

Entrepreneurial relevance of Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy: Enhancing organizing and conceptual competencies among management students

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Abstract

The key catalyst to any nation’s development in this innovation-driven world is entrepreneurship, which not only lead to economic development but social transformation and job creation. Despite government giving necessary ecosystem to the startups, entrepreneurs continue to face early failure. This alarming rate of failure trends to reveal a critical gap in essential entrepreneurial competencies. Addressing this gap, this paper is an attempt to study the impact of the timeless philosophical teachings of Swami Vivekananda. The research employs an experimental design to assess the impact of integrating Swami Vivekananda’s philosophical insights into entrepreneurship education for management students in Jaipur. Through structured interventions, workshops, and competency assessments, the study evaluates changes in key entrepreneurial competencies namely Organizing and Conceptual competencies.

Keywords: Swami vivekananda, entrepreneurship, organizing competency, conceptual competency, strategic competency, philosophies

Introduction

Life of Swami Vivekananda is a profound source of inspiration to all and still his philosophies serve as a great source of motivation for many generations. His revolutionary thoughts and ideas have been compiled in The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda spanning nine volumes. The magnetism of his personality is so wide that he is not only the source of inspiration for Indians but people around the globe admires him.

Swami Vivekananda’s life is like a vast ocean and for young entrepreneurs only a glimpse of it is covered in school and college curricula. Yet, for young entrepreneurs, his journey holds immense relevance. Despite belonging to a different era and context, he started from humble beginnings and went on to establish the Ramakrishna Mission—much like a visionary entrepreneur building an enduring institution from the ground up.

An entrepreneur requires two important competencies namely Organising and conceptual competencies.

Organising Competency

Entrepreneurs, as business owners, are responsible for managing a wide range of tasks and overseeing multiple functional areas. This requires strong abilities in planning and organising resources effectively within the organisation (Chandler & Hanks, 1994). According to McClelland (1987), continuous monitoring is crucial to ensure that the business operates efficiently. To achieve this, entrepreneurs must develop key organising skills such as leadership, delegation, coaching, and training (Martin & Staines, 1994). The three essential components of this competency are teamwork, leadership, and persuasiveness.

Teamwork and Coordination

Coordination is the very essence of management and was identified by Henri Fayol as one of the fundamental Principles of Management in his 1916 book “Administration Industrielle et Générale.” However, long before Fayol’s publication, Swami Vivekananda had already emphasized this concept through his writings, asserting that “organizations of strong wills create the future of India.”

In his writings, Swami Vivekananda reflected on how a small group of invaders, though inferior to us in many respects, were able to conquer, enslave, and rule over us solely because they possessed the vital skill of coordination, which we as Hindus lacked. Entrepreneurs can draw a powerful lesson from this — by embracing the virtues of coordination and teamwork, setting aside personal interests, and placing the collective goal above individual gain, they can achieve remarkable success and overcome any challenge.

Leadership

Entrepreneurship and leadership are deeply interconnected. To drive their vision forward and inspire their teams, entrepreneurs must possess strong leadership skills. While entrepreneurship encompasses elements such as innovation,



risk-taking, and business development, leadership centers on motivating people and uniting them toward common objectives. The synergy of both is vital for building and sustaining successful ventures.

Swami Vivekananda exemplified true visionary leadership—a fact beautifully illustrated in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western disciples. He was not only a remarkable leader but also an insightful teacher who often imparted valuable lessons on leadership to his disciples. In one of his letters to Alasinga, his disciple from Madras, Swami Vivekananda offered guidance on managing people within an organisation. He wrote: “Be the servant while leading... Have infinite patience, and success is yours. Now take care of this: Do not try to boss others, as the Yankees say.”

Persuasiveness

Successful entrepreneurs must possess the art of persuasion. A persuasive entrepreneur not only convinces others but also builds strong networks that contribute to the organisation's growth. Swami Vivekananda exemplified this competency through his remarkable ability to create a shared vision and inspire people. By channelising the energies of individuals through his profound interpretation of Karma Yoga, he instilled the idea that “Service to humanity is service to God,” awakening a dormant nation with this unifying ideal. His persuasiveness extended beyond India—at the World's Parliament of Religions, he eloquently conveyed the essence of Hinduism to the Western world, forming a powerful network in America, where many were so deeply influenced by his message that they later became his disciples.

Conceptual Competency

Conceptual competency refers to the ability to think creatively and “out of the box.” It is reflected in one's capacity to stimulate new patterns of thought and generate innovative ideas or concepts—often requiring a departure from conventional methods of doing things (Michalko, 2000). The ability to think analytically and handle uncertainty is largely dependent on strong conceptual skills (Bird, 1995).

Problem Solving

The journey of entrepreneurship is far from easy; it is filled with challenges and obstacles that test one's determination and resilience. However, when an entrepreneur learns to confront and overcome these challenges effectively, they not only grow stronger but also gain the ability to enjoy the true rewards of entrepreneurial success.

Decision Making

Entrepreneurs function in a constantly changing environment where they are frequently required to make crucial decisions. Decision-making is the ability to assess situations, evaluate available alternatives, and choose the most effective course of action that leads to success.

The Sanskrit word “*Vivek*” originates from the root “*विच*” (*vich*), meaning to discern or select what is right and good. Life is essentially shaped by our choices, and our choices are guided by our will. Therefore, for an entrepreneur, the ability to make the right decision is of utmost importance.

In moments of moral dilemma, the ancient Indian concepts of “Shreya” and “Preya” provide timeless guidance. Every decision we make can be viewed through these two lenses:

- Preya refers to what is pleasing or gratifying in the short term, offering immediate comfort but little lasting value.
- Shreya, on the other hand, signifies what is ultimately good, beneficial, and aligned with long-term success—even if it demands effort or sacrifice in the present.

The choice between Shreya and Preya rests entirely with us. Entrepreneurs must always remember that every decision taken today shapes the path of their future. Once a decision is made, all other alternatives should be set aside with conviction and commitment.

Risk Taking

Risk-taking is the ability to identify, evaluate, and embrace calculated risks that can drive business growth and innovation. It is one of the defining qualities of successful entrepreneurs, as building and expanding a venture often requires stepping into uncertain and uncharted territory. Swami Vivekananda beautifully expressed the spirit of risk-taking when he said: “Take risks in your life. If you win, you can lead. If you lose, you can guide.” Swami Vivekananda viewed risk not as something to be feared, but as an opportunity for growth and learning. According to him, even failure holds immense value—while success enables one to lead, failure provides wisdom that can guide others. In today's dynamic world, entrepreneurship inherently demands courage to take risks. Although there is no guarantee that every risk will yield success, the willingness to take them is what truly distinguishes an entrepreneur from the rest.

Material and Methods

Both primary and secondary sources were utilized to collect data for the present research.

The primary data collection method was employed as it was deemed the most appropriate approach for this study. Data was gathered through a structured questionnaire, using standardized scales (instruments) to ensure accurate measurement and alignment with the research objectives. Initially, a pre-training session was conducted to assess the existing level of entrepreneurial competencies among the students. Following this, relevant study material was shared and training sessions were organized. After the completion of training, a post-training questionnaire was administered to management students to evaluate their competencies using a five-point Likert scale.

Additionally, secondary data was used in designing and developing the Training Module. This data was collected from various sources, including *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, books and journals pertinent to the study, published and unpublished research material, and relevant websites associated with the research topic.

Sample Unit

The unit of analysis were 157 students of public and private universities from Jaipur. The data from the questionnaire has been analyzed using SPSS & Excel Spreadsheet.

Hypothesis

- **HO1:** There is no impact of the Entrepreneurial philosophies of Swami Vivekanand on Organising Competencies of Management students of Rajasthan.
- **HO2:** There is no impact of the Entrepreneurial philosophies of Swami Vivekanand on Conceptual

Competencies of Management students of Rajasthan.

- **HO1:** There is no impact of the Entrepreneurial philosophies of Swami Vivekanand on Organising Competencies of Management students of Rajasthan.

Male	P- Value	Null Hypothesis	Female	P- Value	Null Hypothesis
Team Work	<0.001	Reject	Team Work	<0.001	Reject
Leadership	<0.001	Reject	Leadership	<0.001	Reject
Persuasiveness	<0.001	Reject	Persuasiveness	<0.001	Reject

Organising Competency (Gender)

Since the p-values for all three competencies (Teamwork, Leadership, and Persuasiveness) are less than 0.001, which is far below the conventional significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in each case for both male and female respondents.

This means that there is a statistically significant impact of the independent variable (in your study, possibly the training, or the influence of Swami Vivekananda’s philosophies) on these competencies among both male and female management students.

In simpler terms:

- The training or intervention significantly improved teamwork, leadership, and persuasiveness for both male and female participants.
- There is a meaningful difference before and after the intervention, confirming that the change was not due to chance.

Personal Competency (Family Background)

Business Class	P- Value	Null Hypothesis	Service Class	P- Value	Null Hypothesis
Team Work	<0.001	Reject	Team Work	<0.001	Reject
Leadership	<0.001	Reject	Leadership	<0.001	Reject
Persuasiveness	<0.001	Reject	Persuasiveness	<0.001	Reject

Since the p-values for all three competencies—Teamwork, Leadership, and Persuasiveness—are less than 0.001, which is well below the standard significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected for both business-class and service-class participants.

This indicates that there is a statistically significant effect of the studied factor (most likely the entrepreneurial training or

exposure to Swami Vivekananda’s philosophies) on these competencies in both groups.

HO2: There is no impact of the Entrepreneurial philosophies of Swami Vivekanand on Conceptual Competencies of Management students of Rajasthan.

Male	P- Value	Null Hypothesis	Female	P- Value	Null Hypothesis
Problem Solving	<0.001	Reject	Problem Solving	<0.001	Reject
Risk Taking	<0.001	Reject	Risk Taking	<0.001	Reject
Decision Making	<0.001	Reject	Decision Making	<0.001	Reject

The analysis reveals that for both male and female participants, the p-values for problem-solving, risk-taking, and decision-making are all less than 0.001, which is well below the accepted significance level of 0.05. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis for each competency, indicating that the observed changes are statistically significant and not due to chance. The results clearly suggest that the intervention or training program—likely

based on Swami Vivekananda’s entrepreneurial philosophies—had a strong and positive impact on enhancing these competencies among students of both genders. In essence, both male and female participants demonstrated a marked improvement in their ability to solve problems, take calculated risks, and make effective decisions after the intervention.

Business Class	P- Value	Null Hypothesis	Service Class	P- Value	Null Hypothesis
Problem Solving	<0.001	Reject	Problem Solving	<0.001	Reject
Risk Taking	<0.001	Reject	Risk Taking	<0.001	Reject
Decision Making	<0.001	Reject	Decision Making	<0.001	Reject

The analysis indicates that for both business-class and service-class participants, the p-values for problem-solving, risk-taking, and decision-making are all less than 0.001, which is significantly below the standard threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypotheses are rejected across all three competencies for both groups, confirming that the differences observed are statistically significant and not due to random variation. This demonstrates that the intervention

or training program had a notable positive impact on enhancing these entrepreneurial competencies among students from both backgrounds. In other words, irrespective of whether participants belonged to business or service families, the training effectively improved their ability to analyze and solve problems, take calculated risks, and make sound decisions—core qualities essential for entrepreneurial success.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study clearly demonstrate that the entrepreneurial training program based on the philosophies of Swami Vivekananda had a significant and positive impact on enhancing the entrepreneurial competencies of management students. The statistical results, with p-values less than 0.001 across all competencies—teamwork, leadership, persuasiveness, problem-solving, risk-taking, and decision-making—for both male and female participants, as well as for those from business and service-class backgrounds, led to the rejection of all null hypotheses. This signifies that the improvement in these competencies was highly significant and not due to chance.

The study thus concludes that the integration of Swami Vivekananda's entrepreneurial philosophies into training programs can effectively foster critical competencies among aspiring entrepreneurs. These results emphasize the universal relevance of his teachings in developing leadership, coordination, resilience, and strategic decision-making abilities necessary for entrepreneurial success. Furthermore, the outcomes highlight that such value-based training transcends gender and socio-economic boundaries, making it a powerful model for holistic entrepreneurial education in contemporary management studies.

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