Introduction

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1 Introduction

Our special issue 'From concepts to intentions: the primary challenges in entrepreneurship education' for *IJESB* is based on three keynote speeches/papers along with our three award winning papers from the Internationalizing Entrepreneurship Education and Training (IntEnt) Conference in Oxford, Ohio, USA.

Since its inception in 1992, the IntEnt Conference has provided a forum for entrepreneurship professors to hear, learn, and exchange ideas and perspectives on the latest trends and innovations from leaders in the field of entrepreneurship education and training. At the 18th Annual Conference at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio), over 50 papers were presented from over 20 countries that focused on a variety of entrepreneurship education topics, including:

- the impact and effect of entrepreneurship programmes
- theoretical and methodological approaches in education and entrepreneurship training
- the role of education in the venture creation process
- innovative ways of transferring education and training facilities
- innovative ways of teaching entrepreneurship inside and outside our classrooms
- the role of government and the private sector in fostering education/training
- the didactic benefits of business simulations, role playing, and case studies.

In addition to the paper presentations, conference attendees had the opportunity to hear from several keynote speakers and their recent innovations and recommendations for the entrepreneurship education field:

- Alain Fayolle – EM Lyon, France
- Donald F. Kuratko – Indiana University, USA
- Stan Mandel – Wake Forest University, USA
- Andrew Corbett – Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA.

While much work remains in understanding the learning in designing, facilitating, and evaluating the most effective entrepreneurship pedagogies and curriculum design, the seven papers in this issue outline the ideas, concepts and the role of intentions in explaining and understanding the primary challenges in entrepreneurship education today.

1.1 Entrepreneurship theory, process, and practice in the 21st century

Donald Kuratko, the lead-off keynote speaker spoke to the role of entrepreneurship in the near future. Arguing that economic resurgence will rise from the energy and passion that is the entrepreneurial spirit inside of individuals, he posits that it is that knowledge power that fuels a market economy. Further, since that same force surges in the field of entrepreneurship education, Kuratko highlights some of the crucial questions that confront entrepreneurship education in the near future and how entrepreneurship educators can be the solutions to those questions. Specifically, he addresses the questions of complacency in the field, continued respect for the entrepreneurship research, the threat of diluting the real meaning and discipline of entrepreneurship, and the search for risk in the classroom.

His conclusions are that:

1. entrepreneurship's rightful place in universities of the 21st century will be one of continued growth and innovations
2. educators must be motivated to move entrepreneurship theory, process and practice to ever greater heights.

Part of this effort requires business schools to count and respect the mainstream entrepreneurship journals. As he points out, there is a real perceptual dilemma that exists in entrepreneurial education. As faculty members pursue tenure, they leave the students wondering how the professor can understand risk – a crucial element in the entrepreneurial process. It appears faculty members are promoting students to take risks while they pursue security. There is a distinct need to better convey the challenges and pressure junior faculty are under in the tenure process for they do experience risk in the purest sense.

There is also a warning in to all in the entrepreneurial field. As Kuratko rightfully points out, entrepreneurship gained its credibility through the hard work of business school professors. The discipline should rightfully remain in the domain of business. It is therefore the responsibility of business schools to promote the cross campus expansion of entrepreneurship. While that expansion is sound and healthy, the core discipline of entrepreneurship should always emanate from the business school. There are premier universities that have developed cross campus entrepreneurship programmes without compromising the integrity of the entrepreneurship discipline in business schools and that have refused the funding by agencies that offer something different. Any funding offered

that would insist keeping entrepreneurship away from the business school should be avoided.

1.2 Find your own way: entrepreneurship course development, strategic fit, and the problems of benchmarking

Andrew Corbett, another key-note speaker at the conference contends that the growth of entrepreneurship education is rising internationally and may have already reached a level of maturity in the USA. Nonetheless, as he points out that despite the increase in the number of courses offered, programmes created, and degrees granted, scholarship that researches entrepreneurship education indicates that problems still exist regarding course content. After decades of research, there remains conflicting results and many questions regarding what should be taught and how it should be taught. In his article, Corbett examines the state of the literature and suggests a thesis for why the research continues to show these conflicting outcomes.

Borrowing from the strategic management literature to remind instructors, deans and other stakeholders of how they should approach these questions, Corbett contends that much of the conflicting information regarding lack of clarity in entrepreneurship education stems from two sources. First, evidence exists that sampling concerns seem to have lead to incorrect conclusions. Second, there should be concern over the nature of benchmarking taking place within entrepreneurship education – much more attention should be paid to the institution's resources and overall mission.

He then goes on to suggest that instructors and curriculum developers need to examine entrepreneurship education research not from a collective perspective but from an individual view. To this end, he provides a matrix of metrics that highlights the scope of appropriate and strategic choices regarding the types of courses and programmes that might be developed.

1.3 Creativity and feasibility: applying the IDEO innovation processes to current societal challenges

In their paper, Stan Mandel and Steve Virgil present an in depth view of one specific aspect of entrepreneurial education – the problem of developing creativity. Each year, they present a course that has been framed around the IDEO deep-dive technique to bring some resolution to a societal or global question.

Their article provides insight into how to stimulate creativity – the process of generating or identifying ideas or opportunities. As the authors point out this framework differs considerably from most entrepreneurial courses that focus on the rest of the process – developing a compelling business model, drafting a business plan, launching the venture, growing the venture, and ultimately harvesting the fruits of the venture. Mandel and Virgil accurately point out that "little energy is spent on perhaps the most difficult part of the framework, the process and practice of creativity".

1.4 Gender and the effects of an entrepreneurship training programme on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial knowledge gain

Noa Bergman, Zehava Rosenblatt, Miriam Erez, and Uzi De-Haan examine the ability of building confidence in entrepreneurial education. To examine the impact of

entrepreneurship training has on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, on entrepreneurship-related knowledge gain, and on the moderating role of gender on these relationships, 122 junior high-school boys and girls who participated in a one-year entrepreneurship training programme were matched with a sample of 144 students did not participate. Participants' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial knowledge were assessed at the beginning and end of the programme. Bergman finds that males benefited from the entrepreneurship training much more than females and attributes the results to the highly competitive nature of the programme. Further, the competition negatively influenced female entrepreneurial self-efficacy, while it positively influenced that of the males.

Several practical implications arise from this study:

1 entrepreneurial training programme appear to be gender-sensitive suggesting that different training programmes should be developed for men and women

2 the use of competition should be used judiciously.

Training for men may be based on competition, while those for women should be sensitive to the possible negative effect on them of competition. Programmes designed for women only may include a competitive agenda, in line with Gneezy's et al. (2003) assertion that women respond positively to competition only in all-female groups. Such new structures of training programmes may benefit women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial knowledge.

1.5 Increasing entrepreneurial intention: effective entrepreneurship course characteristics (best paper award)

Susan Mueller uses Ajzen's (1991) model of planned behaviour to measure the impact of specific entrepreneurship course characteristics on entrepreneurial intentions. Course characteristics with a hypothesised positive influence on entrepreneurial intention were identified and the hypotheses were tested with a quantitative study designed with an ex ante/ex post measurement. The results of this study suggest that it is possible to promote entrepreneurial intentions through effectively designed entrepreneurship training.

Mueller finds that perceived behavioural control can be changed through various course characteristics such as practical experience, business planning activities, interactive elements, or integrated feedback processes. Further, two options that influence student attitudes were discovered:

1 role models

2 student-oriented classes with a focus on reflective elements.

It also appears that teaching methods might be as important as the course content. Since entrepreneurial intention is mainly influenced by attitudes and perceptions, teaching methods which comprise emotions and experiential learning should be emphasised.

The study also suggests that one way to change students' entrepreneurial intentions is to make explorative teaching methods a core element of entrepreneurship education. Teaching methods which allow students to explore the subject matter and gain their own experience seem to be crucial to substantially increasing students' self-efficacy beliefs.

Following on Corbett's arguments, Mueller contends that entrepreneurship programmes should not be restricted to simply classroom work but should follow an integrated approach. If universities want to position themselves as institutions actively

promoting entrepreneurship, they must establish programmes linking classroom experience with market experience, student networks with entrepreneurial networks, current students with alumni in business, and student entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs who serve as mentors.

1.6 Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions: the influence of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and attitudes

Edgar Izquierdo and Marc Buelens test two models designed to explain how entrepreneurship education can have an effect on entrepreneurial intentions through its impact on attitudes and self-efficacy. Data were collected from 236 university students who were exposed to an entrepreneurship course.

Grounded in the theory of planned behaviour, the first model analyses how attitudes and self-efficacy influence entrepreneurial intentions and thus, is intended to investigate the extent to which attitudes of university students toward entrepreneurship influence their entrepreneurial intentions. This model also proposes that entrepreneurial self-efficacy exerts a mediating role between self-perceived competencies and intentions to create a new venture. The second model has as a starting point the core self-evaluation model proposed by Judge et al. (1998). Thus, this second model proposes that attitudes toward entrepreneurial acts mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions to new venture creation.

The study confirms that attitudes toward entrepreneurial acts positively affect intentions to new venture creation and that attitudes mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions. Therefore, a practical implication is that introducing students to entrepreneurship at early stage in the entrepreneurial process can be beneficial as they develop positive attitudes toward starting new businesses as well as initiating and implementing new ideas within existing organisations.

The study emphasises that the pedagogical approach to which students are exposed encourages students to become active and to learn by doing through relevant learning experiences consistent with Mueller's findings. They contend that by exposing students to a variety of learning opportunities enables them to become active individuals who gain valuable experience from the activities.

1.7 Entrepreneurial intentions among secondary students: findings from Portugal

Arminda do Paço, João Ferreira, Mário Raposo, Ricardo G. Rodrigues and Anabela Dinis adopted a cognitive approach through the application of an entrepreneurial intention model on a sample of Portuguese secondary students. Students were engaged in a network of 'mini-companies' in which information was exchanged about their products. Students had the opportunity to interact with each other through all stages to the creation, development and dissemination of their new ventures (including opportunities to work with another national or foreign school). This simulation allowed the students to gain practical entrepreneurial experiences and to test their social, personal and business skills.

Results revealed that personal attitude has the most important total effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Subjective norms, despite not having a direct effect on intentions, have a strong indirect effect. Finally and consistent with previous research, perceived behavioural control had a discernable difference on intentions. The authors

conclude that given the strong findings for personal attitude, it seems crucial that educational programming policies should be directed to create new attitudes among young students by creating pedagogical materials that stimulate their entrepreneurial learning and education. Particularly with young aspiring entrepreneurs, they content that such education should focus on the development of competences tangent to entrepreneurship that enhances their social and civic skills, mathematical and accounting capacities, digital competences, creative and artistic skills, as well as their cultural awareness.

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