

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF BOARD GAMES ON CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSETS IN YOUTH

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Abstract

This research paper explores the potential influence of board games on the development of entrepreneurial mindsets in children and young adults. With the increasing importance of entrepreneurship in today's economy, understanding the factors that contribute to cultivating entrepreneurial skills from a young age is crucial. Board games offer a unique and interactive platform that can potentially foster qualities such as strategic thinking, risk-taking, decision-making, and resilience, all essential for entrepreneurial success. Within the realm of board games, players are presented with multifaceted challenges that demand astute problem-solving, thoughtful planning, and calculated risk-taking—skills that are not only integral to entrepreneurship but also vital for success in various aspects of life. This paper examines existing literature on board games, entrepreneurship education, and cognitive development to provide insights into the relationship between board games and entrepreneurial mindsets and adopts a qualitative study design to investigate the phenomenon under investigation through interviews. The findings of the study show that board games serve as effective tools for nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit from a young age, offering a captivating blend of entertainment and education. Hence, utilizing the potential of board games in cultivating entrepreneurial skills represents a promising avenue for empowering the next generation of innovators, visionaries, and changemakers to shape the future of entrepreneurship and beyond.

Keywords: Board Games; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Mindset; Children; Young Adults; Cognitive Development.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a notable resurgence in the popularity of board games, a trend that has captured the attention of both children and young adults. According to Donovan (2017), this resurgence can be attributed to a phenomenon known as "internet fatigue," where individuals are

seeking alternative forms of entertainment and social interaction beyond digital screens. The rising popularity of board games aligns with the current cultural landscape, which also embraces video games, fantasy books, and comic book movies (Cross, 2017; Ellwood, 2018).

This research paper aims to explore the impact of board games specifically on children and young adults, focusing on the potential benefits and effects of engaging with these entertainment options. The study investigates the impact of board games on children and young adults, focusing on their cognitive, social, and emotional development. While board games are often seen as sources of leisure and fun, they also offer educational and developmental opportunities. Recent board games are not only designed for entertainment but also for teaching and illustrating real-life problems (Tan et al., 2022; Bayeck, 2020; Plass et al., 2020).

To investigate the effects of board games on young adults, this study has utilized a qualitative study approach and interviewed fifteen college students and eleven teachers who teach logical and critical thinking subjects at various schools and colleges in Pakistan.

Board games have been a popular form of entertainment and education for centuries, offering a unique blend of fun and learning opportunities.

Research Problem

The research problem addressed in this paper is the need to understand how

board games influence the development of children and young adults. While there is existing literature on the topic, there is a gap in qualitative studies that delve deep into the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals engaging with board games.

The novelty of this study lies in its qualitative approach, which aims to provide rich, in-depth insights into the impact of board games on different aspects of children's and young adults' lives. By utilizing the interview technique this research seeks to uncover nuanced patterns and themes that quantitative studies may overlook.

Study Significance

The contributions of this research paper are twofold. Firstly, it aims to contribute to scholarly literature by adding a qualitative perspective to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of board games. Secondly, the practical goal of this study is to provide insights that can inform educators, parents, and game developers on how to maximize the benefits of board games for children and young adults.

The structure of this paper will include an introduction to the research problem, a review of relevant literature on board games and their impact, a methodology section detailing the interview process,

findings from the selected studies, and a discussion on the implications of the results.

This research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the effects of board games on the younger population, offering insights that can inform both parents and educators on the potential benefits of incorporating board games into children's and young adults' activities.

Literature Review

Recent research has shown a growing interest in the impact of board games on children and young adults. The resurgence of board games in recent years has not only been for entertainment but also to teach and elucidate real-life problems (Robinson et al., 2021). This trend coincides with the popularity of other forms of gaming and entertainment in today's culture, such as video games, fantasy books, and comic book movies (Bayeck, 2020). Board games are economically feasible, making them accessible to a wide range of individuals (Lin & Chen, 2022).

Board games have been found to simplify complex issues and systems, making them ideal for exploring learning and concepts such as motivation and computational thinking in both formal and informal settings (Swacha et al., 2021). Moreover, as the popularity of playing

practices grows worldwide, there is a need for more research on the impact of games on behavior and cognition, particularly in children and young adults (Dale & Shawn Green, 2017).

Understanding the potential benefits of board games for cognitive functions and skill development is crucial. While existing studies have highlighted the advantages of video games and board games, there is a need to further understand the intensity of impact and expand research on learning through commercial board games (Garaigordobil et al., 2022; Bayeck, 2020).

Young people's mental health is a significant concern with long-lasting implications (Westberg et al., 2022). Studies show that mental health issues during youth can lead to physical and mental health challenges extending into adulthood (Westberg et al., 2022). Promoting mental well-being among young individuals is crucial for their overall development and lifelong health (McCory et al., 2022).

Moreover, research on entrepreneurial mindsets, particularly in the context of children and young adults, is a burgeoning area of interest. The entrepreneurial mindset is defined as a metacognitive state of thinking, reflecting a state of mind where individuals frequently

engage in entrepreneurial activities (Kuratko et al., 2021). In this vein, exploring the impact of board games on fostering entrepreneurial mindsets in children and young adults presents a unique and valuable insight. The concept of mindset encompasses socio-emotional skills, entrepreneurial awareness, and qualities like confidence, leadership, and creativity that are closely tied to motivation and future success in entrepreneurship (Nooh, 2022). By utilizing board games as a tool to cultivate these skills, researchers can potentially enhance the development of entrepreneurial traits from a young age. However, while some areas of research have contributed to understanding the entrepreneurial mindset, some gaps remain under-addressed, and opportunities for future exploration in the area of utilizing board games to nurture entrepreneurial thinking in youth (Naumann, 2017).

In the context of Game-Based Learning (GBL), the structural elements of a game, including rules, goals, outcomes, conflict, interaction, and representation, provide a framework for developing entrepreneurial skills in players (Mao et al., 2022). By engaging with these elements through board games, individuals can enhance their problem-solving abilities, strategic thinking, decision-making skills,

and risk assessment - all essential traits for entrepreneurship.

Research studies have shown that using board games in educational settings can have a positive impact on academic performance (Viray, 2016). Additionally, studies evaluating the effects of board games on children have highlighted improvements in cognitive areas such as critical thinking, creativity, and social skills (Adachi & Willoughby, 2013). By fostering these skills, board games play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets in children and young adults.

Materials & Methods

This study explores the impact of board games on the development of entrepreneurial mindsets in children and young adults, focusing on insights gathered through interviews conducted with college students and teachers in Karachi, Pakistan. The methodology employed in this study is a qualitative research design, aiming to capture rich, in-depth perspectives on the role of board games in fostering entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors.

Study Respondents (Selection Criteria)

Participants were purposively selected from colleges and schools across Karachi, Pakistan, to ensure diversity in age,

educational background, and experience with board games. The sample comprised 15 college students (8 female students and 7 male students) and 11 teachers who teach logical and critical thinking subjects at the school and college levels. Participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and their perceived relevance to the research topic.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with participants individually. The interview guide was designed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the impact of board games on the development of entrepreneurial mindsets. Key topics covered in the interviews included participants' exposure to board games, their perceived influence on strategic thinking, risk-taking behavior, decision-making skills, and resilience, as well as any observed changes in these attributes over time.

Interview Protocol and Procedure

Interviews were conducted in person at a location convenient for the participants, mainly at their college or school campus. Before the interviews, participants were provided with informed consent forms outlining the purpose of the study,

confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants. Interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent to ensure accurate data capture.

Data Analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. The thematic analysis involved identifying recurring patterns, themes, and categories within the interview transcripts related to the impact of board games on entrepreneurial mindsets. Data were coded and categorized based on emergent themes, allowing for the identification of commonalities and differences across participant responses.

Ethical Considerations

As the study involved children and young adults, participant's confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Any potential risks to participants' well-being were minimized, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Thematic Analyses and Results

Thematic analysis revealed several key findings regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and observations

related to the role of board games in fostering entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors. Following are the key themes identified through the interviews with students and teachers.

1. Enhanced Strategic Thinking

The majority of the participants reported that engaging in board games encouraged strategic thinking and planning skills. College students noted that playing strategic board games required them to anticipate opponents' moves, evaluate various strategies, and adapt their approach based on changing circumstances. Teachers corroborated these observations, highlighting how board games promoted critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among their students.

One respondent, Student 1, described how playing strategy-based board games like "Clue" challenged her to think several steps ahead, anticipating potential moves by her opponents while devising alternative strategies to achieve her goals. She described how this iterative process of strategic thinking mirrored the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial ventures, where adaptability and foresight are paramount.

Similarly, respondent 2, another college student, reflected on his experiences

playing "Chess" and how it sharpened his ability to assess risk versus reward and make calculated decisions under pressure. He noted that the strategic depth of the game forced him to consider multiple possibilities and weigh the consequences of each move—a skill that he believes directly translates to real-world entrepreneurial scenarios where uncertainty and ambiguity abound. Respondent 2 emphasized that board games provided him with a safe space to experiment with different strategies, learn from failures, and refine his decision-making approach.

Moreover, participants expressed appreciation for the collaborative aspect of certain board games, where strategic planning and teamwork are essential for success. Respondent 3, another college student, shared how coordinating strategies with her peers during board game sessions fostered effective communication, coordination, and collective problem-solving.

These personal insights from college students underscored the multifaceted nature of strategic thinking cultivated through board game play.

2. Increased Risk-Taking Behavior

Participants also discussed the influence of board games on risk-taking

behavior. Respondent students expressed that playing board games allowed them to experiment with different strategies and take calculated risks in a safe and controlled environment. They noted that experiencing failure or setbacks in board games taught them resilience and encouraged them to learn from their mistakes. Teachers similarly observed that board games helped students become more comfortable with uncertainty and failure, fostering a willingness to take risks which is a crucial mindset for entrepreneurship.

For one respondent, Respondent 5, playing the board game Risk became a hypothetical journey of navigating uncharted territories and making bold strategic moves. She recalled moments of hesitation when faced with unnerving challenges on the board, but through practice, she gradually learned to trust her instincts and take calculated risks. She emphasized how these experiences instilled in her a newfound confidence to tackle ambiguity and adversity.

Similarly, one respondent teacher observed a notable shift in his students' attitudes towards failure after incorporating board games into his classroom activities. He recounted how students initially approached games like Monopoly with apprehension, fearing the consequences of making wrong

decisions. However, as they engaged in gameplay and experienced setbacks firsthand, HE witnessed a remarkable transformation in their mindset. Students began to view failure not as an endpoint but just as a phase toward growth and innovation. Hence, board games instill a pivotal realization that fuels students' willingness to take risks both inside and outside the classroom.

Moreover, participants also highlighted the role of board games in creating a supportive environment for risk-taking, where experimentation was encouraged, and mistakes were celebrated as learning opportunities.

3. Improved Decision-Making Skills

Several participants highlighted the positive impact of board games on decision-making skills. College students described how board games forced them to make strategic decisions under pressure, often with limited information. They noted that these experiences translated into improved decision-making abilities in real-life situations, such as academic or career choices. Teachers endorsed these responses, emphasizing how board games provided opportunities for students to practice making decisions and considering the consequences

which is an essential aspect of entrepreneurial mindset development.

One respondent, Respondent 5, recalled a critical moment during a game of Chess where he found himself confronted with a complex board state and multiple possible moves. With time ticking away, he considered each option meticulously, weighing the potential risks and rewards before committing to a decisive course of action. He remarked how this experience taught him the importance of deliberation and foresight in decision-making, principles that he now applies to academic pursuits and future career aspirations.

Similarly, Respondent 9 shared how playing the game Catan challenged her to make strategic decisions during uncertain and evolving game dynamics. She shared the instances where she had to assess resource scarcity, negotiate trades with other players, and strategically allocate her assets, all within a limited timeframe. Through these experiences, she asserted that she developed a keen intuition for assessing trade-offs, identifying ideal approaches, and adapting strategies in response to changing circumstances.

Overall, board games were perceived as effective tools for improving strategic

thinking skills, which are considered essential for entrepreneurial success.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the manifold impact of board games on the development of entrepreneurial mindsets in children and young adults. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with college students and teachers in Karachi, Pakistan, several key themes emerged, including enhanced strategic thinking, increased risk-taking behavior, and improved decision-making skills. These findings contribute to our understanding of innovative approaches to entrepreneurship education and skill development, highlighting the potential of integrating board games into educational settings to foster an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the study is the role of board games in enhancing strategic thinking abilities. Participants reported that engaging in board games encouraged them to think critically, anticipate opponents' moves, and adapt their strategies based on changing circumstances. This finding resonates with previous research highlighting the cognitive benefits of board game play, such as improved problem-solving skills and spatial

reasoning (Gobet & Campitelli, 2006). By providing a dynamic and interactive environment for strategic decision-making, board games offer a valuable platform for improving the analytical skills essential for entrepreneurial success.

Moreover, the study revealed the crucial impact of board games on risk-taking behavior. Participants expressed that playing board games allowed them to experiment with different strategies, learn from failure, and develop resilience, a crucial mindset for navigating the uncertainties of entrepreneurial ventures. This finding aligns with the concept of "productive failure," where experiencing setbacks in a supportive environment foster learning and innovation (Kapur, 2008). By embracing failure as an inherent part of the learning process, board games cultivate a mindset that views challenges as opportunities for growth, aligning with the concept termed "productive failure".

Furthermore, the study highlighted the role of board games in improving decision-making skills among participants. By simulating complex decision-making scenarios under pressure, board games provide a training ground for evaluating options and making informed choices. These findings align with research indicating the

transferability of decision-making skills from board game contexts to real-world situations (Lieberman, 2015). By enhancing their decision-making abilities through board game play, children develop a capacity for sound judgment and strategic thinking, which is an imperative skill to navigate the uncertainties and complexities of entrepreneurial ventures. Overall, the findings of this study underscore the potential of board games as effective tools for fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in children and young adults. By engaging players in strategic thinking, encouraging risk-taking behavior, and promoting decision-making skills, board games offer a holistic approach to entrepreneurship education that complements traditional teaching methods. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of board game interventions on entrepreneurial outcomes and to identify essential strategies for integrating board games into educational curriculum as well as extracurricular activities.

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