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Research Paper

The Influence of "The Entrepreneurial Mind" Course on Entrepreneurial Mindset and Career Aspirations of BFPT Students

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in shaping how students recognize opportunities, build confidence, and envision their future careers. This study examined how "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course influenced the entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations of Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology students at the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines – Oroquieta, using a qualitative single-case study design guided by Merriam's approach and analyzed through inductive thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the course served as a transformative learning experience consistent with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, in which students initially believed that entrepreneurship was accessible only to the wealthy or naturally talented but gradually reconstructed these assumptions through experiential activities, reflective tasks, and collaborative discussions. They developed greater creativity, resilience, and self-efficacy, with some even initiating small ventures that demonstrated a shift from passive learning to active engagement. Although the study provides meaningful insights into how entrepreneurship education fosters innovation and career direction among rural-based, non-business students, its scope is limited to BFPT students selected through purposive and snowball sampling, suggesting the value of future longitudinal or comparative studies to deepen understanding of the broader impact of entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: *Career Aspirations, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Food Processing and Technology, The Entrepreneurial Mind, Transformative Learning*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, entrepreneurship education has gained increasing prominence worldwide, recognized not only for its economic value but also for its potential to cultivate transformative competencies essential in a rapidly shifting global landscape. Once centered primarily in business schools, entrepreneurship education has expanded into scientific, technical, and vocational disciplines in response to labor markets shaped by technological acceleration and globalization (Li et al., 2025; Ullah, 2026). These conditions have underscored the importance of developing adaptability, opportunity recognition, resilience, and problem-solving abilities, collectively described as the entrepreneurial mindset (Kosti et al., 2026; Shrivastav & Rao, 2025).

The entrepreneurial mindset comprises attitudes and behaviors that enable individuals to think creatively, act proactively, and navigate uncertainty. Its development is closely linked to self-efficacy and creativity, attributes that likewise influence career aspirations, or individuals' long-term professional goals and intentions (Lent et al., 2020). Although much of the existing literature focuses on business students or those in urban settings, emerging research demonstrates that entrepreneurship education can meaningfully support the career aspirations of non-business students by presenting entrepreneurship as an accessible and empowering pathway (Li et al., 2025; Maslakci et al., 2025).

Evidence consistently highlights that effective entrepreneurship education strengthens emotional resilience and self-efficacy, two factors critical to navigating risk and ambiguity (Bellini

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et al., 2026; Nguyen et al., 2025). Programs that integrate emotional competence with practical entrepreneurial experiences have been shown to enhance students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to explore entrepreneurial opportunities. Emotional competence, in particular, significantly predicts entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which in turn influences entrepreneurial intention (Hu & Li, 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025). Further, recent studies affirm that entrepreneurship education fosters creativity, confidence, and adaptive thinking, enabling students to consider alternative career trajectories that they may not have previously envisioned (Li et al., 2025; Ullah, 2026).

In the Philippine context, entrepreneurship education supports national goals for inclusive economic development, particularly through strengthening the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector (Maravilla & Flores, 2025). Despite these policy aspirations, a critical gap remains between developing entrepreneurial intention in academic settings and supporting students in translating those intentions into entrepreneurial action, especially among non-business and rural learners (Bajarias et al., 2025; Relente & Capistrano, 2024). Globally, scholars continue to debate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education due to challenges in assessment and concerns about contextual relevance (Banha et al., 2022; Komodromos, 2025). Research suggests that entrepreneurship education yields stronger outcomes when adapted to students' disciplinary backgrounds and socio-economic environments, enabling more meaningful and context-aligned learning experiences (Arendt et al., 2025; Tuitjer & Thompson, 2025).

This issue is particularly salient in Misamis Occidental, a predominantly rural province characterized by limited infrastructure, constrained market access, and minimal entrepreneurial support systems. Local surveys show that while many students express interest in entrepreneurship, they lack mentorship, financial opportunities, and community-level support structures that enable entrepreneurial action (Bajarias et al., 2025). This reveals an enduring disconnect between classroom learning and the realities of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem (Jurgelevičius & Raišienė, 2025). Scholars highlight the need for context-responsive entrepreneurship models that integrate technical knowledge with localized, meaningful applications (Al-Hosan, 2026; Sales-Batang et al., 2025).

Supporting this, research suggests that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention (Seda, 2026; Ye & Kang, 2025). Scholars highlight the need for context-responsive entrepreneurship models that integrate technical knowledge with localized, meaningful applications (Al-Hosan, 2026; Sales-Batang et al., 2025). Supporting this, research among young professionals in Cotabato Province found that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education, creativity, and entrepreneurial intention (Seda, 2026; Ye & Kang, 2025).

In response to these challenges and opportunities, the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP)-Oroquieta incorporated "The Entrepreneurial Mind" into the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) curriculum. The course aims to cultivate innovation, value creation, and self-efficacy among non-business students by linking entrepreneurial principles with technical expertise. Preliminary research underscores the key role of self-efficacy in shaping students' decisions to pursue entrepreneurial ventures (Muchineripi et al., 2025; Nson, 2025). However, limited empirical research examines how such entrepreneurship courses influence the mindsets and career aspirations of rural students in technical programs, particularly in the Philippine context.

Theoretically, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature by extending the application of entrepreneurial mindset frameworks to non-business and technical disciplines within a rural context. It contributes to the discourse on transformative learning by examining how

technical expertise, particularly in food technology, interacts with entrepreneurial self-efficacy to shape and redefine students' career trajectories (Kulturel-Konak et al., 2025). Rather than treating entrepreneurship as a purely business-oriented domain, the study situates it within the lived academic experiences of technical students. Through the lens of a specialized curriculum, the research provides a more nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of how pedagogical interventions function beyond traditional business school environments, thereby supporting the growing call for context-aligned learning experiences (Al-Hosan, 2026; Komodromos, 2025).

From a practical perspective, the findings offer meaningful and actionable insights for academic administrators and curriculum designers at USTP and similar regional institutions. The study positions "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course not merely as a curricular requirement but as a strategic platform for cultivating entrepreneurial thinking responsive to the realities of rural communities (Tuitjer & Thompson, 2025).

By highlighting the role of self-efficacy in shaping entrepreneurial decisions (Muchineripi et al., 2025), the research underscores the importance of designing learning environments that build confidence alongside competence (Ahuja, 2024; Motta & Galina, 2023). In doing so, it provides a foundation for developing targeted mentorship initiatives and institutional support systems that are closely aligned with students' technical capabilities and socio-economic conditions in the food processing sector.

Thus, this study explored how "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course facilitates transformative learning experiences (Mezirow, 1997) that influence the entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations of BFPT students at USTP Oroquieta. The inquiry begins by examining the initial assumptions and career aspirations that students bring to the course, recognizing that these starting points shape how they interpret and internalize learning.

It then considers the specific curricular experiences that encourage students to question and reassess their existing beliefs, particularly those moments that create meaningful reflection and cognitive dissonance (Chauhan, 2025). Building on this, the study traces the transformative process as students move through various phases of learning, capturing how their perspectives gradually evolve. Finally, it investigates how these mindset shifts translate into concrete actions, as reflected in students' academic engagement, participation in extracurricular activities, and emerging professional behaviors in the food technology sector (Wang et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines how integrated entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial mindsets and career aspirations of non-business students within rural higher education institutions. The term entrepreneurial mindset refers to a set of cognitive and behavioral tendencies characterized by innovation, opportunity recognition, resilience, proactive problem-solving, and a willingness to take calculated risks (Kosti et al., 2026; Shrivastav & Rao, 2025). This review focuses on an often-overlooked context: students who encounter entrepreneurship in specialized, non-business fields. It critically evaluates empirical and contextual evidence to illuminate how students internalize entrepreneurial concepts and how these experiences shape their envisioned career trajectories.

The analytical framework of this study is grounded in a triadic synthesis of Transformative Learning Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and the construct of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE). Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory provides the primary lens for examining the cognitive evolution of Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) students, identifying the "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course as a disorienting dilemma that prompts critical reflection on established professional identities.

This process is further explained through Social Cognitive Career Theory, which illustrates

how the interplay between person, behavior, and environment reshapes career aspirations and goals (Lent et al., 2020; Woreta et al., 2025). Linking these theories is the mediating role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, which serves as the psychological mechanism that translates transformed perspectives into confident professional action (Al Issa et al., 2025; Nson, 2025). Together, these benchmarks form a robust framework for analyzing how technical students in a rural Philippine context navigate the shift from passive employment seekers to proactive entrepreneurial agents.

The modern educational landscape increasingly emphasizes interdisciplinary, experiential, and action-oriented learning, which develops competencies relevant across diverse academic and professional contexts (Ahuja, 2024; Horowitz Gassol, 2025). The findings suggest that entrepreneurship education is most effective when it cultivates students' capacity to recognize and act on opportunities, even among learners from non-business disciplines (Motta & Galina, 2023; Tseng et al., 2025).

For students in technically oriented fields, the relevance of entrepreneurship becomes clearer when instructional strategies align with disciplinary needs. Experiential methods grounded in "learning by doing" enhance engagement and skill retention (Wang et al., 2025). However, the literature emphasizes that experiential approaches are most effective when complemented with theoretical scaffolding, enabling students to interpret and apply their learning critically (Arendt et al., 2025; Komodromos, 2025).

The findings further indicate that curriculum integration significantly shapes learning outcomes. Standalone courses provide focused exposure to entrepreneurial concepts (Soelaiman et al., 2026), whereas pervasive integration across an entire degree program fosters sustained entrepreneurial dispositions (Al-Hosan, 2026). However, pervasive approaches risk fragmented delivery or conceptual dilution without careful coordination (Kuratko & Morris, 2023). This contrast underscores the need for deliberate program design to ensure coherent and meaningful entrepreneurial learning (Saputra et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, these international perspectives intersect with national policies. Urban universities typically emphasize innovation and scalability, whereas rural campuses prioritize contextualized instruction that addresses the realities of local communities (Sales-Batang et al., 2025). The findings suggest that incorporating local enterprise case studies strengthens student motivation and reinforces the perceived relevance of entrepreneurship education (Binwa, 2026). However, rural institutions continue to face structural challenges, including limited access to mentors and unreliable connectivity, which constrain the depth of learning experiences (Tuitjer & Thompson, 2025).

The development of the entrepreneurial mindset remains a central concern in scholarship. The findings indicate that structured entrepreneurial activities enhance traits such as creativity, resilience, proactivity, and opportunity recognition, particularly when learning is designed to strengthen confidence in problem-solving (Hana, 2025; Kulturel-Konak et al., 2025). For example, students in technical and non-business programs develop more robust creative problem-solving abilities when entrepreneurial concepts are integrated into discipline-specific coursework (Li et al., 2025; Ullah, 2026).

The literature further demonstrates that active learning strategies, including simulations, fieldwork, and hands-on projects, consistently outperform traditional lecture-based instruction in fostering entrepreneurial growth (Ahuja, 2024; Depryck & Wambacq, 2025). Students exposed to immersive, practice-oriented environments report increased initiative, adaptability, and openness to new ideas, highlighting the transformative potential of experiential pedagogy (Chang & Raj, 2025; Motta & Galina, 2023).

The critical construct of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) illustrates the link between

learning experiences and career intentions. ESE refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks successfully and consistently predicts entrepreneurial intentions and new venture creation (Muchineripi et al., 2025; Tran, 2025). The findings indicate that higher ESE correlates with stronger entrepreneurial aspirations and a greater likelihood of pursuing business initiatives (Al Issa et al., 2025; Ye & Kang, 2025).

Scholars also note that ESE can be intentionally developed through reflective practice and practical simulations, which enable learners to internalize knowledge and build confidence (Ioannou & Retalis, 2025; Tseng et al., 2025). Embedding entrepreneurship across non-business disciplines further strengthens ESE, even among students initially lacking a business orientation (Li et al., 2025; Maslakci et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurship education also broadens students' career perspectives, exposing them to pathways such as launching a business, pursuing a social enterprise (Al Issa et al., 2025), or working as a freelancer. The findings indicate that students shift from passively seeking employment to actively focusing on value creation and societal contribution (Kumari & Sapna, 2024). This transition is especially evident in technical programs, where students begin envisioning their own ventures. The literature further highlights that entrepreneurial intentions, which often precede actual entrepreneurial action, are closely linked to career aspirations, with ESE serving as a mediating factor (Muchineripi et al., 2025; Mardiana et al., 2025). However, in rural contexts, many students continue to perceive entrepreneurship primarily as a fallback option, emphasizing the importance of locally aligned, hands-on education to foster proactive career orientations.

The critical skills of creativity and critical thinking are essential for entrepreneurial success. Creativity supports the generation of original ideas and innovation, while critical thinking enables systematic evaluation and risk assessment, ensuring viability and practicality (Alharthi, 2025; Shen & Chen, 2025). The findings indicate that design thinking activities and prototyping exercises grounded in local contexts effectively cultivate both ideation and analytical reasoning (Horowitz Gassol, 2025). Moreover, interdisciplinary, context-specific tasks, such as conceptualizing sustainable business solutions, stimulate higher-order thinking more effectively than domain-restricted exercises, enabling learners to integrate knowledge, critically evaluate possibilities, and innovate meaningfully (Kumari & Sapna, 2024; Rakhimova et al., 2025).

Rural educational settings present unique structural and contextual challenges that shape entrepreneurship learning. Infrastructural constraints, including limited access to financial services, unreliable internet connectivity, and a shortage of mentors, impede students' ability to translate knowledge into practice (Jurgelevičius & Raišienė, 2025). Food processing programs are further affected by inconsistent electricity and transportation, compromising the execution of practical activities and product distribution (Tuitjer & Thompson, 2025).

Psychological barriers, particularly fear of failure, also reduce students' willingness to experiment or pursue ventures (Hana, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2025; Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2024). However, targeted initiatives such as the Department of Agriculture's Young Farmers Challenge demonstrate that strategic interventions can successfully nurture entrepreneurial capabilities in resource-limited environments by providing practical training and seed capital

The critical gaps in the literature underscore the need for contextualized, discipline-specific, and integrated entrepreneurship education in rural settings. Curriculum designed for urban contexts often fails to resonate with rural students, and access to relevant mentorship remains limited (Bajarias et al., 2025; Tuitjer & Thompson, 2025). Technical and applied programs frequently lack interdisciplinary integration, constraining students' ability to translate technical skills into entrepreneurial thinking (Li et al., 2025; Ullah, 2026). Furthermore, the absence of institutionalized pathways, such as embedded incubation programs, diminishes the sustainability of entrepreneurial support (Jurgelevičius & Raišienė, 2025). The findings indicate that addressing

these gaps requires courses that are both contextually grounded and systematically integrated (Al-Hosan, 2026; Saputra et al., 2023).

The findings from the literature highlight the importance of designing entrepreneurship education that is relevant, discipline-specific, and aligned with students' contextual realities, particularly in rural non-business programs. The present study addresses these gaps by focusing on "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course for Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology students in a rural academic institution.

By examining how students internalize entrepreneurship concepts and translate them into career aspirations, the study provides insights into effective strategies for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset in contexts characterized by structural and resource constraints. This review situates the study within broader educational and policy discourse, demonstrating how targeted, experiential, and integrated approaches can cultivate both the confidence and capability required for meaningful entrepreneurial engagement among non-business learners in rural higher education environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a single qualitative case study design, guided by Merriam's (1998) model, to examine how "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course influenced the entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) program at the University of Science and Technology of the Southern Philippines (USTP) - Oroquieta Campus. The case, defined as the experiences of BFPT students who completed the course during Academic Year 2024 to 2025, was explicitly bounded by four components: the academic program, institutional setting, course content, and timeframe. This defined structure was established to enable an in-depth investigation of this specific educational intervention within the clearly defined rural context.

Participants of the Study

The study's participants included eight (8) undergraduate students from the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) program at USTP Oroquieta Campus who had completed "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course during Academic Year 2024–2025. They were selected using purposive and snowball sampling to ensure direct experience with the course and diversity in gender and entrepreneurial background. Limiting the sample to eight allowed for in-depth exploration and thematic saturation. This cohort provided insights into how entrepreneurship education is internalized by students in a technical, non-business field within a rural academic context.

Research Instrument

The study employed three qualitative research instruments, following Merriam's (1998) approach to case studies: a document analysis checklist, a semi-structured interview guide, and participant observation. The document analysis examined course materials, including the syllabus and supporting documents, to identify learning outcomes, pedagogical approaches, and key content areas. The semi-structured interview guide explored students' perceptions of entrepreneurship and the evolution of their career aspirations and was validated by experts and piloted with non-participant students. Participant observation captured non-verbal cues during interviews, enriching interpretation. These instruments provided a comprehensive understanding of how "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course shaped students' entrepreneurial mindset and career orientations.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

The study upheld rigor and trustworthiness by adhering to Merriam's (1998) criteria for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through triangulation of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. Transferability was supported with a rich, thick description of the research context, course, and participant characteristics. Dependability was maintained through a detailed audit trail documenting sampling, data collection, coding, and thematic development, complemented by a reflexive journal. Confirmability was reinforced through reflexivity, triangulation, and peer review, ensuring findings were grounded in data rather than researcher bias.

Collecting Qualitative Data

A formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the USTP-Oroquieta Campus Director with the endorsement of the researcher's adviser, and approval was granted. The study focused on undergraduate students from the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology program who had completed "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course. Participants were initially selected through purposive sampling to ensure direct relevance to the course, and subsequently recruited via snowball sampling to capture a broader range of perspectives.

Data collection was carried out using semi-structured interviews as the primary method, supplemented by document analysis of course materials and participant observation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at times convenient for the participants, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted to capture nonverbal cues and students' application of entrepreneurial thinking in academic and co-curricular activities, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

Triangulation of data sources, including interviews, documents, and observations, enhanced the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the findings. Ethical considerations, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the protection of participants' confidentiality, were strictly observed throughout the research process. This approach ensured the collection of rich, meaningful, and authentic data, illuminating how The Entrepreneurial Mind course influenced students' development of an entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations in a rural higher education context.

Data Analysis

This study employed a qualitative, inductive approach to thematic analysis following Merriam's (1998) framework for qualitative case studies, emphasizing the interpretive construction of meaning from rich, descriptive data. The analysis aimed to explore how students in the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) program experienced transformative learning through "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course. Initial immersion in the dataset involved repeated readings of interview transcripts, careful listening to audio recordings, and review of course documents. During this stage, preliminary observations were noted, including disorienting dilemmas and critical reflection moments, which informed the coding and thematic development process.

The coding process was conducted inductively, with line-by-line coding of transcripts using participants' own language to capture pre-course assumptions, career aspirations, and perceptions of entrepreneurship. Similar codes were then clustered into broader categories that reflect shared experiences, transformative learning processes, and the practical application of entrepreneurial thinking. Categories were iteratively refined to ensure coherence, distinctiveness, and alignment with the research questions. Key categories included pre-course assumptions; pedagogical

experiences that prompted reflection; critical examination of those experiences; perceived impact on entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations; and demonstrated entrepreneurial behaviors that illustrate both cognitive and behavioral shifts.

Themes were interpreted through the lens of Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory, complemented by Social Cognitive Career Theory and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, to capture students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral transformations. The final report integrated illustrative excerpts from interviews and documents to substantiate the findings and highlight the alignment between course design and student experiences. This approach ensured a rigorous, theory-informed analysis that illuminates how the "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course fostered mindset development and influenced evolving career aspirations among BFPT students in a rural academic context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and post-course observations, following Merriam's qualitative case study model. It aims to provide a clear, in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives on how "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course influenced their entrepreneurial mindset and career aspirations. The results are organized thematically to highlight the key patterns and insights that emerged from the data, offering a comprehensive view of the case.

Data saturation was achieved through the participation of 8 students from the Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology (BFPT) program at USTP-Oroquieta Campus, selected using purposive and snowball sampling. The participant cohort was primarily composed of young adults in a formative stage of their career development, with 75% aged 18–25 and the remaining 25% aged 26-35. The group consisted of five female and three male students, representing a diverse range of perspectives across four academic sections: BFPT 2A (37.5%), BFPT 2B (25%), BFPT 2C (25%), and BFPT 2D (12.5%).

The analysis of these experiences was guided by Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory, which explains the process of internal transformation, and is further supported by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and the concept of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) to provide deeper insights into how mindset shifts shape future career choices. The analysis was guided by Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory, which explains the process of internal transformation, and is further supported by the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and the concept of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), which provide deeper insights into how mindset shifts can shape future career choices.

The study employed an interview guide comprising seven open-ended sub-questions, supported by a reliable audio setup with a mobile phone and two mini microphones to ensure clarity and accuracy in capturing participants' responses. To complement and validate the interview data, a structured observation was conducted using the Researcher's Observation Checklist, which provided a systematic means of recording behavioral cues, classroom interactions, and indicators of entrepreneurial engagement. This was further strengthened by a document analysis guided by the Document Analysis Checklist and Coding Scheme, which facilitated the careful examination of student artifacts, including reflection journals, business plan proposals, and pitch decks.

All audio recordings were transcribed manually and verbatim, followed by meticulous review to confirm their accuracy and completeness. Participants were then provided with summarized transcripts to verify the faithful representation of their perspectives. Once all data sources were validated, the researcher conducted a manual thematic analysis informed by Merriam's framework.

This analytic process began with repeated immersion in the data, proceeded to open coding through line-by-line examination and in-vivo coding, and advanced to axial coding, during which initial codes were organized and refined into coherent thematic categories. Triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence enhanced the credibility, depth, and consistency of the findings. Throughout this process, the researcher maintained close consultation with the research adviser and a qualitative research specialist to ensure methodological rigor, trustworthiness, and the overall robustness of the emergent themes.

Entrepreneurship as a Purely Transactional Activity

At the start of the course, many students viewed entrepreneurship as a simple, transactional activity focused primarily on generating income. This narrow perspective associated business with producing and selling products for immediate profit, while overlooking broader processes such as innovation, opportunity recognition, and strategic planning. This initial outlook aligns with the findings of Li et al. (2025), who noted that students in technical disciplines often lack exposure to the strategic and innovative dimensions of entrepreneurship. Despite pedagogical interventions, some participants resisted this cognitive shift, continuing to emphasize production over strategy and to treat strategy as a purely financial tool. Such unexpected resistance supports the observations of Chauhan (2025) and Motta and Galina (2023), who suggest that technical students may require more prolonged interdisciplinary exposure before a complete transition from "producer" to "innovator" occurs.

Participant 1 articulated this view, stating:

> *"Abi nako nga entrepreneurship is only about putting up a business para maka-income… murag purely money-making ra siya. Abi nako ma'am, kung naa kay puhunan, automatic ka na nga entrepreneur." [I thought entrepreneurship was only about putting up a business to earn income… it seemed purely money-making. I thought, ma'am, if you have capital, you automatically become an entrepreneur.]*

Participant 5 expressed a similar understanding:

> *"Para nako, entrepreneurship kay basta naay negosyo, makakwarta, ug okay na." [For me, entrepreneurship is just having a business, making money, and that is enough.]*

Participant 6 added:

> *"I thought it was just about making food products and selling them to earn a profit."*

Entrepreneurship as a Niche for the Privileged

Several students believed that entrepreneurship was accessible only to those with natural business talent, strong confidence, or a background in business education. This belief contributed to self-doubt among BFPT students who perceived themselves as outsiders to the entrepreneurial field. These assumptions mirror the "fixed mindset" described by Li et al. (2025) and Shrivastav and Rao (2025), where students in non-business disciplines often exclude themselves from entrepreneurial pathways due to a perceived lack of innate talent. While the course introduced more inclusive models, some participants maintained a degree of "transformative resistance," citing personal traits such as shyness as permanent barriers. This suggests that for some learners, deeply held personal identities can slow the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, a phenomenon noted by Hana (2025) and Nguyen et al. (2025).

Participant 1 reflected this belief, stating:

> *"Nituo pud ko nga entrepreneurs are naturally gifted… naay special talent sa pag-manage og negosyo." [I also believed that entrepreneurs are naturally gifted… they have a special talent for managing a business.]*

Participant 7 shared a similar perception:

> *"Ma'am, I really thought entrepreneurship was only for people who took up business courses… dili ni siya para sa amoa sa BFPT." [Ma'am, I really thought entrepreneurship was only for people who took business courses… this is not for us in BFPT.]*

Participant 8 added her own hesitation:

> *"Feeling nako dili ko apil ana kay shy ko, and dili ko maayo mo-sulti in front of people." [I feel like I am not part of that because I am shy, and I am not good at speaking in front of people.]*

Assumptions on Fixed Career Aspirations

Before taking the course, students held narrow and predetermined ideas about their future careers, often envisioning themselves in traditional roles within the food industry. Many preferred stable and predictable employment, influenced by family expectations and a desire for financial security. This prioritization of stability over risk reflects the "employment-only" mindset typically found in rural settings, as identified by Tuitjer and Thompson (2025). However, the data reveal that some students remained anchored in these original career plans even after the course, viewing entrepreneurship as too risky. This highlights that shifting deeply ingrained professional identities is a gradual process that may not be fully realized within a single semester.

Participant 1 shared:

> *"Before the course, ang plano jud nako kay to work in the food industry as a quality assurance staff or food technologist… mao ra gyud akong gi-picture out."[Before the course, my plan was really just to work in the food industry as a quality assurance staff or food technologist… that was the only thing I had pictured for myself.]*

Participant 2 expressed a similar plan:

> *"Akong plano kay mag-employ sa restaurant or coffee shop, maybe as a barista or kitchen staff." [I planned to work in a restaurant or coffee shop, maybe as a barista or kitchen staff.]*

Participant 6 emphasized her focus on stability:

> *"My plan was just to graduate and find a job in a food company as production staff… thinking more about stability kaysa sa risks sa business." [My plan was just to graduate and find a job in a food company as production staff… I was thinking more about stability than the risks of running a business.]*

Pedagogical Experiences Prompting Reflection

Students described how teaching strategies and activities encouraged them to reconsider prior assumptions. Problem-based exercises, such as product presentations and taste tests, required students to apply technical knowledge in practical contexts. This mastery-based learning approach validates Ahuja (2024) and Wang et al. (2025), who argue that experiential pedagogy effectively shifts cognitive boundaries in technical education. While most found these activities helpful, a few students found the transition to "creative thinking" stressful, suggesting that the shift from rigid technical protocols to open-ended entrepreneurial tasks can cause cognitive dissonance

for some learners.

Participant 3 shared:

> *"The course pushed us to think about how to market our product, how to make it unique, and how to present it in a way that people would buy. The product presentations were not just requirements; they became an opportunity to apply what we learned in a real-world setting."*

Participant 4 reflected:

> *"The activities, especially the taste tests and brainstorming sessions for new products, were very helpful. It taught me to be more critical about what makes a product appealing and to think outside the box."*

Participant 8 emphasized mindset development:

> *"The discussion about the 'entrepreneurial mindset' was a big takeaway for me. I used to think you had to be naturally good at business. However, the course taught me that anyone can develop an entrepreneurial mindset through practice and being open to learning."*

Disorienting Dilemmas Prompting Reflection

Students encountered situations that challenged their core beliefs, such as analyzing case studies of entrepreneurs who started with minimal resources. These "disorienting dilemmas" forced a reconsideration of the assumption that launching a business requires large capital. This process is central to Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory, as it encourages reflection on resourcefulness and strategic planning. However, for a minority of students, these stories were viewed as "exceptions" rather than a realistic blueprint for their own lives, indicating that personal socio-economic fears can sometimes overshadow successful case examples.

Participant 1 reflected:

> *"For me, ma'am, it was when our professor presented case studies of entrepreneurs who started with almost no capital. I always thought you needed a large sum of money to start a business, so seeing those stories made me question my belief."*

Critical Examination of Reported Experiences

Students described a shift from fear of judgment to active self-reflection and confidence. Activities that promoted idea generation and feedback encouraged them to examine assumptions about their own capabilities critically. This evolution of self-reflective practice aligns with the "critical assessment of assumptions" stage in transformative learning. However, some participants reported that while they became more confident in the classroom, they still felt hesitant to apply these ideas in real-world settings, indicating a gap between academic confidence and its application.

Participant 8 reflected on her growth in confidence, indicating:

> *"My feeling before was nga useless ra ang akong ideas. Pero karon mas na-empower ko nga mo-propose bisan pa man ug imperfect siya." [Before, I felt that my ideas were useless. However, now, I feel more empowered to propose them even if they are not perfect.]*

Participant 6 highlighted her growing appreciation for feedback, indicating:

> *"Yes, kay nakasabot ko nga feedback is not criticism but a tool for growth. Mas ganahan na ko mangayo og opinion sa teachers ug classmates aron ma-refine akong work." [Yes, because I*

understand that feedback is not criticism but a tool for growth. I now prefer to ask for opinions from teachers and classmates to help refine my work.]

Perceived Impact on Entrepreneurial Mindset

Students described a significant shift in their belief in their entrepreneurial abilities after the course. This shift included recognizing the value of their contributions and understanding that unconventional ideas could be meaningful. This rise in Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) is a key predictor of entrepreneurial intent, as noted by Al Issa et al. (2025) and Tung et al. (2026). In contrast, a few students reported that the course actually made them more aware of their weaknesses, leading to a more cautious, though better-informed, mindset rather than a purely "positive" shift.

Participant 5 reflected on her application of ideas at home, indicating:

"Honestly, ma'am, mas confident ko karon to the point nga I even pitch ideas sa akong family. Like, I suggested sa akong mama nga, instead of selling our backyard crops raw, we could process them into chips or jam. Before, dili gyud ko mu-open up, but now I am not shy to share." [Honestly, ma'am, I am more confident now to the point that I even pitch ideas to my family. For example, I suggested to my mother that instead of selling our backyard crops raw, we could process them into chips or jam. Before, I would never open up, but now I am not shy to share my ideas.]

Participant 6 further shared her growth, stating:

"Yes, mas confident nako mu-share og ideas without overthinking kung unsay isulti sa uban." [Yes, I am more confident in sharing ideas without overthinking what others might say.]

Perceived Impact on Career Aspirations

Participants reported a transformation in their professional goals, recognizing entrepreneurship as a realistic and accessible option rather than a distant path for business students. This supports the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) model, in which increased self-efficacy broadens the range of career goals considered. Interestingly, for some students, this did not lead to a desire for business ownership but instead fostered "intrapreneurial" thinking - a desire to be more innovative within a traditional job, which Li et al. (2025) and Ullah (2026) describe as an essential competency for the modern labor market.

Participant 1 reflected on this change, stating:

"Before, I thought entrepreneurship was only for business students or people with a lot of capital, pero karon I realize nga it is also for us, BFPT students, kung willing lang ta mo-learn and practice." [Before, I thought entrepreneurship was only for business students or people with a lot of capital, but now I realize that it is also for us BFPT students, as long as we are willing to learn and practice]

In addition, Participant 3 shared how the course influenced her perspective, indicating:

"Sa tinuod lang ma'am, ang 'The Entrepreneurial Mind' course naka-open sa akong panan-aw nga dili lang kutob sa trabaho sa planta ang among course, pero pwede diay mahimong negosyo." [To be honest, ma'am, the 'The Entrepreneurial Mind' course opened my perspective that our course is not limited to working in a plant, but it can also be turned into a business.]

Participant 8 further highlighted the realism of entrepreneurship as a career path, stating:

> *"I started to see maam nga being an entrepreneur is also a realistic choice, especially sa among field nga daghan opportunities sa food industry." [I started to see, ma'am, that being an entrepreneur is also a realistic choice, especially in our field, where there are many opportunities in the food industry.]*

Integration of Transformed Entrepreneurial Mindset into Academic and Extracurricular Activities

Students reported that their entrepreneurial mindset influenced both academic and extracurricular activities, with projects now viewed as potential business opportunities. Observations confirmed increased initiative and the application of technical skills to entrepreneurial ideas. This integration of skills into the BFPT curriculum strengthens professional agency, as noted by Li et al. (2025) and Rakhimova et al. (2025). However, some students struggled to balance these new creative approaches with the rigid requirements of other technical courses, showing a conflict between interdisciplinary thinking and traditional academic silos.

Participant 3 captured this realization, stating:

> *"Sa among product presentations, nakita nako nga potential business ideas ni, dili lang requirements. Nakatabang kini nga dili ko mahadlok sa risks ug mas open ko karon nga magtukod ug kaugalingong food-related business sa future." [In our product presentations, I realized that these are potential business ideas, not just requirements. This helped me overcome my fear of risks and made me more open to starting my own food-related business in the future.]*

Participant 5 shared this transformation, saying:

> *"Yes, mas proactive gyud ko karon. Dili lang sa klase, pero even on social media. I sometimes post my ideas and ask people what they think." [Yes, I am much more proactive now. Not just in class, but even on social media. I sometimes post my ideas and ask people for their opinions.]*

Integration of Entrepreneurial Skills into Food Processing and Technology

The course shifted the students' approach to food processing, encouraging them to see technical tasks as opportunities for innovation and value creation. They began exploring how local ingredients could be transformed into unique products. This shift from "production" to "innovation" aligns with the work of Horowitz Gassol (2025) and Rakhimova et al. (2025), who argue that context-specific tasks are the most effective means of stimulating higher-order entrepreneurial thinking.

Participant 6 expressed this realization, stating:

> *"As a BFPT student, nakasabot ko nga food processing is not only about production but also about innovating and finding value sa mga simple raw materials." [As a BFPT student, I understand that food processing is not only about production but also about innovating and finding value in simple raw materials.]*

In agreement, Participant 4 shared a similar experience:

> *"I would notice local ingredients, or small ways to improve snacks, and ask myself, 'Pwede ni himoon into something new?'" [I would notice local ingredients or small ways to improve snacks and ask myself, 'Can this be turned into something new?']*

Demonstrated Proactive Entrepreneurial Behaviors

Students exhibited a shift toward proactive behaviors, such as seeking feedback from teachers and social media to refine their ideas. They became bolder in sharing thoughts in both academic and personal settings, demonstrating an internalization of an entrepreneurial identity. This proactive stance is a hallmark of high ESE. However, some students noted that their "proactiveness" was limited to areas where they felt technically superior, such as food safety, rather than general business management.

Participant 3 reflected on this change, sharing:

> *"Before, I would just keep my ideas to myself, but now I actively ask my classmates and even my teachers, 'Unsaon kaha nako pag-improve ani?'" [Before, I would just keep my ideas to myself, but now I actively ask my classmates and even my teachers, 'How can I improve this?']*

Participant 5 shared a similar experience, highlighting how this behavior extended to her home environment:

> *"I even pitch ideas sa akong family. Like, I suggested sa akong mama nga instead of selling our backyard crops raw, we could process them into chips or jam." [I even pitch ideas to my family. For example, I suggested to my mother that instead of selling our backyard crops raw, we could process them into chips or jam.]*

Demonstrated Application of Entrepreneurial Thinking

Students demonstrated that entrepreneurial thinking extended into daily life as they became more observant of opportunities for innovation. They began transforming ordinary materials into potential products, reflecting a practical integration of entrepreneurship into their routines. This "daily-life" application shows a high level of internalization. However, some participants admitted they applied this thinking only when prompted by a specific problem rather than as a constant habit.

Participant 4 shared this mindset shift, stating:

> *"I would notice local ingredients, or small ways to improve snacks, and ask myself, 'Pwede ni himoon into something new?'" [I would notice local ingredients or small ways to improve snacks and ask myself, 'Can this be turned into something new?']*

Similarly, Participant 2 described how part-time work became a training ground for entrepreneurial practice:

> *"Pwede nako hinay-hinay nga i-practice, i-observe, ug i-improve samtang nagtrabaho part-time ug nag-eskwela." [I can gradually practice, observe, and improve while working part-time and studying.]*

Behavioral Changes Exhibited by Students

Participants exhibited clear behavioral changes, including reduced overthinking and a more collaborative approach. They became more willing to seek input from external networks to refine their ideas. This shift toward "open innovation" is supported by Rehman et al. (2025) and Motta and Galina (2023), who observe that collaboration is vital for technical students entering the business world. A few students, however, reported that they still preferred working alone due to a lingering fear that their ideas would be "stolen," indicating that trust remains a hurdle in entrepreneurial collaboration.

Participant 7 reflected on becoming more vocal and engaged:

> *"I gained more courage to speak up in discussions. Even with friends, I suggest new approaches and sometimes business ideas, which I never used to do before."*

Participant 5 also shared how they even use social media to gather opinions:

> *"I sometimes post my ideas and ask people what they think. Nakita nako nga daghan willing mo-share ug tips or experiences. That is something I would never have done before the course." [I am now proactive in seeking constructive feedback, not just to pass, but to make my ideas more realistic. I even ask people outside the classroom, such as family and friends, for their opinions. Sometimes they provide surprising insights that help improve my plans. This practice has made me more open-minded and adaptive.]*

Exhibited Post-Course Entrepreneurial Practices

Students demonstrated significant post-course practices, including a long-term vision for entrepreneurship as a sustainable career path. They realized they could balance both employment and business in the future. This dual-track career vision provides the resilience needed to navigate local structural challenges, as argued by Maravilla and Flores (2025) and Nguyen et al. (2025). Despite this, some students expressed concerns about the lack of local mentors, indicating that while their mindset has changed, their perceived environment remains a significant challenge.

Participant 8 reflected on this growing sense of possibility:

> *"I started to see maam nga being an entrepreneur is also a realistic choice, especially sa among field nga daghan opportunities sa food industry. It made me realize maam nga kung magpadayon ko sa innovation and apply the lessons we learned, I can balance both employment and business in the future." [I started to see, ma'am, that being an entrepreneur is also a realistic choice, especially in our field, where there are many opportunities in the food industry. It made me realize that if I continue innovating and apply the lessons we learned, I can balance both employment and running a business in the future.]*

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course played a significant role in transforming the perceptions, mindset, and career aspirations of Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology students at USTP Oroquieta. At the outset, many students viewed entrepreneurship through a narrow lens, often associating success with substantial capital, innate business talent, or formal business training. These assumptions limited their career aspirations to conventional and relatively low-risk roles within the food industry.

However, through a combination of experiential learning activities and reflective dialogue, students were exposed to situations that challenged these deeply held beliefs. These learning experiences encouraged critical reflection and gradually reduced internal barriers, leading to a noticeable increase in entrepreneurial self-efficacy. As a result, students began to shift their professional identity from passive job seekers to more proactive, opportunity-oriented individuals capable of creating value in their field.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the extension of Transformative Learning Theory within the context of technical vocational education, particularly in rural settings. The findings suggest that the process of critically examining one's assumptions does not proceed linearly, especially among technical students whose learning is often grounded in structured, procedural knowledge. Instead, transformation appears to require context-specific and discipline-aligned experiences that effectively connect technical competencies with entrepreneurial thinking.

In addition, the study offers further insight into Social Cognitive Career Theory and the concept of entrepreneurial self-efficacy by demonstrating that self-efficacy is not a generalized trait but is shaped by context and domain-specific experiences. Among BFPT students, the integration of technical expertise with entrepreneurial knowledge appears to foster a distinct form of confidence that may be described as technical entrepreneurial efficacy. This highlights the importance of interdisciplinary learning environments in supporting the development of more flexible and adaptive career pathways among students in non-business programs.

From a practical and policy-oriented perspective, the findings underscore the need for a more contextualized approach to entrepreneurship education. For curriculum designers and faculty members, there is a clear implication that entrepreneurship should not be treated as a separate or purely theoretical subject, but rather as an embedded component of technical training. Incorporating market-oriented tasks within food processing activities can help reduce the cognitive gap that students often experience when transitioning between technical and business-oriented thinking.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of using localized and relatable examples, particularly in rural higher education institutions, where students may perceive entrepreneurship as inaccessible. Presenting case studies of low-capital and community-based enterprises can make entrepreneurial pathways more attainable and relevant. At the institutional and policy levels, there is a need to establish support structures, such as pre-incubation spaces on technical campuses, where students can experiment with ideas in a low-risk environment. Such initiatives can strengthen students' confidence, encourage innovation, and ultimately support the development of sustainable and self-directed career pathways within rural communities.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study acknowledges several limitations that shaped its scope and the interpretation of findings. It focused exclusively on Bachelor of Food Processing and Technology students who completed "The Entrepreneurial Mind" course, excluding other academic programs, which limits the generalizability of the results. Purposive and snowball sampling ensured participants were actively engaged and able to provide rich insights, but may have introduced selection bias by overlooking quieter students with potentially valuable perspectives.

Additionally, interviews were conducted in the campus library, a formal setting that may have constrained participants' openness, and relied on self-reported data, which is subject to memory recall and social desirability biases. Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into the transformative effects of entrepreneurship education on students' mindsets, self-efficacy, and career aspirations.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen entrepreneurship education for BFPT students and similar contexts. The course design and instructional materials should emphasize entrepreneurship as a value-creation process, integrating resilience, creative problem-solving, and examples of local, resource-constrained ventures. Experiential learning strategies, including project-based activities, community immersion, and collaboration with local enterprises, should be enhanced to reinforce mindset shifts and practical application.

Institutional support, such as seed funding, mentorship programs, and innovation spaces, can help students translate learning into actionable ventures, while industry partnerships can align projects with market needs. Policymakers should consider designing targeted programs that address rural learners' challenges, and future research should explore the long-term development of students' entrepreneurial mindset across disciplines and campuses to inform more inclusive and effective entrepreneurship education.

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