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Managing Entrepreneurship Education for Vocational College Students: A Case Study in Vietnam's Mekong Delta Region

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Research Article

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Abstract

Background/purpose. Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in equipping vocational college students with the skills, mindset, and confidence necessary for self-employment, innovation, and adaptability in a dynamic labor market. In response to Vietnam's national strategy to foster innovation and employment through entrepreneurship, this study examines the current state and management of entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges across the Mekong Delta region.

Materials/methods. A quantitative survey design was employed to collect data from 250 managers and lecturers, along with 650 students across 11 vocational colleges in the Mekong Delta. The study systematically investigated key dimensions of entrepreneurship education, including perceptions, implementation practices, managerial functions, and influencing contextual factors.

Results. Findings indicate that entrepreneurship education is highly valued and effectively implemented in terms of content and objectives. However, moderate ratings were observed for methods, forms of entrepreneurship education, and management practices, signaling areas for development. Additionally, institutional support, faculty preparedness, and students' socioeconomic backgrounds were found to significantly influence educational outcomes.

Conclusion. The study highlights the need for pedagogical innovation, faculty development, and context-specific strategies to enhance entrepreneurship education in vocational institutions. These findings offer evidence-based insights to support policy formulation, institutional planning, capacity building, continuous improvement, and university-industry-government cooperation in alignment with Vietnam's vocational education reform objectives.

1. Introduction

Startups are crucial to national innovation systems (NISs), especially amid the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where digitalization, automation, and globalization are transforming economies (Bărbulescu et al., 2021). These enterprises substantially enhance job creation, economic diversification, and Gross Domestic Product growth, establishing themselves as essential catalysts for sustainable development and technological progress (Bărbulescu et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2021; Diakanastasi et al., 2018; Kofanov & Zozul'ov, 2018; Schimperna et al., 2022). Moreover, entrepreneurship is progressively acknowledged as a remedy for social and economic issues, particularly in developing nations (Soetanto & Jack, 2016; Vu & Phan, 2022). In light of the growing significance of startups, entrepreneurship education has emerged as a strategic focus in worldwide educational frameworks. The primary aim is to foster entrepreneurial attitudes and provide learners with the skills to initiate and manage enterprises (Bae et al., 2014; Mathushan, 2020; Nabi et al., 2017; Schultz, 2021). Entrepreneurship is described as the process by which individuals or teams see opportunities, allocate resources, and generate value via novel or enhanced services (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; SendPlus, 2022). Entrepreneurship education includes formal and informal teaching methods to cultivate entrepreneurial knowledge, attitudes, and intents (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Ho et al., 2024; Kuratko, 2005). Empirical studies underscore its beneficial impact on students' entrepreneurial intents, commercial acumen, and innovative capacities (Carpenter & Wilson, 2022; Dhahri & Omri, 2018; Fanea-Ivanovici et al., 2024; Nguyen & Pham, 2021; Sansone et al., 2021; Su et al., 2021; Tong et al., 2011). It has a crucial role in mitigating youth unemployment, particularly in developing areas with scarce conventional career prospects (Masoomi et al., 2016; Pham, 2020; Taha et al., 2017; Tu & Huy, 2017).

In Vietnam, the government has increasingly prioritized entrepreneurship education in vocational institutions to better prepare students for an evolving and competitive labor market. Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurial skills for national economic resilience and youth employment, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 14/TT-LĐTBXH (2022), which mandates vocational colleges implement structured policies on career orientation, employment guidance, and startup support for students. This directive reflects a broader commitment to cultivating a generation of agile, opportunity-driven graduates who can contribute to innovation and self-employment (Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2022). Despite this policy momentum, entrepreneurship education in Vietnam—particularly within the Mekong Delta region—remains underdeveloped and fragmented. Several studies have reported ongoing challenges, including inadequate financial and infrastructural resources, limited access to startup ecosystems, and a shortage of qualified faculty with practical entrepreneurial experience (Ho et al., 2024; Pham, 2020). Moreover, many vocational colleges lack coherent management strategies and institutional frameworks to effectively implement and evaluate entrepreneurship education programs (Tho & Nhi, 2018). These limitations hinder the full realization of national goals in fostering entrepreneurial capacity at the grassroots level. Additionally, recent research indicates that while students show interest in entrepreneurship, their intentions are strongly influenced by institutional support, faculty mentorship, and perceived relevance of the training they receive (Nguyen & Pham, 2021; Vo & Le, 2021). Socioeconomic constraints and cultural perceptions in the Mekong Delta further complicate student motivation and their access to entrepreneurial opportunities. To improve entrepreneurship education, we need to align policies and invest in designing lessons, training staff, and getting resources together in a way that works for the region (Ho et al., 2024; Tho & Nhi, 2018).

Given these dynamics, there exists a critical research gap in understanding how entrepreneurship education is currently managed and delivered in vocational institutions in underrepresented regions like the Mekong Delta. While national policies exist, localized insights into their implementation and impact remain limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the

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current status, management practices, and contextual challenges of entrepreneurship education in the Mekong Delta's vocational colleges. It aims to explore how such education is perceived, organized, and delivered at institutional levels and identify key factors influencing its effectiveness.

The results of this study are meant to help shape policies, create curricula, train teachers, and decide how to use resources based on the real-life economic conditions of the Mekong Delta. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader discourse on regional equity in educational reform and offers practical strategies that can be adapted for similar regions within and beyond Vietnam. As such, this research holds relevance for scholars and policymakers and practitioners seeking to strengthen entrepreneurship as a vehicle for youth empowerment and economic resilience. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do managers, lecturers, and students perceive the importance of entrepreneurship education activities in vocational colleges?

2. What is the level of implementation of entrepreneurial education activities among vocational college students?

3. What is the level of management of entrepreneurship education activities among vocational college students?

4. What are the factors affecting entrepreneurship education activities among vocational college students?

5. How can entrepreneurship education be effectively promoted to meet Vietnam’s vocational education goals?

This study aims to assess the current status and management of entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges across the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam. Specifically, it examines how such education is perceived, structured, and delivered, while identifying the factors that either support or hinder its effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurship Education in Vocational Colleges

Entrepreneurship education serves as a strategic tool to enhance employability and foster entrepreneurial self-efficacy among vocational students. It bridges the gap between technical skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, encouraging students to pursue self-employment as a legitimate career path (Galvão et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Thomas & Kelley, 2011). By integrating entrepreneurial thinking with practical, industry-specific training, vocational institutions can prepare learners not only to enter existing job markets but also to create new economic opportunities. This approach is particularly critical in the context of rising automation and labor market volatility, where entrepreneurial adaptability becomes a key survival skill. In emerging regions such as Southeast Asia, vocational colleges are increasingly positioned as platforms to promote grassroots entrepreneurship and community-based economic development (Shenkoya et al., 2023; Showalter & Jensen, 2019; Soesanto et al., 2021; Zotov et al., 2019). These institutions play a dual role—not only delivering technical competencies but also nurturing a mindset of innovation and self-reliance among young people, especially in underserved and rural areas. As such, entrepreneurship education within vocational training is not merely about business formation; it becomes a broader mechanism for socioeconomic empowerment and inclusive growth.

A variety of institutional and contextual factors significantly influence student engagement in entrepreneurship education. Some important factors are how much support there is from institutions, the availability of startup-friendly tools like incubators, seed funding, and mentorship, and how much entrepreneurship is taught in schools (Link & Scott, 2006; Lu et al., 2021; Markman et

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al., 2008; Yi, 2021). When institutions offer comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystems—including networking events, exposure to successful role models, and interdisciplinary collaboration—students are more likely to develop confidence in their entrepreneurial potential. Conversely, in the absence of such support structures, even motivated students may lack the confidence or resources to act on their entrepreneurial intentions. These dynamics highlight the importance of designing entrepreneurship education not as a standalone initiative but as an integrated institutional strategy that aligns with broader economic development goals and student aspirations. For vocational education to fulfill its potential as a launchpad for sustainable entrepreneurship, systemic investments in capacity-building, curricular innovation, and ecosystem development are essential.

2.2. Components of Entrepreneurship Education Activities

Entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges is designed with a multidimensional framework that integrates clear objectives, comprehensive content, innovative pedagogical methods, and diverse delivery formats to effectively nurture entrepreneurial potential among students. The core objectives center on fostering creativity, encouraging risk-taking, promoting critical problem-solving skills, and cultivating business acumen—key competencies necessary for navigating complex, real-world entrepreneurial environments (Kuratko, 2005; Maxwell et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2004). In terms of content, entrepreneurship education typically includes modules on idea generation, market analysis, business model development, financial literacy, legal compliance, and the use of digital tools for business operations (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Thomassen et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). To enhance practical readiness, these programs adopt experiential and active learning approaches such as business simulations, case studies of startups, design thinking exercises, and hands-on project work (Breznitz & Zhang, 2019; Lackéus, 2020; Zulfiqar et al., 2018). It's crucial to note that there are numerous approaches to delivering entrepreneurship education. It can be a required course, an elective course, or something that happens outside of school, like innovation boot camps, incubators, entrepreneurship clubs, and startup competitions (Metcalf et al., 2020; Miço & Cungu, 2023; Smith, 2016). Collectively, this integrated approach ensures that students are not only equipped with theoretical knowledge but are also empowered to apply entrepreneurial thinking in practical, context-specific scenarios.

2.3. Managing Entrepreneurship Education Activities

Effective management of entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges requires a structured approach encompassing four core managerial functions: planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating. Planning involves establishing clear objectives, defining relevant content, and ensuring alignment with national vocational training policies and frameworks, thereby providing strategic direction for program implementation (Ho et al., 2024). This stage is critical for integrating entrepreneurship education into the institutional mission and for tailoring programs to meet both labor market needs and regional development priorities. Organizing entails the efficient coordination of institutional resources, forming partnerships with industry stakeholders, and managing logistical elements such as scheduling, resource allocation, and student engagement mechanisms (Covelli et al., 2019; Siegel et al., 2007). Institutions that successfully coordinate with local businesses, alumni entrepreneurs, and innovation hubs can create enriched learning environments that extend beyond the classroom. Directing focuses on the leadership role of faculty and institutional managers in motivating student participation, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, and maintaining instructional quality (Harima et al., 2021). Effective direction requires not only pedagogical competence but also leadership skills that inspire collaboration among departments and with external partners. Faculty members who model entrepreneurial behavior and actively mentor students can significantly increase program effectiveness. The last part of evaluating is looking at how well students learned, getting feedback from students and other important people, and improving the program by

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improving it all the time based on real-world data (Duval-Couetil, 2013; Siegel et al., 2003). Evaluation must be both formative and summative, combining quantitative performance metrics with qualitative insights to inform decision-making and strategic adjustments. These management dimensions create a feedback-driven, responsive system that ensures entrepreneurship education remains relevant, effective, and sustainable. When implemented holistically, they support institutional innovation, enhance student learning experiences, and contribute to broader socioeconomic development by producing graduates who are both employable and capable of creating their own ventures.

2.4. Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is influenced by a complex interplay of institutional, individual, and contextual factors that collectively determine its effectiveness and sustainability. Institutional support plays a foundational role; strong leadership, adequate infrastructure, and strategic partnerships with other educational institutions and industry stakeholders significantly enhance program quality and implementation (Lu et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2017). Equally important is educator readiness—faculty members with entrepreneurial experience are better positioned to deliver relevant content, mentor students, and foster a practical, opportunity-driven learning environment (Harima et al., 2021; Krawczyk-Bryłka et al., 2020). On the individual level, the student mindset—including characteristics such as resilience, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and risk tolerance—directly impacts entrepreneurial engagement and learning outcomes (Carsrud & Johnson, 1989; Su et al., 2021). Also, it's important to keep in mind the socioeconomic background of vocational colleges. Things like regional economic conditions, cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and changes in the job market all have a big impact on how students see entrepreneurship as a possible career path (Pham, 2020; Tu & Huy, 2017; Hong et al., 2020; Taha et al., 2017). These interconnected dimensions highlight the necessity of adopting a multidimensional and context-sensitive strategy in the management and development of entrepreneurship education. In light of this, the current study aims to provide empirical insights and practical recommendations tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by vocational institutions in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam.

The study's five main research questions led to an in-depth look at people's thoughts, current practices, management styles, and factors that affect them. The study's main goal was to come up with strategic suggestions for improving entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges so that it fits with Vietnam's national goals for vocational education. The present study will benefit multiple stakeholders by providing empirical insights that can inform policy development, institutional planning, and curriculum design. Specifically, it will assist policymakers and educational leaders in identifying gaps and opportunities in current entrepreneurship education. It will also help vocational schools improve how they deliver and manage their programs and give teachers and students more power by creating a more supportive and effective learning environment for entrepreneurs that fits with national development goals.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative survey design to systematically investigate key dimensions of entrepreneurship education within vocational training institutions. This method was chosen to get standard data from a wide range of participants, which would then allow the evaluation of their thoughts, implementation activities, management processes, and factors that affected them. Structured questionnaires were administered to managers, lecturers, and students, facilitating comparative analysis across stakeholder groups. The survey design made it possible to collect measurable data, which was then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to get useful

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information about the current state and effectiveness of teaching entrepreneurship in vocational education.

3.2. Participants

This study employed a convenience sampling method, involving a total of 900 participants drawn from 11 vocational colleges across the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. The sample included 250 managers and lecturers and 650 students, all of whom voluntarily participated in the survey. A detailed breakdown of participants by institution showed relatively consistent participation rates across the selected colleges, each contributing approximately 8.7% to 9.4% of the total sample. In terms of demographic characteristics, approximately 36% of participants (including both students and educators) were female. Among the managerial and academic staff, approximately 68% held a master's degree, while a notable proportion possessed doctoral qualifications, indicating a high level of academic attainment within this group. The sample was made to include a wide range of people involved in vocational education in the Mekong Delta. This approach allowed us to examine entrepreneurship education from the perspectives of both students and institutions. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study: participants were fully informed of their rights, assured of anonymity, and participation was entirely voluntary, with no personal or institutional identifiers collected.

3.3. Instruments

The present study utilized four structured scales to assess multiple dimensions of entrepreneurship education among vocational college students. These scales were specifically developed to evaluate perceptions, implementation practices, management processes, and influencing factors associated with entrepreneurship education within the context of vocational training. The first scale consisted of five items aimed at gauging the perceptions of managers, lecturers, and students regarding the significance of entrepreneurship education activities. An example item includes: *"Using students' knowledge and capacity to contribute to economic growth."* Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not very important*) to 5 (*very important*). The second scale comprised four dimensions used to evaluate the implementation of entrepreneurship education activities. The first dimension included four items addressing the objectives of entrepreneurship education (e.g., *"Equip learners with skills, knowledge, spiritual inspiration, and experience to be ready for entrepreneurship."*). The second dimension contained six items related to entrepreneurship education content (e.g., *"Develop a startup support program through experiential activities at businesses."*). The third dimension consisted of five items focusing on teaching methods (e.g., *"Organize activities to guide, support, and advise students on startup ideas and projects."*). The fourth dimension included five items examining the forms of educational delivery, such as multimedia and informal learning (e.g., *"Educational activities on entrepreneurship through video clips, images, publications, documents, and media."*). Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*not implemented at all*) to 5 (*fully implemented*), and items were categorized under four core components: objectives, content, methods, and forms of delivery.

The third scale, which divided into four functional categories, evaluated the management of entrepreneurship education activities. The first category included four items on planning (e.g., *"Plan to support and train staff, lecturers, and students on startup issues."*). The second included four items assessing the organizing function (e.g., *"Organize entrepreneurial orientation activities for students, such as seminars and startup competitions."*). The third contained four items related to directing and leadership in program implementation (e.g., *"Direct the development of business skills and abilities for students."*). The fourth included five items examining reviewing and evaluation practices (e.g., *"Review support and training for staff, lecturers, and students on entrepreneurship issues."*). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not very effective*) to 5 (*very effective*),

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corresponding to the four primary management functions: planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating. The fourth scale consisted of nine items designed to identify factors influencing entrepreneurship education from students' perspectives. These items addressed broader contextual influences such as policy frameworks, institutional support, and the surrounding business ecosystem (e.g., *"Policy and business environment"*). Responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not very influential*) to 5 (*very influential*).

3.4. Data Analysis

All observed variables in this study were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, tailored to capture varying degrees of perception, implementation, effectiveness, or influence, depending on the specific construct being assessed. Responses were numerically coded from 1 (lowest level) to 5 (highest level). To interpret the Likert scale responses, the range was divided into five equal intervals using the formula: (Maximum–Minimum)/Number of Levels=(5–1)/5=0.8. Based on this calculation, the interpretation thresholds were established as follows: Level 1: 1.0 to less than 1.8, Level 2: 1.8 to less than 2.6, Level 3: 2.6 to less than 3.4, Level 4: 3.4 to less than 4.2, and Level 5: 4.2 to 5.0. Each level reflects a progressive intensity of the measured construct—for instance, ranging from low to high levels of importance, implementation, effectiveness, or influence—depending on the context of the items. In addition to descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), the study assessed the internal consistency of each scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating that the scales demonstrated satisfactory reliability in measuring their intended constructs.

4. Results

4.1. Perceptions of Managers, Lecturers, and Students About the Importance Entrepreneurship Education Activities

Both participant groups reported a high level of perceived importance regarding entrepreneurship education. Students' self-assessments produced a mean score (M = 4.22) with a standard deviation (SD = 0.77), indicating strong consensus on the relevance of entrepreneurship education for their academic and career development. The internal consistency of student responses demonstrated acceptable reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.76). Similarly, administrators and lecturers reported a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.76), reflecting perspectives closely aligned with those of the students. The internal consistency for this group was notably high (α = 0.88), indicating strong agreement and reliable assessment. These findings suggest a shared recognition across stakeholder groups of the critical role that entrepreneurship education plays in vocational training, highlighting its importance in preparing individuals for the workforce and contributing to economic development.

4.2. Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education Activities Among Vocational College Students

Table 1 presents the evaluation results concerning the current implementation of entrepreneurship education activities at vocational colleges, based on responses from both students and administrators/lecturers. Regarding the objectives of entrepreneurship education, students reported a mean score of M = 4.22 (SD = 0.77; α = 0.76), while administrators and lecturers provided a slightly lower rating of M = 4.18 (SD = 0.76; α = 0.88). These consistently high scores indicate that both groups perceive the objectives—such as promoting entrepreneurial mindsets, skills, and readiness—as well-defined and effectively implemented. The internal consistency of responses was satisfactory for students and notably high for administrators and lecturers, indicating reliable measurement. The content of entrepreneurship education received the highest ratings among all components. Students rated this dimension at M = 4.38 (SD = 0.79; α = 0.91), while administrators

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and lecturers provided a closely aligned score of M = 4.29 (SD = 0.84; α = 0.89). These findings suggest that the curriculum—encompassing elements such as market research, business planning, and startup tools—is perceived as comprehensive and well-integrated. High internal consistency values further confirm the reliability of these evaluations.

In contrast, the methods of entrepreneurship education received comparatively lower ratings. Students reported a mean score of M = 3.55 (SD = 0.72; α = 0.81), and administrators/lecturers rated this component at M = 3.45 (SD = 0.81; α = 0.75). These moderate scores suggest a lack of diversity or innovation in teaching approaches, such as the use of experiential learning, case studies, or simulation-based instruction. They may also reflect limited exposure to practical, hands-on entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, the forms of entrepreneurship education—such as extracurricular workshops, media-based instruction, and entrepreneurial competitions—received mid-level evaluations. Students assigned a mean score of M = 3.65 (SD = 0.80; α = 0.82), while administrators and lecturers reported M = 3.62 (SD = 0.86; α = 0.80). These results indicate that while such forms of delivery are present within institutions, they may not be fully optimized or uniformly implemented.

Table 1. Assessment results of entrepreneurship education activities among vocational college students

Components	Level of implementation					
	Self-assessment of students			Assessment of administrators and lecturers		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
Objectives of entrepreneurship education activities	4.22	0.77	0.76	4.18	0.76	0.88
Contents of entrepreneurship education activities	4.38	0.79	0.91	4.29	0.84	0.89
Methods of entrepreneurship education activities	3.55	0.72	0.81	3.45	0.81	0.75
Forms of entrepreneurship education activities	3.65	0.80	0.82	3.62	0.86	0.80

Overall, the data reflect a generally positive status of entrepreneurship education activities in vocational colleges, particularly with regard to well-defined objectives and strong curriculum content. However, the relatively lower ratings for methods and forms underscore the need for pedagogical innovation and structural enhancement. Improvements may include expanded use of experiential learning, mentorship opportunities, and diversified delivery formats. Addressing these areas offers valuable opportunities for institutional advancement, faculty development, and policy intervention to enhance the overall effectiveness of entrepreneurship education.

4.3. Management of Entrepreneurship Education Activities Among Vocational College Students

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Table 2 summarizes the evaluation results concerning the effectiveness of managing entrepreneurship education activities, as reported by both students and administrators/lecturers. In terms of the planning function, students rated effectiveness at M = 3.16 (SD = 0.66; α = 0.66), while administrators and lecturers provided a slightly higher score of M = 3.24 (SD = 0.85; α = 0.82). These moderate ratings suggest that, although basic planning mechanisms are in place, there may be shortcomings in areas such as strategic alignment, resource allocation, or goal-setting. The relatively low internal consistency among student responses implies possible variability in student awareness or involvement in planning processes. Regarding the organizing function—which includes coordinating resources, engaging stakeholders, and executing entrepreneurship-related activities—students assigned a mean score of M = 3.20 (SD = 0.68; α = 0.72), while administrators and lecturers rated it slightly higher at M = 3.26 (SD = 0.77; α = 0.92). The administrator/lecturer group's high reliability means that they strongly agreed with each other's answers. On the other hand, the moderate overall scores show that there may be problems with operational structures, cross-department coordination, or working with outside partners.

The directing function, encompassing leadership, motivation, and instructional oversight, received nearly identical ratings from both groups—students at M = 3.19 (SD = 0.62; α = 0.71) and administrators/lecturers at M = 3.20 (SD = 0.72; α = 0.90). These results suggest that while leadership and motivational structures are in place, they may lack the intensity, innovation, or visibility necessary to effectively inspire entrepreneurial engagement among students. The checking and reviewing function received the highest effectiveness ratings across all management components. Students reported a mean score of M = 3.66 (SD = 0.81; α = 0.92), while administrators and lecturers rated this dimension at M = 3.87 (SD = 0.82; α = 0.79). These results indicate that review and evaluation systems are relatively well developed and consistently applied across institutions. Such systems likely include mechanisms for collecting feedback, monitoring performance, and implementing data-driven improvements.

In general, the data suggest that while management practices for entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges are moderately effective, there is clear potential for enhancement—particularly in planning, organizing, and directing activities. Strengthening these areas could contribute significantly to improving the coherence, innovation, and impact of entrepreneurship initiatives within the vocational education system.

Table 2. Assessment results of managing entrepreneurship education activities among vocational college students

Components	Level of effectiveness					
	Self-assessment of students			Assessment of administrators and lecturers		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
Planning student entrepreneurship education activities	3.16	0.66	0.66	3.24	0.85	0.82
Organizing student entrepreneurship education activities	3.20	0.68	0.72	3.26	0.77	0.92
Directing student entrepreneurship education activities	3.19	0.62	0.71	3.20	0.72	0.90
Checking and evaluating student entrepreneurship education activities	3.66	0.81	0.92	3.87	0.82	0.79

4.4. Factors Affecting Entrepreneurship Education Activities Among Vocational College Students

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The study also investigated the influence of various institutional and contextual factors on the implementation of entrepreneurship education. Results indicated that students rated the level of influence at M = 4.28 (SD = 0.80; α = 0.89), while administrators and lecturers provided a slightly lower, yet still high, score of M = 4.12 (SD = 0.80; α = 0.90). The fact that both groups got high average scores suggests that policy support, infrastructure availability, faculty expertise, and students' socioeconomic backgrounds, along with other internal and external factors, have a big impact on how well and how well vocational colleges teach entrepreneurship. These findings underscore the necessity for a systemic and multi-stakeholder approach to enhancing entrepreneurship education. Even though the current systems for evaluating seem to work fine, planning, organizing, and directing could be made even better by strengthening institutions, getting faculty more involved, and ensuring they are more in line with the local economy.Moreover, recognizing and addressing contextual factors specific to regions such as the Mekong Delta will be essential for designing entrepreneurship education programs that are both contextually relevant and sustainable. Overall, the results show how important it is to use a complete plan that includes getting institutions ready, adapting to the situation, and working together with all stakeholders to make entrepreneurship education in vocational settings as effective as possible.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm, contextualize, and extend the existing literature on the role and implementation of entrepreneurship education (EE) in vocational colleges. Consistent with global research, the study reaffirms that EE significantly enhances students' employability, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and adaptability amid increasingly volatile labor markets. These findings support the conclusions of previous research (Galvão et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Thomas & Kelley, 2011), which emphasized that EE equips students with essential life and career competencies such as resilience, innovation, and the ability to recognize and act on emerging opportunities. Furthermore, the broad institutional and student support for EE observed in this study mirrors the strategic priorities set out in recent international literature (Kuratko, 2005; Maxwell et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2004), where EE is positioned as a mechanism to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking, including creativity, calculated risk-taking, and effective problem-solving. These competencies are increasingly critical as graduates face complex economic environments and shifting job demands. The alignment between stakeholder perceptions and these broader educational goals suggests that EE in vocational colleges is not only relevant but also crucial to fostering a proactive, opportunity-oriented mindset among youth, particularly in regions where employment options are limited and self-employment presents a viable path forward.

This study also found high levels of satisfaction with the content and intended outcomes of EE programs in vocational colleges across the Mekong Delta. These findings align with the comprehensive instructional frameworks emphasized by previous scholars (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Thomassen et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018), who advocate for integrating practical components such as market analysis, business planning, and financial literacy into entrepreneurial education. The presence of these components contributes to the perceived effectiveness of the curriculum, as reflected in the high performance scores for course content and learning outcomes in this study. This suggests that, while challenges persist in implementation, the curricular foundations of EE in the region are increasingly aligned with international best practices for entrepreneurial competency development.

However, a critical gap emerges in the methods of delivery, with participants reporting lower effectiveness for teaching strategies and forms of instruction. This mirrors concerns raised by recent studies (Lackéus, 2020; Zulfiqar et al., 2018), which argue that many EE programs remain overly

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theoretical and lack experiential components such as simulations, real-world case studies, and project-based learning. The underutilization of these active learning tools suggests that while the curriculum may be well-structured, the pedagogical approach requires modernization to better engage learners and build practical competencies.

The evaluation of management functions—planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating—reveals uneven development across vocational institutions. Evaluation stands out as a relative strength, suggesting that colleges are starting to incorporate student feedback and outcome assessments into their EE programs. However, the moderate performance in planning and directing points to a reactive rather than strategic approach to program implementation. This observation supports the view of Duval-Couetil (2013), who argues that successful entrepreneurship education requires a continuous, cyclical process of evaluation and improvement. Without strong planning and direction, institutions may struggle to translate feedback into meaningful changes, limiting the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of EE initiatives. A shift toward proactive management is essential to enhance both quality and impact across the system. Institutional leadership and faculty engagement also appear to be pivotal yet underdeveloped areas. According to Harima et al. (2021), a strong leadership culture and faculty entrepreneurship experience are essential to orchestrating cohesive EE programs—elements that are still lacking in many Mekong Delta vocational colleges. This aligns with our findings, which indicate that many institutions lack dedicated EE coordinators or fail to embed EE into broader strategic planning.

Beyond managerial practices, the influence of contextual and ecosystemic factors must be emphasized. National-level policies may provide a guiding framework, but actual implementation is shaped by local infrastructure, staff qualifications, economic conditions, and community attitudes. Entrepreneurship education must be understood as operating within a broader ecosystem, requiring alignment between policy, practice, and place (Lu et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2017; Su et al., 2021). Such alignment is particularly critical for the Mekong Delta, where persistent socioeconomic disparities, limited digital and physical infrastructure, and a lack of local incubators or business mentors hinder the realization of EE objectives (Pham, 2020; Tu & Huy, 2017). Ultimately, this study underscores the need for context-sensitive, multi-level strategies to improve the reach and relevance of EE in vocational colleges. While there are rules in place, they need to be supported by local efforts that fix infrastructure issues, improve teaching methods, and encourage creativity among teachers and students. The findings also offer valuable insights for comparative research on EE implementation in under-resourced regions globally, where systemic barriers often mirror those observed in the Mekong Delta.

5.2. Implications

The study's results have important implications for improving the quality and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (EE) in vocational colleges. This is especially true in Vietnam, where the government is pushing for education reform to align with the country's national goals for innovation, workforce competitiveness, and socioeconomic development (Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, 2022). As the role of vocational institutions grows more prominent in addressing regional labor demands, it is essential that entrepreneurship education evolves to reflect current market realities, pedagogy innovations, and local contextual needs. This study outlines key strategic implications to guide improvements in EE programs, with an emphasis on teaching practices, institutional capacity, curriculum localization, and ecosystem collaboration.

Strengthen Active Learning Pedagogies. While the study indicates that vocational colleges have made progress in developing structured content and goals for EE—covering areas such as business planning, marketing, and financial literacy (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Thomassen et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018)—the low scores in teaching methods reveal a major area for improvement. Traditional

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lecture-based instruction still dominates in many institutions, limiting students' engagement and real-world readiness (Carpenter & Wilson, 2022; Lackéus, 2020). To address this, vocational colleges must prioritize the integration of active, experiential learning pedagogies that place students at the center of their educational journey. Tools such as simulations, business games, and startup labs offer dynamic environments where students can practice entrepreneurial decision-making in low-risk, high-feedback settings (Zulfiqar et al., 2018; Lackéus, 2020; Maxwell et al., 2019). Implementing case-based learning and collaborative projects can deepen critical thinking and encourage teamwork—a key competency in entrepreneurial ventures (Thomassen et al., 2020; Schultz, 2021). Institutions should also establish mentorship programs that connect students with real entrepreneurs, thereby fostering authentic exposure to startup challenges and expanding their professional networks (Miço & Cungu, 2023; Sansone et al., 2021). These changes are well-aligned with Vietnam's vocational education strategy, which stresses the importance of outcome-based, competency-oriented instruction tailored to 21st-century labor market demands (Vu & Phan, 2022; Ho et al., 2024).

Enhance Faculty Capacity and Institutional Leadership. Another implication concerns the internal capacity of vocational institutions, particularly the uneven implementation of planning and directing functions in entrepreneurship education programs. Faculty often lack formal training in entrepreneurship or experience in startup environments, which limits their ability to facilitate experiential learning or mentor students effectively (Harima et al., 2021; Duval-Couetil, 2013). Therefore, targeted faculty development programs are needed—focusing on entrepreneurship pedagogy, curriculum design, and startup mentoring (Thomas & Kelley, 2011). These programs should be embedded in continuous professional development pathways and supported by national policies or donor-funded education projects (Tho & Nhi, 2018). Furthermore, appointing dedicated entrepreneurship coordinators or establishing entrepreneurship units within colleges can promote stronger cross-departmental coordination and accountability (Siegel et al., 2003; Kuratko, 2005). Institutions with clear visions, leadership commitment, and capacity-building strategies are more likely to innovate and scale effective EE models (Duval-Couetil, 2013; Harima et al., 2021).

Institutionalize Monitoring and Continuous Improvement. Effective entrepreneurship education requires more than good intentions; it demands systematic feedback and quality control mechanisms. While this study finds that evaluation mechanisms are somewhat present, they are often ad hoc or limited in scope. Colleges should move toward institutionalizing cyclical quality assurance systems that allow for continuous improvement (Fanea-Ivanovici et al., 2024). This involves conducting regular reviews of curriculum relevance and teaching effectiveness using multi-source feedback, including students, alumni, faculty, and industry partners (Nabi et al., 2017; Carpenter & Wilson, 2022). Graduate employability data and startup outcomes should also feed into program assessment to ensure alignment with labor market needs (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Bărbulescu et al., 2021). Benchmarking against national competency frameworks and international EE standards can help vocational colleges strengthen the coherence and credibility of their programs (Lee et al., 2019; Galvão et al., 2020). Additionally, sharing performance results across institutions—via digital platforms or regional peer learning networks—can foster collaborative learning and evidence-based innovation (Markman et al., 2008; Covelli et al., 2019).

Localize Content to Address Regional Socioeconomic Context. One of the most critical insights from this study is the need to contextualize entrepreneurship education within the regional socio-economic environment of the Mekong Delta and other disadvantaged areas in Vietnam. Despite national-level policies promoting entrepreneurship, students in rural or economically marginalized provinces face distinct challenges, including fewer resources, limited access to markets, and lower exposure to entrepreneurial role models (Pham, 2020; Tu & Huy, 2017). Standardized EE curricula often fail to address these local realities. Vocational institutions must adapt their programs to promote context-specific entrepreneurship pathways such as microenterprise development, social

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entrepreneurship, and community-based business models (Su et al., 2021; Dhahri & Omri, 2018; Tong et al., 2011). Incorporating localized case studies, community partnerships, and regional SME engagement can create relevant, accessible learning experiences (Nguyen & Pham, 2021; Vo & Le, 2021). This recommendation aligns with research emphasizing the importance of tailoring education to local socio-economic and cultural conditions to maximize relevance and impact (Morris et al., 2017; Yi, 2021).

Foster University–Industry–Government Collaboration. Entrepreneurship education cannot flourish in isolation. It requires a robust ecosystem of support, anchored by meaningful partnerships among educational institutions, industry, and local governments (Siegel et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2004). This study's findings suggest that while some institutions have evaluation mechanisms and basic partnerships in place, deeper collaboration is needed to enhance both the quality of education and the real-world opportunities available to students. Colleges should expand partnerships with local businesses, cooperatives, and startups to offer internships, joint projects, guest lectures, and seed funding opportunities (Soetanto & Jack, 2016; Metcalf et al., 2020). Regional entrepreneurship centers or business incubators hosted on campus could serve as collaborative spaces for co-developing ventures (Blank, 2021; Covelli et al., 2019). Engaging local and provincial governments to co-create policy, access funding, and align with local development plans is also critical (Choi et al., 2021; Shenkoya et al., 2023). This triple-helix approach mirrors Vietnam's "Open and Applied Vocational Education" strategy, which promotes responsiveness, workforce integration, and lifelong learning (Lu et al., 2021; Shapero, 1982).

Improving entrepreneurship education in vocational colleges requires a multidimensional strategy that addresses pedagogical practices, institutional structures, local adaptation, and ecosystem collaboration. Each of these areas is interconnected and essential to building a sustainable and impactful EE program. As Vietnam continues to transform its vocational education system to meet the challenges of a dynamic and globalized labor market, targeted reforms in entrepreneurship education can empower the next generation of job creators and innovators, particularly in under-resourced regions like the Mekong Delta. Policymakers and educators may increase the potential of entrepreneurship education to act as a catalyst for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development by firmly establishing these reforms on proposals supported by evidence and context-specific knowledge.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the current state of EE in vocational colleges across Vietnam's Mekong Delta, with a focus on stakeholder perceptions, program implementation, and management practices. The results reveal a strong consensus among students, lecturers, and administrators regarding the significance of EE, with high ratings for program goals and content. However, persistent challenges were identified in teaching methods, delivery formats, and especially in management functions such as planning and directing. These limitations suggest that while core curricular elements are in place, there is a pressing need for more innovative, practice-oriented, and strategically guided approaches to program delivery.

To address these gaps, several actionable recommendations are proposed. First, vocational colleges should integrate experiential learning tools—such as business simulations, case studies, and project-based tasks—into EE curricula to enhance engagement and practical skill development. Second, faculty development programs should be introduced to strengthen educators' entrepreneurial competencies and pedagogical agility. Third, institutions must adopt a cyclical management model for EE, incorporating continuous feedback loops and data-driven planning, in line with Duval-Couetil's (2013) framework. Lastly, policymakers and institutional leaders should invest in regional partnerships with local businesses, incubators, and NGOs to foster a supportive

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entrepreneurial ecosystem. These targeted strategies can strengthen the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of EE in under-resourced contexts like the Mekong Delta.

7. Recommendations

Despite its valuable contributions, this study is not without limitations. The results may not be applicable to other parts of Vietnam with different socioeconomic or educational systems because they were gathered through a convenience sampling method and only looked at the Mekong DeltaFuture studies should think about using random sample approaches across different locations to gather a more diversified participant base in order to get over these restrictions and provide a more representative knowledge. Adding qualitative methods like in-depth interviews and institutional case studies would also help us learn more about the real-life experiences, problems, and best practices of people who are involved in entrepreneurship education. Longitudinal research is also needed to assess the long-term outcomes of entrepreneurship training, particularly in terms of students' entrepreneurial activities, startup success, and career development. Moreover, gender-specific analysis should be prioritized, as only 36% of participants in this study were female, and existing literature suggests that gender may play a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions. Future studies examining these topics will help create a more comprehensive and empirically supported framework for planning, carrying out, and overseeing entrepreneurship education in Vietnam's vocational training system.

Declarations

Author Contributions. All authors contributed equally to the study's conception and design. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.
Conflicts of Interest. The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
Ethical Approval. The Ethical of Dong Thap University, Vietnam, has granted approval for this study on 06 December 2023 (Ref. No. 5674/QĐ-ĐHĐT).
Data Availability Statement. The authors confirm that the data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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