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Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy

CALL FOR PAPERS SPECIAL ISSUE ON

Connecting Entrepreneurship Research and Practice in Entrepreneurship Education

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Over the years, entrepreneurship education has established itself as an emerging and growing research area (Landström et al., 2022). Historically, entrepreneurship education research leans on empirical findings of how entrepreneurs learn (Hägg & Kurczewska, 2021). Recently, entrepreneurship education has become increasingly experiential in nature (Neck et al. 2014; Rasmussen and Sørheim 2006), meaning that students engage in entrepreneurial activities during their studies. For example, tools developed for practice, such as design thinking, the lean startup model, and the business model canvas are frequently used in the classroom, often constituting the core of the curriculum. There are also tendencies that entrepreneurship education has become highly standardized and intellectually comfortable, e.g., ‘McEducation’ (Hytti, 2018). Simultaneously, the gap between entrepreneurship research and practice receives increasing attention in entrepreneurship research (e.g., Shepherd & Gruber, 2021). As the rigor of entrepreneurship research has increased, scholars seem less concerned about its practical relevance (e.g., Wiklund, Wright & Zahra, 2019). The gap between research and practice in entrepreneurship is particularly pressing in the classroom where instructors meet expectations of providing knowledge with practical relevance.

In this special issue, we argue that there is a potential for a stronger connection between entrepreneurship research and entrepreneurship education research as well as connecting research with entrepreneurship education practice. By bringing in new content, and study it through the lens of teaching and learning (c.f. Neck and Corbett, 2018), we can ensure that the entrepreneurship education field develops, explores, and remains relevant.

We see four particularly promising avenues to overcome the divide between entrepreneurship education and research. First, research relating to entrepreneurship education should build on and inform mainstream entrepreneurship theories. For instance, Shepherd and Gruber (2021) point out that much of the mainstream entrepreneurship research has the potential of informing the lean startup framework. To date however, few attempts have been made to make such linkages. This is a promising first step in a direction we believe has much potential. Moreover, design science approaches are increasingly making their way into entrepreneurship (Berglund et al. 2020). Briefly speaking, design science is an approach reminiscent of engineering where the world is adapted to the theory rather than adapting the theory to the world (which is the more common social science

approach). This theoretical approach is well suited for intervention research, but has hitherto received scant attention within entrepreneurship research, which is unfortunate.

Second, the use of experimental methods has great potential in entrepreneurship intervention research, including in research related to entrepreneurship education. In fact, EEP has a call for papers in 2022 related to experimental designs in entrepreneurship education. At the same time, recent publications in *Academy of Management Annals*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, and *Journal of Business Venturing* have discussed and encouraged the use of experimental methods in entrepreneurship research more generally (Stevenson et al. 2020; Williams et al. 2019; Yi & Duval-Couetil 2021). Therefore, the time is ripe for conducting this kind of research. However, to speak to a mainstream scholarly audience, entrepreneurship education research needs to apply creative experimental approaches that provide findings with relevance also outside of the classroom. For example, by using mixed methods and multiple samples that include practicing entrepreneurs as well as students.

Third, entrepreneurship education research needs to study relevant outcomes. A review of dependent variables in entrepreneurship research (Shepherd et al. 2019) showed that firm performance is dominating although other outcomes, such as well-being, are receiving increased attention. Some entrepreneurship education studies examine these types of outcomes. For example, entrepreneurship education for non-business students uses outcomes such as entrepreneurial interest (Roy, Schlosser & Pasek, 2020) and entrepreneurial empowerment (Neergård, Aaboén & Politis, 2022). Furthermore, using an experimental design, Campos et al. (2017) showed that the teaching of personal initiative beat traditional training approaches in terms of firm performance subsequent to the training. However, early entrepreneurship education research relied on proximal outcomes such as entrepreneurial intentions (Bae et al. 2014), which has been shown to be a poor proxy for engaging in actual entrepreneurial activity (e.g., Kautonen & van Gelderen, 2015). Consequently, such outcomes are now receiving limited attention in the mainstream journals (e.g., Shepherd et al., 2019).

Fourth, by connecting entrepreneurship research and practice, and -at the same time- applying meaningful theories and sound research designs to the context of entrepreneurship education, we can properly test the effectiveness of interventions, such as: training education programs (Eesley & Lee, 2021), acceleration and incubation support programs (Lyons & Zhang, 2018), as well as the effect of changes in regulations and policies (Fini, Grimaldi, & Meoli, 2020). This is key, we argue, for at least two reasons. First, OECD governments spend \$1billion annually on entrepreneurship training activities for 5 million potential and existing entrepreneurs (McKenzie, 2020). Second, to date, research focused on the impact of entrepreneurial education has provided mixed, in some cases anecdotal, evidence (Camuffo et al., 2020). Shedding lights on these aspects will have important implications: for the individuals and teams who commit to the training programs, for the instructors and mentors involved in it, and for the policy makers and universities administrations that financially support these initiatives worldwide.

Sample Topics:

Given the limited attention to the topic, the call for papers will be intentionally broad. The following is not an exhaustive list but provides some examples of potential topics.

- *Entrepreneurial mindset.* What is an entrepreneurial mindset and can it be developed? How does entrepreneurial mindset relate to other concepts in entrepreneurship (such as entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions)? How can entrepreneurship education contribute to igniting and developing an entrepreneurial mindset? What would a high-quality research design aimed at studying entrepreneurial mindset look like?
- *Entrepreneurial education and training.* What theoretical contributions can entrepreneurship education research provide? The education setting provides a context for learning that is more

intensive, time-compressed and pre-determined compared to the context that entrepreneurs normally face. Although this setting needs context sensitive theorizing it may also provide an interesting setting from a methodological point of view for contributions to mainstream entrepreneurship, management, education, or psychology research.

- *Entrepreneurial skills.* How to equip would-be entrepreneurs with the right entrepreneurial skills? What kind of competencies do entrepreneurs need to succeed? How do potential entrepreneurs learn, as individuals and/or in a team?
- *Policy intervention to foster entrepreneurship.* What is the effect of different types of interventions on individuals and organisations? How can the entrepreneurial ecosystem be conducive for entrepreneurial skills and mindsets? How to account for broader outcomes from entrepreneurship, such as wellbeing or sustainability?
- *Facilitation of experiential learning of new (developments of) concepts and findings from entrepreneurship research.* How may new entrepreneurship research findings be translated to classroom activities and extra-curricular activities for entrepreneurship students from all disciplines? How should the learning be measured? And how does it develop concepts within entrepreneurship education further?

Submission Process and Deadlines:

Submissions are to be made directly to the journal at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eex>. Please select the appropriate special issue when submitting your article. Manuscripts will be reviewed according to the EEP double-blind review process and submissions should be prepared using the EEP Manuscript Submission Guidelines: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/eex>

Full papers submitted to EEP	February 1, 2023
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