
Book Review

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Entrepreneurship in Western Europe: A Contextual Perspective

by: Léo-Paul Dana

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Entrepreneurship in today's world plays a very important role in creating socio-economic welfare. Entrepreneurial activities bring prosperity and social development of society. From the economic point of view, it creates jobs, brings new technology and improves economic outlook. In this regard, Fayolle (2007) argues that entrepreneurship is 'the engine of a national economy'. Entrepreneurship is a 'spontaneous' (Cassis et al., (2005), p.6] process. At the same time, that process is evolutionary and it is developing through the time. Since it is 'spontaneous' and evolutionary, it is also very sensitive and responsive process to various state policies. These policies, if they are not favourable to entrepreneurship development, can easily destruct its positive evolution.

The book *Entrepreneurship in Western Europe: A Contextual Perspective* introduces mainly non-European readers to the fine points of entrepreneurship in 21 Western European countries. The book covers a complete profile of Western European countries reflected in their historical, cultural and economic activities since their establishment. Well elaborated material in the book will inspire a reader to think of his/her first, if not business, visit to those countries.

The content of the book (chapters) is given in an alphabetical order, avoiding favouritism of any of the countries. It contains 22 chapters where the first chapter acquaints readers with the broad view of entrepreneurship and familiarises readers with the rest of the book content. The rest of the 21 chapters describe each Western European country, whereas each chapter is made of *introduction*, followed by *historical overview*, *the current environment for entrepreneurship*, and concluded with *toward the future*.

In the *introduction*, Dana briefly introduces readers with various definitions of entrepreneurship from its early birth (from the 17th century) and the theories of entrepreneurship that are discussed in the last century. Along this, he familiarises audience about progression of self-employed businesses at that time and their

transformation into small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, Dana explores different views and definitions of SMEs around the world and he gives the latest definition of SMEs retained in the Western Europe. Broad political, legal, social and cultural circumstances of development of the European Union (EU) are highlighted. It treats transformation and unification of the EU, from its early establishment, beginning with custom unions, over the free trade areas and economic communities, to the modern EU. This chapter elaborates *diversity* of the Western European countries, whereas each examined country has its own heterogeneousness. Such divergent business environment brings new opportunities subject to different cultural backgrounds. Finally, in this chapter, the author explains different *state policy models* throughout the time. It is stressed out that a state plays a unique role in affecting entrepreneurial activities. Since the Western Europe is very diverse region, then different state-business policies are applied. Though, this diverse business environment (Western Europe) brings the unity of various business opportunities.

The *historical overview* heading of each chapter gives crucial and brief facts of a nation from its establishment (covers main socio-economic circumstances). It connects the history and entrepreneurship development in a particular country. It has been reported that historical background and historical factors have a significant influence on entrepreneurial activities and SMEs' pattern (Bamford, 1987; Mandakovic et al., 2015). Positive historical circumstances give strengths to the country. If so, then the future perspective is assumed to be more prosperous than those countries which are newly established. In this context, some of very famous entrepreneurs or business people's names are mentioned who had a notable impact at that time. This book pays attention to historical background and culture of each country. Additionally, an interesting moment while reading these facts is a unique photo (a photo that has a historical or present value), which gives light to that particular ambience. Moreover, small and medium enterprises, in the *historical overview*, are elaborated in a concise manner, throughout the time they were born up today.

The *environment of entrepreneurship* section focuses on each country's business infrastructure at present time, along with a state policy regarding the entrepreneurship and business in general. It observes the chronological overview of the state of entrepreneurship and its promotion. It goes into historical facts of the entrepreneurship development, the ways a new entrepreneurship is born, as well as how entrepreneurship is facilitated by certain bodies or individuals. Educational initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship development is not omitted, rather it is emphasised.

In the last section of each chapter, *towards the future*, the author envisages a future of each country's entrepreneurship development. Under this section, he portrays a future state of entrepreneurship development, taking into consideration former times and the ways businesses were done in a particular country.

The book appeals to students, and can be of a great value to *researchers, educators* (teachers and trainers), *practitioners* and *investors*. *Students* (as potential entrepreneurs) will be able to gain fruitful outlook of each country they did not think of before. Prospective undergraduate students will have opportunity to read a novel. They will enjoy each country's interesting information and learn that each Western Europe country has something very specific and unique to offer.

Researchers will have an opportunity to get insights into facts based on extensive literature that they did not have opportunity to come across. While reading, researchers

could see the masterly-organised and focused work driving them into factual information, which may be very useful. Additionally, Dana's book may open their horizons for the future works in this area.

Very simple, straightforward facts and information in the book will be of a great asset for *practitioners* who are in the business already and thinking to explore new business perspectives. An entrepreneur, if interested to undertake entrepreneurial activities in any of these countries, might have a look of a circumspect profile of a country and use it for a business purpose. This book is likewise well written for *educators* (teachers and trainers) in the area of entrepreneurship due to its socio-economic perspective. The book has historically encompassed all socio-economic area of each country, pointing main clues and guidelines of each country's entrepreneurship perspective.

The book is a good start for *investors* interested in a specific country from the Western Europe. Although relevant and detailed information for investors are not available, however, the main outset is given to be explored.

Finally, the book is surely worthwhile to be read. The concept, content and flow of the book, is a very genuine in representing the entrepreneurship context. Moreover, due to its geo-strategic, socio-economic, historical and business approach in describing relevant facts, I hope that it will find its place at the entrepreneurship literature shelves. It suits a wide scope of audience who can certainly benefit, like students, entrepreneurs, educators and researchers.

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