

Enterprise Education in Undergraduate Business Programmes Advances Students' Negotiating Competence and Self-Confidence

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**Enterprise education in undergraduate business programmes advances students'
negotiating competence and self-confidence**

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Purpose – Business graduates' enterprising capability augments their work readiness, transforming them into professionals capable of driving successful outcomes. At the core lie self-confidence and negotiating competence. However, embedding enterprise education and developing assessments to evidence learning is challenging. This study aims to offer a blueprint for establishing enterprise learning in the classroom and investigating the effectiveness of cultivating negotiating competence and self-confidence.

Design/methodology/approach – Modelled on Kolb's experiential learning cycle, students engage in in-class and real-life negotiations, assessing self-confidence using a scale founded in Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Open-ended reflections are also submitted. Quantitative data is analysed through multiple linear regression, while quantitative and qualitative data triangulation substantiates enterprise learning in negotiating competence and self-confidence.

Findings – Students' reflections show that low self-confidence poses an initial barrier in negotiations, overcome with successive engagements. Quantitative analysis uncovers response-shift biases, with female and male students overestimating initial self-confidence levels. The gender and difference score type interaction reveals a more pronounced bias among female students starting from a lower baseline than male students, implying a more substantial self-confidence improvement for female students. These findings challenge traditional assumptions about gender differences in negotiations and emphasize the need for nuanced perspectives.

Originality/value – Enterprising capability is pivotal for business professionals. This study highlights the advancement of negotiating competence and self-confidence. It contributes uniquely to the development of enterprise education pedagogy. Focusing on nuanced gender differences challenges prevailing assumptions, providing a perspective to the discourse on negotiating competence and self-confidence in management training.

Keywords Enterprising, Business, Undergraduate, Self-confidence, Negotiations, Transversal competencies

Introduction

Business graduates' work readiness and skills gap are motivated discussions that attract the participation of postsecondary institutions, industry, designation-granting bodies, and governments (Benson and Enstroem, 2017; Perusso *et al.*, 2020; Prikshat *et al.*, 2019; Prikshat *et al.*, 2020; Winterton and Turner, 2019). The discourse typically revolves around the contrasts between theoretical and applied competencies and technical and professional competencies (Benati *et al.*, 2021; Inamdar and Roldan, 2013; Jackson and Chapman, 2012; Ritter *et al.*, 2018). In essence, the industry relies on graduates with excellent subject matter knowledge—generalist and specialist—but universities are also under mounting pressure to supply graduates with professional competencies for the future. These demands put competitive pressures on postsecondary institutions and business schools to reinvent themselves with business models and learning environments that foster students' meta-subject matter competencies (Lichy and Enstroem, 2015; Ritter *et al.*, 2018). In Canada, provincial governments have initiated sector-wide programme reviews of the postsecondary system to address these challenges. For instance, in the authors' home province, Alberta, the Provincial Government has articulated their intent through the 'Alberta 2030' initiative (2021) of 'Building Skills for Jobs.' Pronounced goals are to transform Alberta's higher education system by emphasizing future work readiness and tightening the postsecondary-industry relationships.

In examining work readiness, enterprising capability is an oft-mentioned desirable quality (Enstroem, 2018; Jackson *et al.*, 2022; Lean, 2012; O'Neill, 2016). This behavioural readiness broadly speaks to individuals apt at identifying opportunities, taking initiatives, being reflective, assuming accountability, seeing things through, communicating, and taking calculated risks. In

work-integrated learning, students are organically exposed to immersion in authentic tasks that allow them to further their enterprising capability through uncertain elements, repetition under new situations, and opportunities for personal reflection (Govender and Wait, 2017; Smith, 2012). These experiences are challenging to emulate in a classroom, and the inclusion of enterprise education in curricula requires measurements for assurance of enterprise learning, which differs from traditional knowledge assessment (Lackéus and Sävetun, 2019; Murray, 2019).

This research responds to the call for research on enterprise education in terms of a cohesive enterprise education pedagogy (e.g. Jones *et al.*, 2014) and valid enterprise education assessment practices (e.g. Draycott *et al.*, 2011). It achieves this by describing the design, logistics, and measurements of an undergraduate business course in Organizational Management purposed for enterprise education. Students undertake several online and real-life out-of-class negotiations in the course and provide personal reflections and quantitative scale responses about their self-perceived self-confidence over progressive negotiating exercises. In triangulating the qualitative and quantitative responses, we demonstrate the course's significant impact on students' enterprise learning by evidencing their development of negotiating competence, a fundamental enterprising competency, and self-confidence, a central enterprising attribute.

Limning enterprise education

Background

Often overshadowed by entrepreneurship education (Draycott *et al.*, 2011; Edwards and Muir, 2012; Gibb, 2008; Jones and Penaluna, 2013), enterprise education is a tangible contribution to twenty-first-century business education (Enstroem, 2018; Jones and Iredale, 2010). Early on, the

value proposition entailed productivity, innovation, improved living standards, and private enterprise (APEE, 2021; Enstroem, 2018). From the start, enterprise education has been linked to work-integrated learning through internships, sandwich degree programmes, and cooperative education (Enstroem, 2018; Jackson *et al.*, 2022; Jones and Iredale, 2010). Work-integrated learning provides experiential learning, which signifies the desirability of enterprise education (Enstroem, 2018; Heyworth-Thomas, 2023; Jackson *et al.*, 2022). As such, enterprise education provides opportunities to experiment and learn through hands-on tasks, achieve goals under pressure, engage in problem-solving, learn by discovery, and learn through dynamic peer interactions (Draycott *et al.*, 2011; Enstroem, 2018; Gibb, 1993; Jackson *et al.*, 2022). Ideally, these enterprising experiences yield a sense of self-reliance and self-confidence, stimulating the person to engage in further enterprising behaviours (Brentnall, 2021; Enstroem, 2018; Tiernan, 2016). Enterprise education generally puts the development of personal skills and behaviours to function as a citizen, consumer, employee, and self-employed person at the fore (Enstroem, 2018; Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004; Jones and Iredale, 2014; Owens and Tibby, 2014). Entrepreneurship then draws on enterprising attributes, skills, and behaviours in starting and developing a business (Gibb, 2008; Jones and Penaluna, 2013).

Figure 1 presents a condensed set of the enterprising attributes, competencies, and behaviours endorsed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (2018). The central behaviours of enterprising people are opportunism, initiative-taking, calculated risk-taking, problem-solving inclination, and autonomy (QAA, 2018). Developing enterprising attributes and skills through properly designed curriculums and courses implies that the person will be better

equipped to produce enterprising behaviours. This awareness and increased self-confidence will spark enterprising behaviours.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Enterprise education rests upon naturally occurring experiences of self-discovery, goal-setting, time management, and decision-making under uncertainty (Enstroem, 2018; Turner and Mulholland, 2017; Yasin and Khansari, 2021). In work-integrated learning, relevant work assignments and a supportive environment for a trial-and-error approach are necessary (Enstroem, 2018; Jackson *et al.*, 2022). Integrated reflection assignments then incentivize the students to juxtapose in-class learning with work placement learning and how these experiences impacted them. Integrated reflection assignments will assist students in developing self-awareness and critical thinking, contributing to deep-level learning (Albert and Grzeda, 2015; Welsh and Dehler, 2012).

Enterprise education in the classroom

Compared to work-integrated learning, where challenges and decision-making dilemmas occur organically, the classroom learning environment is more rigid. In reviewing examples of enterprise education, Gibb (1993) postulates three necessary conditions for enterprise education in the classroom: (1) Essence of Enterprise, (2) Decision-Making under Uncertainty, and (3) Opportunities for Self-Discovery. A sense of enterprise implies ownership and responsibility by students to see things through, freedom and space to navigate alternative routes and a clear focus on future outcomes. When facing uncertain decisions, students must manage the totality of the projects themselves, assign meanings to them, and manage interpersonal relationships on an as-

needed basis. These attributes imply open-ended scenarios, so students have space to be opportunistic, investigative, and creative, requiring a more facilitatory teaching style than conventional lectures.

An alternative way to comprehend enterprise education is to frame it around a time axis or process of critical events. In Dewey's *Philosophy of Experience*, the planning stage encompasses the action's purpose, the action to receive the experience, and checks and balances intertwined with the action to facilitate reflection (Lewis and Williams, 1994; Matlay and Pepin, 2012). Similarly, Kolb's *Experiential Learning Cycle* (Kolb, 2014; Morris, 2020) calls for four distinct phases: (1) concrete experiences—encounter new situations or reinterpret old ones, (2) reflective observations—noticing what happened and relate to past experiences, (3) abstract conceptualizations—distilling perceptions into new or modified abstract concepts, and (4) active experimentations—test new ideas and hone skills in new situations. Through this continual learning, students contemplate their experience, draw conclusions from it, and apply their learning to a new situation (Eriksen, 2012).

The QAA (2018) lists negotiating competency as a desirable enterprising outcome under communication and strategy skills. Negotiations are ubiquitous in our personal lives and span all human activity (Thompson *et al.*, 2010). They are also cardinal business activities occurring at every organizational level, internally and externally, in different functional areas and scales (Agndal *et al.*, 2017; Mozahem *et al.*, 2021). However, irrespective of context, all successful negotiations feature strategy choice, preparation, tactics, concessions, and closing tactics. Negotiating competency, therefore, has generic qualities that are transversal to contexts. The QAA

(2018) notes the importance of building students' self-confidence in enterprise education to cultivate a 'can-do' outlook. Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory serves as a fundamental conceptual framework for understanding self-confidence development. Self-efficacy pertains to the belief in one's capacity to navigate uncertain situations. It is divided into efficacy expectation, belief in capability for successful participation in an event, and outcome expectation, the extent to which one believes participation will produce an effect. Benson and Enstroem's Self-Confidence Indicator (Benson and Enstroem, 2013; Benson and Enstroem, 2017) has been developed from these propositions and is used in this study to measure students' self-confidence in managing negotiations.

While enterprise education is an established learning framework with presumed benefits to the individual and society, outcomes are not always measured, evaluated, and evidenced. There is a need to understand the feasibility and effectiveness of enterprise education in terms of immediate benefits and long-term impact to justify its existence (Henry and Lewis, 2018; Jones *et al.*, 2017; Turner and Mulholland, 2017). This paper contributes to this desire by examining how students respond to embedded enterprise education components in undergraduate programmes regarding negotiating competency and self-confidence development.

Design and method

Course design

The negotiation exercises presented herein comprise the primary assessed assignments in the undergraduate Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) course in 'Managing Negotiation' at a Canadian university. It is a senior-level course in the Organizational Management block where students

‘explore theoretical concepts that support practical training in the key competencies required for negotiating in day-to-day situations.’ The students then ‘demonstrate and apply negotiating skills and concepts in out-of-class situations.’ Students taking this course were 3rd-year students enrolled in multiple sections of the same course taught in a blended delivery format.

Students do six negotiating exercises: three online and three real-life negotiations. The three sets of negotiations are staggered so that students first do an online negotiation exercise, followed by a real-life negotiating exercise. In tackling the negotiations, students use an assignment guideline that includes strategy choice, preparation, tactics, making concessions, ethical considerations, and reflections and future applications in both modes. This guideline is followed for all three sets of online and real-life negotiations so that students write up extensive qualitative reflections three times, pinpointing their newly found experiential insights about negotiations and themselves.

In the online negotiations, students negotiated the price of used cars, followed by an employment-related negotiation, and lastly, a house purchase negotiation. All online negotiation scenarios were facilitated through the learning management system Blackboard Learn. Students were given a one-page role description that provided context for each negotiator conducting online negotiations. When negotiating, students signed on as pairs to Blackboard Learn. In the used car negotiation, one student played the seller role, and the other student acted as the buyer. For the employment conditions, one student acted as an employee and the other as an employer. The house transaction negotiation featured an added complexity in that both the student playing the seller and the buyer role interacted with other students, taking on the personas of buyer and seller agents. The students

chose real-life negotiations after completing each online negotiation and covered a range of negotiations for prices, rental deposits, apartment rents, wages, and mortgages.

As the exercise structure covers strategy choice and preparation, negotiations, and reflection, the design of the negotiating exercises adheres to the spirit of Dewey's Philosophy of Experience, focusing on Planning-Action-Reflection (Lewis and Williams, 1994; Matlay and Pepin, 2012). The repetitious structure, which allows for contrast and learning between the old and new experiences, also aligns with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2014). The continuous cognitive process and incremental learning are emphasized in each new situation. Figure 2 presents the structure of the negotiating exercise as it relates to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2014).

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

Method

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected as part of the course. Prior approval had been obtained to use the data for this study. The reflective assignments, which followed the three online and real-life exercises, comprise this study's qualitative data. These reflections are open-ended personal narratives illustrating students' experiential journey, personal development, and newfound insights. In writing up their reflections, the instructions specifically asked students to follow a structured format and allude to the different phases of the negotiating exercises and, consequently, the phases of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2014): 1) Personal Attitude, (2) Strategy and Negotiation Preparation, (3) In-depth Description of the Negotiation, (4) Opening

Tactics, (5) Tactics Used During the Negotiation, (6) Concessions Used During the Negotiation, (7) Closing Tactics, (8) Ethics, (9) Results and Practical Lessons, and (10) Future Negotiations.

None of the questions in the reflective assignments specifically asked students to consider aspects of their self-confidence but instead asked about their attitudes toward negotiations and strategies used. In analyzing the qualitative material, students' reflective statements were explored to look for manifestations of self-confidence. Each occurrence was noted, and a summary code was used to indicate the percentage of students who alluded to aspects of self-confidence in their reflective writings.

Students' self-confidence development was measured through Benson and Enstroem's Self-Confidence Indicator (Benson and Enstroem, 2013; Benson and Enstroem, 2017), developed from Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory conjures that individual efficacy comprises the tenets of Person, Behaviour, and Outcomes. Therefore, the Self-Confidence Indicator measures Bandura's three dimensions through scale items covering Beliefs and Self-Assuredness, Initiating Actions and Influencing Others, and Achieving Results. Figure 3 presents the fundamental propositions of Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory and the Self-Confidence Indicator's dimensions (Benson and Enstroem, 2013; Benson and Enstroem, 2017).

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

The Self-Confidence Indicator was administered to participants in a two-stage process similar to the approach used by Martins *et al.* (2022) and a retrospective post-then-pre design following

Howard and Dailey (1979). Participants completed the Self-Confidence Indicator at the course's beginning and end and retrospectively evaluated their self-confidence at the course's outset. Students responded to the 12 scale items in the Self-Confidence Indicator through a 5-point Likert scale anchored by 5, Strongly agree, and 1, Strongly disagree.

Students had limited exposure to negotiation concepts, tools, and techniques at the course's start. This limited experience could bias their self-assessment of negotiating self-confidence (Drennan and Hyde, 2008; Kowalski, 2023). Therefore, combining these three assessments allowed us to measure the extent of perceived self-confidence improvement and whether students over- or underestimated their initial negotiating self-confidence levels. The latter measure is essential when using curriculum design to align students' competence and confidence accurately.

Results

Qualitative data

In their reflective writings, over 80% of all students mentioned aspects of self-confidence as they alluded to the negotiation exercises. The manifestations expressed either lacking self-confidence, having self-confidence, or gaining self-confidence through the exercises. All-in-all, students identified self-confidence as a constituent negotiating factor. They were cognizant of how limits to it negatively impacted their attitude toward going outside their comfort zone and engaging in enterprising behaviours. In the written material, female students mentioned aspects of self-confidence to a greater extent than males, with an occurrence rate of 88.24% for female students and 79.17% for male students. These numbers are based on a sample of 130 personal reflections.

Reading through students' statements illustrates how their views on negotiations and self-confidence evolved over the three sets of negotiations. The reflections demonstrate that students regard self-confidence as necessary in negotiations, with remarks such as 'the most important negotiation tactic is confidence' and 'I feel that negotiating and personal confidence are extremely positively linked.' Students frequently referenced their development as negotiators in the course, with examples such as 'My personal attitude towards negotiation has changed significantly. I am no longer afraid of negotiating and what people think of me when I negotiate' and 'I have rarely participated in negotiations prior to this course as I found them to be intimidating and emotional. I felt confident and the stress I had felt before the negotiation was no longer present as I realized this negotiation went successfully.' Figure 4 presents representative verbatim sample statements from students' reflections over the three sets of negotiations.

[INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE]

In conclusion, based on students' reflective statements, when starting the course, students did not see themselves as effective negotiators; they were not confident and doubted their abilities. After completing the second set of negotiations, the tone changed, and students started to believe in their abilities as their competence in negotiating tactics increased. Students were generally quite positive in the final set of negotiations, saw themselves as confident, and acknowledged that their negotiating competence and self-confidence had increased. From the development of reflections over the three sets of negotiations, one can find tentative support for self-confidence development according to an increase in belief and self-assuredness, initiating action, influencing others,

achieving results, and finally, an increase in self-confidence. Thus far, the qualitative data points to the concomitance of negotiating competence and self-confidence.

Quantitative data

Students provided three responses to the Self-Confidence Indicator: their perceived level of self-confidence at the beginning of the course (PRE), after taking the course (POST), and their level of self-confidence at the beginning of the course in retrospect (THEN). The scores for the 12 items of the Self-Confidence Indicator were averaged within the three types of responses. Two difference scores were computed from these scores, POST-PRE and POST-THEN, resulting in $n=63$ difference scores from a sample of 33 students, gauging students' within-subjects development of self-confidence over the negotiation course.

Figure 5 exhibits the distribution of self-confidence development scores for the 63 responses. The maximum increase (decrease) in self-confidence students could experience is +4.0 (-4.0). Students elicited a fair degree of variability in their self-confidence development. Even so, students' self-confidence consistently increased materially through the course, with maximum development of over 2.5, although most responses hovered around 1.5. Only two responses indicate a negative development of self-confidence, as illustrated by the infringement of the graph into the zero-point area in the middle of Figure 5.

[INSERT FIGURE 5 HERE]

The variability in students' self-confidence development called for a parameterization through a multiple regression model. In the regression model, the difference scores served as the dependent variable. To inquire into the change attributions, an indicator variable controlled for FEMALE student (MALE student), and a second indicator variable controlled for the type of difference score, POST-THEN (POST-PRE). The student-perceived usefulness of the online (OLN) and the real-life negotiations (RLN) was measured through two 5-Likert questions, and these respective responses were included as two explanatory variables. An interaction variable was also included to tease out whether the impact of student gender on self-confidence depended on the type of difference score: FEMALE \times POST-THEN.

The regression results are presented in Table 1. In predicting students' development in negotiating self-confidence, the regression model explains 62% of the observed variation ($F[5, 57] = 18.65$; $p < .0000$). The results indicate that students overestimated their self-confidence in negotiations at the beginning of the course. Specifically, through the significant and positive POST-THEN coefficient, it can be inferred that students deemed their improvement in self-confidence to be almost 0.7 unit scores higher in retrospect. Assessing gender impact, the first analysis through the FEMALE variable proposes that gender is insignificant, with female and male students experiencing equal levels of self-confidence development. However, the picture becomes more involved when considering the impact of the interaction variable between FEMALE and retrospective difference score, POST-THEN. Accordingly, female students inflated their negotiating self-confidence at the beginning of the course to a much greater extent than male students. The effect sizes imply that female students overestimated their initial self-confidence twice as much as the male students, with ~ 1.5 unit scores compared to ~ 0.7 unit scores.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Integrating the results, we note that male and female students were on par in self-confidence development, as judged by their POST-PRE scores. However, female students elicited initial inflated self-confidence scores over twice as high as male students. Holistically, the results demonstrate that female students benefitted from a more substantial improvement in negotiating self-confidence through experiential learning in the negotiating exercises. This relationship is captured in Figure 6. Examining the box plot, female and male students have similar self-confidence development, as judged by their POST-PRE scores. Nevertheless, female students exhibit more substantive improvement when considering their retrospective assessment.

The positive and significant OLN variable demonstrates that students deemed online negotiations more instrumental than real-life negotiations in their self-confidence development. As much as this finding may seem unforeseen, the online negotiation exercises preceded the real-life negotiations in each of the three sets of negotiations. The online negotiations were also more structured and stylized, providing students with the essential tools and framework as they subsequently tackled real-life negotiations, situations with inherently more uncertainty.

[INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE]

Discussion

This paper started in the longstanding but recently revitalized debate about the ideal makeup of undergraduate students' professional competencies and work readiness as they enter the future labour market. At the authors' University, a postsecondary institution specializing in undergraduate education, professional competencies have long been integrated into the BCom curriculum (Benson and Enstroem, 2017). The professional competency framework includes Critical Thinking, Ethics, Team Work, Communication, and Technology. However, these competencies are meaningless if students do not take initiative, step outside their comfort zone, and 'make things happen.' We identified enterprise education as a fruitful avenue to address these concerns.

Rooted in work-integrated learning, we noted the reliance of enterprise education on immersed learning environments that enable students to develop behaviours to tackle naturally arising problems and decisions in realistic scenarios. Gradual learning occurs through reflection and self-discovery, gradually transforming into enhanced self-sufficiency, confidence, and productivity. In bringing enterprise education to campus, we described the design and setup of a 3rd year negotiating course in the BCom programme. Students conduct rounds of online and real-life negotiations, interlaced by reflections, to produce experiential learning in line with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2014).

In students' qualitative and quantitative responses, we found affirmative evidence about the course's effectiveness in advancing students' negotiating skills—one of the vital enterprising competencies. Students also reported that the exercises increased self-confidence—one of the foundational enterprising attributes. In the reflective writings following each online and real-life

negotiation set, most students—unsolicitedly—mentioned self-confidence. From these results, we infer that the lack of self-confidence constituted a mental barrier for students to engage in enterprising behaviours but that the course assisted students in overcoming this insufficiency. The students' reflective writings indicate a continuous concomitance of competence and confidence over the phases of belief and self-assuredness, initiating action, influencing others, achieving results, and increasing self-confidence. This principal finding is important because the exercises seem to result in self-confidence that matches students' competence.

The quantitative analysis provided thought-provoking findings. On average, male ($M = 0.70$) and female ($M = 0.83$) students were roughly on par in their self-confidence development when looking at their prospective assessments. At the same time, students demonstrated retrospective self-confidence developments that differed from their prospective assessments. This result indicates a response-shift bias: a change in students' evaluation standard of self-confidence as they learned more about themselves and their abilities in the negotiating assignments. As students' retrospective self-confidence development was more significant than their prospective assessment, it can be inferred that they overestimated their self-confidence at the beginning of the course. So, while both genders exhibit similar prospective self-confidence development, the retrospective assessments tell us that the female students improved more in their self-confidence than their male peers from the course and the negotiating exercises. This finding matches well the female students' greater likelihood of making remarks around self-confidence in their reflective writings. Concurrently, it is notable that female students exhibited a more dramatic response-shift bias, indicating that they were akin to overestimating their initial level of self-confidence to a greater extent. Yet, female

students overestimated their initial self-confidence from a lower level ($M = 3.23$) than male students ($M = 3.58$).

Holistically, these results reverberate but also dissonate the longstanding discourse about gender differences in self-confidence across judgment and decision-making contexts. For instance, it is a long-held belief that females exhibit less self-confidence than males (Papyrina *et al.*, 2021) and that males are generally more inclined to overestimate their self-confidence (Ring *et al.*, 2016). At the same time, it is often reported that females are less likely to engage in negotiations than males (Mozahem *et al.*, 2021), which may imply that they have less calibration to fall back on when assessing their negotiating self-confidence. Therefore, self-confidence development, curriculum design, and programme intervention evaluation should account for the situation specificity of self-confidence (Oney and Aghaei, 2022) and that risk-tolerance—which is domain-specific (Enstroem and Schmaltz, 2017)—will likely impact self-confidence. Moreover, gender, role congruency, and personality will affect self-confidence (Huszczo and Endres, 2017; Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014; Shinnar *et al.*, 2014).

A fruitful avenue to explore, which could reconcile the results in this study, is a targeted study investigating the linkage between students with low self-confidence (high self-confidence) and their tendencies to overestimate (underestimate) their self-confidence while controlling for gender. Such a study falls firmly in the context of a Dunning-Kruger Effect (Ehrlinger *et al.*, 2008; Greitemeyer, 2020; Kruger and Dunning, 1999) applied to negotiation self-confidence. The hypotheses would revolve around signs that low-confidence students overestimate their ability relative to themselves. This assertion does not preclude that they still consider themselves less

confident than others. One should expect the opposite pattern for students on the higher end of the self-confidence continuum, a tendency to underestimate their self-confidence relative to themselves. In the present study, we saw how students' self-assessments of self-confidence changed as they progressed through the course. In a Dunning-Kruger context, this correction indicates that students increased their metacognitive competence so that the limits of their abilities came to the fore (Kruger and Dunning, 1999). The logical implication is that in our study, students gained greater self-awareness, one of the necessary conditions for personal development (Huszczo and Endres, 2017).

This study highlights the critical mission of business schools to not only further students' subject matter knowledge but also their sense of capability (Huszczo and Endres, 2017). The challenge is to do it so that students' self-confidence develops vis-à-vis their competence and, as such, to design exercises that are developing, yet 'corrective,' in self-confidence. Altogether, students' reflections and the scale measurements did show that the course corrected students' initial inflated self-confidence and thus served as a 'reality confrontation.' At the same time, by the end of the course, students had developed their negotiation competence, matched by a corresponding boost of self-confidence.

An expectancy of postsecondary institutions is a sound curriculum design to ensure learning for all students without differentiating for some (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). This paper chalked out this result by providing an 'experimental and experiential zone' for students and using curriculum principles of knowledge-steeping, simple-to-complex, structured-to-unstructured, and low uncertainty to high uncertainty within a repetitious structure with intertwined reflection. In

achieving experiential learning within the classroom—and, accordingly, enterprise education—we suggest that beyond Gibb’s propositions (1993), the two dimensions of *real-life consequences for actions* and *emotional intensity* are necessary inducements to evoke in students through the curriculum design.

In light of the evidence-driven economy and the realities of a sharpened ROI focus driven by shrinking public funding, even local professional competency measurements demonstrated in this study will become instrumental assets. Postsecondary institutions need these as they (I) evidence their mission and vision to governments and other stakeholders, (II) heighten their brand and value proposition, (III) seek accreditations, (IV) demonstrate societal impact, (V) underwrite the graduate competency set, and (VI) evaluate the effectiveness of programme and curriculum changes. Therefore, postsecondary institutions need to define, measure, and monitor relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) to metamorphose into tomorrow’s requisite of the *Data-Driven University*.

There are limitations to this study. The study does not have a control group to compare students who had the intervention through the course and negotiating exercises and those who did not have the intervention. A natural experiment, or at least a quasi-natural experiment, would have strengthened the study’s validity and lessened the possibility of extraneous variables influencing the results. The analysis would then be conducted as a Difference-in-Differences analysis (Abadie, 2005), comparing the changes in self-confidence over time between students who took the course and those who did not. The sample size is also small, even though the within-subjects design partially offsets this limitation of the study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was undertaken within the broader context of addressing business graduates' competency profiles and enhancing their work readiness. By integrating Enterprise Education principles into the curriculum, we established a framework that mirrors the experiential benefits of work-integrated learning. The course's iterative structure, encompassing progressively complex assignments intertwined with reflective exercises and integrated pre- and post-scale measurements, was designed to foster the development of critical enterprising attributes.

Our findings offer a multifaceted perspective on the interaction between self-confidence, negotiating competence, and gender. The students' reflective writings illuminated the pivotal role of self-confidence as a determining factor in engaging in negotiations—a quintessential enterprising behaviour. Moreover, the quantitative metrics, rooted in Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory, provided compelling evidence of the course's effectiveness in elevating students' self-confidence.

The emergence of a response-shift bias among male and female students lends nuance to our understanding of self-confidence development. It underscores the nuanced interplay between gender, self-assessment, and self-confidence. Our insights resonate with the intricate dynamics of self-perception, challenging conventional beliefs about gender differences in self-confidence across decision-making contexts.

Given these findings, our study extends the discourse by proposing a targeted investigation into the relationship between students' self-confidence levels and their propensity to overestimate or underestimate their abilities. Such an inquiry aligns with the Dunning-Kruger Effect, elucidating the intricacies of self-assessment and metacognitive competence within negotiation contexts.

This research contributes to the realm of Enterprise Education and underscores the imperative for educational institutions to balance subject matter knowledge with nurturing students' self-assurance and capabilities. The methodology and insights offered here lay the groundwork for curriculum design that harmonizes competence with calibrated self-confidence.

In a larger context, this study underscores the growing importance of quantifiable metrics in higher education. Collecting and utilizing relevant KPIs become pivotal as institutions seek to validate their mission, amplify their value proposition, secure accreditations, and cater to stakeholders' demands. This paradigm shift positions universities as proactive agents in shaping the educational landscape of tomorrow, driven by data-driven decision-making and holistic student development.

While this study provides valuable insights, we acknowledge its limitations. The absence of a control group and the relatively small sample size create opportunities for future research. Addressing these constraints through quasi-experimental designs and larger cohorts would enhance the robustness and generalizability of our findings.

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FIGURES AND TABLES

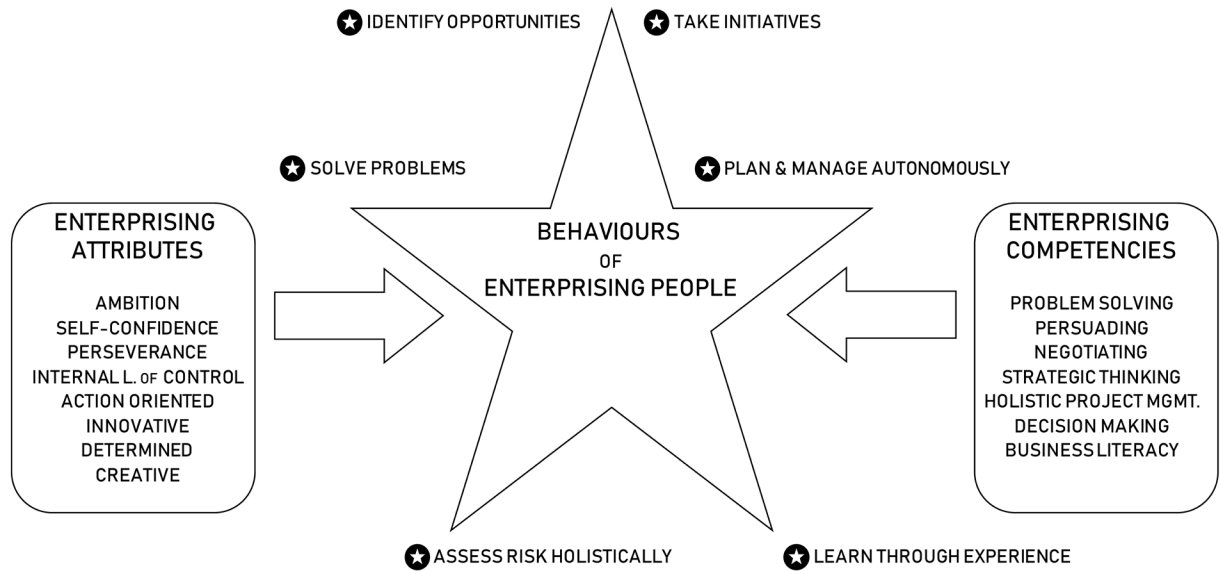


Figure 1. Enterprising attributes, competencies, and behaviours

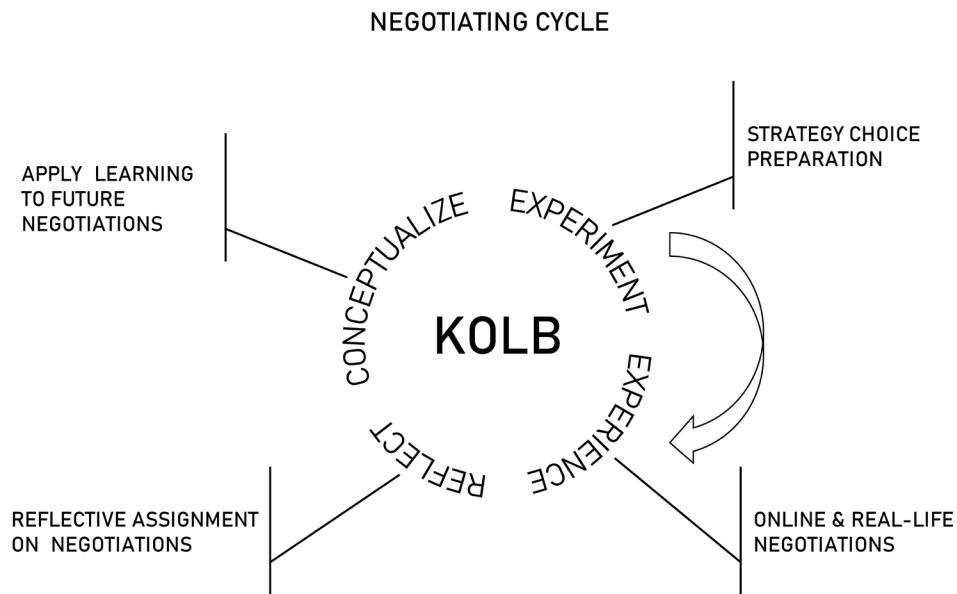


Figure 2. Negotiating cycle in relationship to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

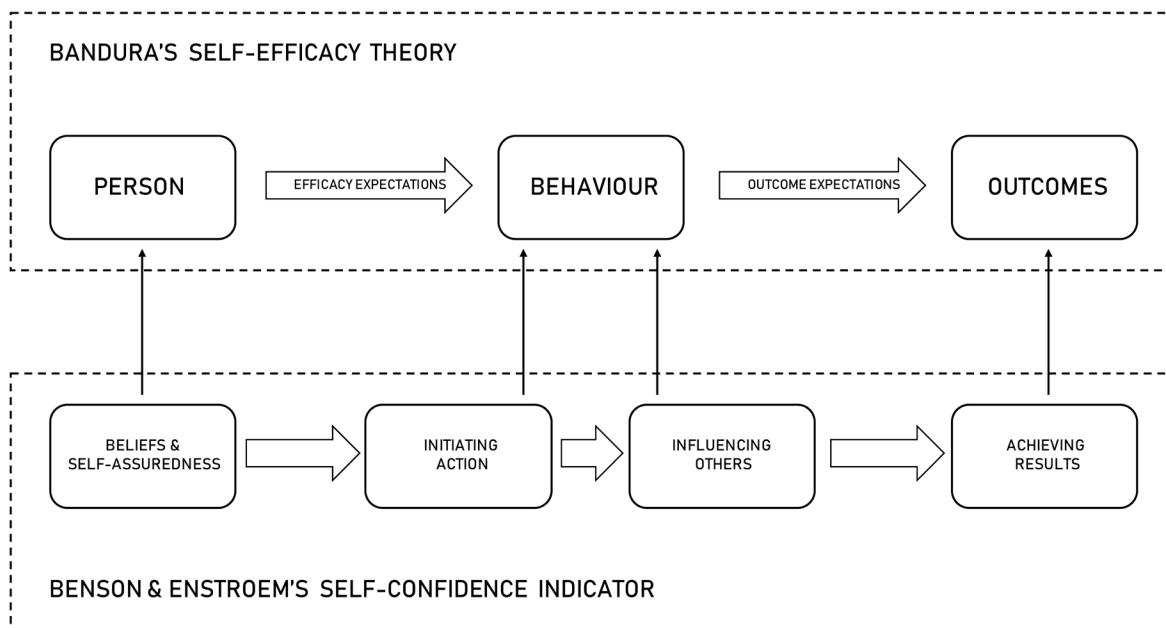


Figure 3. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and the Self Confidence Indicator

VERBATIM REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS

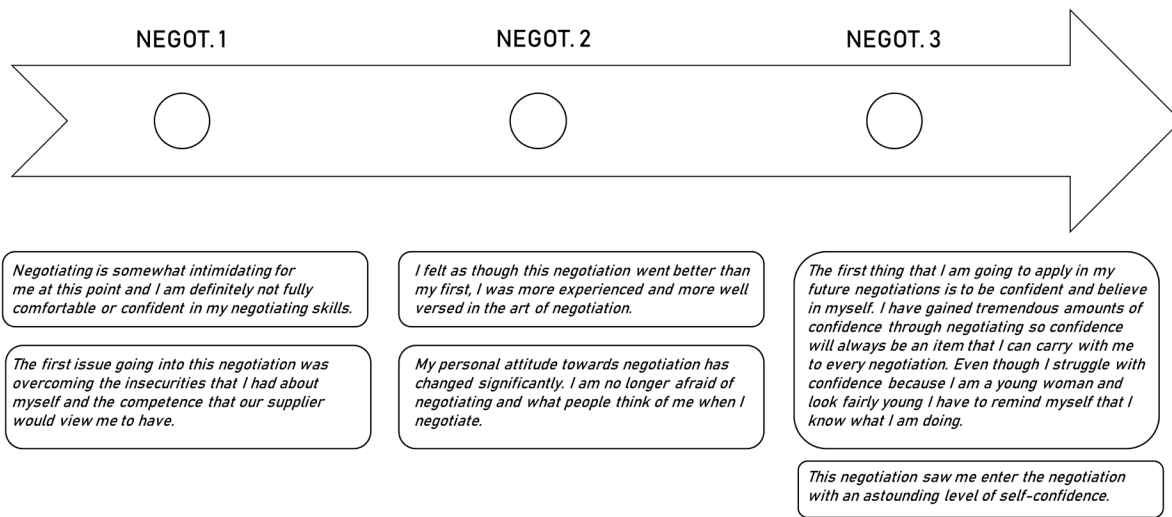


Figure 4. Sample verbatim statements from students' reflections

DISTRIBUTION OF SELF-CONFIDENCE DEVELOPMENT

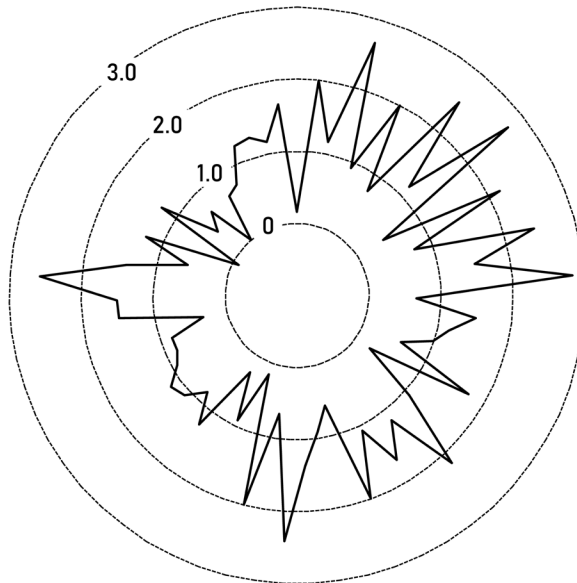


Figure 5. Distribution of self-confidence development



Figure 6. Comparison of female and male students' self-confidence development

Table 1. Regression results

SUMMARY	COEFFICIENT	ESTIMATE	p-value
R-Squared = .62	INTERCEPT	-.059	.861
F = 18.65, p-value = .000	FEMALE	.057	.762
n = 63	POST-THEN	.685	.000
	FEMALE×POST-THEN	.796	.003
	OLN	.141	.038
	RLN	.078	.288