syllabus also prescribed two chapters for Reading Assignment: (i) Forms of Business Organization, and (ii) Ethical issues governing Entrepreneurship.

The following weaknesses had been observed on the curriculum and syllabi on entrepreneurship:

- As many as 6 course objectives were not addressed in the course outline. If the course instructor was adhering to the course outline prescribed (which was usually done), then these objectives might not be attained at all.
- Term Paper prescribed for the course was stated as “business plan preparation”, thereby restricting the creativity and customized approach on the part of the instructor. Especially in class size of more than 30, it was impracticable to prescribe the same assignment.
- Only 5 references had been listed. Certain very popular and highly informative texts on Entrepreneurship were found missing in the references list.

As much as 94 per cent of the respondents felt that the course was motivating enough for them to venture into entrepreneurial activities. A majority (59 percent) of the respondents felt that the credit hours allotted for the course was adequate, while a minority (31 percent) felt it was low. Contrarily, 59 percent responded that there was no credit for practical component, while 32 percent felt it was low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOURS ALLOCATED</th>
<th>No Credit</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Enough</th>
<th>Excess</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the whole course</td>
<td>Credit Hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Practical Component</td>
<td>Credit Hours</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Trends and Gaps in Course Delivery:
A majority of student-respondents (76 percent) rated the course delivery in terms of translating the course objectives to their understanding as Excellent, Very Good or Good. While 13 percent felt it was satisfactory, another 11 percent rated it as poor. Some reasons attributed for poor rating were: inadequate knowledge on the part of the instructor, ineffective usage of credit hours allotted, and negligence as to course objectives in delivery.

As to “Knowledge imparted, Skills developed, and Attitudes gained” through this course, high majority of the students agreed that they gained knowledge on (i) Business Plan Development, (ii) Market Study aspects, (iii) Product Study, (iv) Financial Avenues available for investment, (v) Legal formalities in starting business venture, (vi) Tax formalities in business operations, and (vii) Licensing procedures and requirements. As to skills acquired through the course, high majority of student-respondents concurred that they acquired (i) Time Management, (ii) Sales, (iii) Finance, (iv) Decision-making, (v) Communicative, (vi) People, and (vii) Planning Skills. As far as attitudes are concerned, once again majority felt that they gained (i) Self-Motivation, (ii) Self-Confidence, (iii) Ethics and Morals, (iv) Adaptability, (v) Perseverance, (vi) Not being Risk-Averse, and (vii) Networking ability. Across varying batches, some disagreement in above verdict was being observed.

Views on Delivery Time:
Some course instructors strongly felt that this course must be offered only to graduating students, since it required high level of maturity and comprehensiveness in understanding the course. As such, they expressed their discomfort against the current practice of offering the course to freshman students in respect of certain programs.

Factors influencing course delivery:
The course instructors listed the following as factors which influenced the delivery positively:
- Personal commitment of the instructor in delivering the course
- Policy of the Government (in encouraging entrepreneurial development)
- Role played by Entrepreneurship in Economic Development
- Growth in Entrepreneurial Ventures and their success rates in the recent past
- Media Publicity for emerging enterprises

Following were listed as negatively influencing factors:
- Inadequate or absence of practical component
- Underestimation of course value by students – especially from non-business programs
- Larger class size (with more than 50 students)
- Lack of adequate reference materials
- Time constraints

Following were the steps suggested to address the negative factors:
- Purchasing or Preparation of reference materials
- Increasing the credit hours for the course delivery
- Taking steps to train the students to have a positive attitude towards the course
- Reduction of class size to manageable levels

Critical Factors faced during the course delivery:
The following had been identified as critical factors in course delivery:
Current Trends and Gaps in Course Resources:
The resources required for the satisfactory delivery of the course on entrepreneurship were listed thus:

1. **Human Resources**: Current trend points to the inadequacy of the human resources. There were only 3 instructors who were to handle more than 2 or 3 batches in each semester. Considering the fact that they needed to deliver other courses too, this was not encouraging.

2. **Knowledge Resources**: Availability of teaching materials on the course was very limited. Considering the fact that nearly 15 batches of students (average class size around 30) spread over different programs, the knowledge resources were highly inadequate.

3. **External Resources**: To a great extent, the paucity of human and knowledge resources could be addressed effectively, if the institution availed the services of external resources (such as educated and experienced entrepreneurs, and practicing managers of commercial and financial enterprises).

Serious Lacunae observed and its implications:
The study pointed out to one unanimous factor – fully supported by research respondents of every category (students, instructors, and alumni), that is the absence of practical component in course design. All the instructors and 88 percent of the students opined that practical component must be incorporated in the course.

As to the reasons why practical component must be in-built in the course, following arguments were put forward by the instructors:

- Students will be psychologically ready for their future endeavor.
- They have to relate what they know theoretically with the practice.
- If the course is given theoretically only, it cannot be internalized by the students.
- Entrepreneurial course needs on the spot study of the issues.
- Theory must be supplemented by practice in order to enable thorough understanding of the concepts.
- They can have the courage when they get exposure to the practice.
- Moreover, the practical component may serve as an orientation and stepping stone for those who desire to engage themselves seriously in establishing new ventures, and make them psychologically ready.

Popularity of Entrepreneurship Concept:
To the question on desire to become an entrepreneur, 87 percent of the student-respondents answered in affirmative – with 60% strongly agreeing, and 27% agreeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wanting to be an Entrepreneur</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon completion of graduation, I want to be an ENTREPRENEUR by starting my own business</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sizeable number of students who seek to be employed (to enable them to meet their living conditions) also expressed desire to become entrepreneurs. While asked to respond to an open question on the
reasons for their desire to become entrepreneurs, the survey respondents presented varying views, among which the following were found to be most repeated ones:

- To gain freedom (work, financial and time)
- To be free from unwanted bureaucracy in offices
- To provide employment for a few others
- To earn higher income and to enjoy higher social status
- To be one’s own boss and be independent

CONCLUSION

Majority of the students of entrepreneurship course were satisfied with the theoretical delivery of the courses by competent instructors who were all qualified with post-graduate degree in business administration. However, the inadequacy of reference materials and absence of practical component in the course were considered as serious impediments. These can be addressed by incorporating the recommendations suggested by the researcher to the key stakeholders of the issue, viz., the instructors and the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having studied the issue in depth, the following recommendations are made to the key stakeholders, viz., (i) the course instructors, and (ii) the Schools and the Educational Managers.

To the Course Instructors:

1. It is recommended that the course instructors develop more diversified and practical assignments for the students to carry out individually as well as in small groups.
2. It is recommended that the course instructors should pool their collective wisdom and experience and invest the same in developing state-of-art comprehensive course module that highly reflect the Ethiopian context and situation. This is intended to ensure uniformity in course delivery across various instructors and batches, as well as to share the best of the knowledge on the subject with the students.
3. Though there is a great challenge as to time available for the instructors, they must make serious efforts in designing and implementing various Active Learning Methods and Group Learning Techniques in order to enable the students to acquire the desired skills and attitudes that are needed for being successful entrepreneurs.
4. The instructors have to motivate select groups of students to conduct in-depth studies on businesses which failed to take off or flourish or sustain in their locality – which will provide a focused understanding on real-time issues, especially the factors which lead to small business failures in Ethiopian context.
5. Instead of giving the same term paper assignment of “developing a business plan” to all the students of the course, instructors may assign the students to develop in-depth and practical aspects of various parts of business plan – such as Market Feasibility Analysis, Financial Analysis, and Technical Analysis. This step will minimize the “copy – paste” attitude of some of the less-performing students.
6. Lastly, each instructor may personally mentor a few students who are really and seriously interested in becoming entrepreneurs and guide them through the process of small business establishment.
To the Schools and Educational Managers:

1. It is recommended that efforts should be made to strengthen the curriculum on Entrepreneurship by incorporating credit for practical assignments on the course.
2. It is also recommended that the schools must foster sustained relationships with successful entrepreneurs in their catchment area and invite them at periodical intervals to share their experiences and practical wisdom with the students.
3. Efforts must be taken to conduct Practical Workshops (at least one in each semester) in which officials from various organs of the Government, Financial Institutions, Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), and leading commercial enterprises would be invited to participate and explain the procedures and challenges pertaining to licensing, taxation, fund-raising, marketing and product development.
4. By coordinating with the Trade Associations and Chambers of Commerce, Field Trips to various entrepreneurial ventures may be organized. In such visits, interactions between the students and the promoters/managers of the enterprises may be arranged in order to motivate the students to develop their own enterprises in future.
5. Efforts may be taken to establish “Entrepreneurial Cells” which would offer a forum for many such activities listed above.
6. Entrepreneurial Competitions may be conducted once a year and those who field creative solutions with innovative entrepreneurial ideas may be rewarded adequately.
7. Should think of developing certificate courses for real-life entrepreneurs – to bridge the gap they face for lack of theoretical background.
8. Wherever feasible, incentives may be offered to those instructors who actively engage themselves in mentoring and developing real-life entrepreneurs – which will serve as a motivation to the instructors concerned and to others also.
9. Steps may be taken to increase the stock of reference materials by making requests for donation of books and materials from various embassies and consulates operating in Addis Ababa.

Significance of the study
Considering the depth with which the study is conducted, this would probably first of its kind on issue investigated – which factor brings a lot of significance to the study as a pioneer. Further the study looks into multidimensional focus on one of the significant course that contributes to the growth of the country in the developing world and provides an answer to serious unemployment issues. It studies the current trends as well as gaps – thus serving an appraisal and helps to fill the lacunae existing. Moreover, it forwards implementable recommendations to enhance the academic quality of the institution.

Limitations of the study
Though the study had been an in-depth one, it was restricted to only one University in Ethiopia. Because of this limitation, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the whole of the country.

Scope for further research
Considering the limitation stated above, the study can be extended to many other universities in Ethiopia, so that meaningful conclusions can be drawn at the national level. Comparative studies in other developing countries in African continent can also be carried out.
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APPENDIX

Table showing “Knowledge imparted, Skills developed, and Attitudes gained” through the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business Plan</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Market Study</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.014</td>
<td>0.723</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Product Study</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Financial Avenues</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.234</td>
<td>0.988</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Legal formalities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.092</td>
<td>1.034</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tax issues</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.234</td>
<td>1.186</td>
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<td>7. Licensing procedures</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.142</td>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Time Management</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.851</td>
<td>0.581</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sales</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.915</td>
<td>0.560</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Finance</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.922</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Decision-Making</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.816</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Communicative</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.950</td>
<td>0.600</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. People</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.106</td>
<td>0.705</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Planning</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.716</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>ATTITUDES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-Motivation</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.603</td>
<td>0.637</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Confidence</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.560</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethics &amp; Morals</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.043</td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adaptability</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.078</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perseverance</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.220</td>
<td>0.583</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Not being Risk-Averse</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2.333</td>
<td>0.988</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Networking Ability</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.943</td>
<td>0.706</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Legend: SA – Strongly Agree; A- Agree; N – Neutral; D – Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree.