

UNIVERSITIES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP
RESEARCH VOLUME 11

**UNIVERSITIES AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL
AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES**

EDITED BY

PAUL JONES

Swansea University, UK

NIKOLAOS APOSTOLOPOULOS

Neapolis University Pafos, Cyprus

ALEXANDROS KAKOURIS

University of Peloponnese, Greece

CHRISTOPHER MOON

Middlesex University, UK

VANESSA RATTEN

La Trobe University, Australia

ANDREAS WALMSLEY

Coventry University, UK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Paul Jones is a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Swansea University's School of Management. He is currently Editor of the *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research* and Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Management Education*. He is also an Editor of the Emerald Book Series Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research.

Nikolaos Apostolopoulos is an Assistant Professor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and the Director of the MBA programme at Neapolis University Pafos. He also acts as a Scientific Advisor at the Labour Institute (INE-GSEE). He has participated in many academic articles, policy reports and funding initiatives.

Alexandros Kakouris is a Researcher and Adjunct Professor at University of Peloponnese. He also teaches at the Hellenic Open University. He holds two PhDs, in Physics and Entrepreneurship, and an MSc in Adult Education. He pursues research in the areas of nascent and youth entrepreneurship, innovating teams, entrepreneurship education and learning.

Christopher Moon is Senior Lecturer in Eco-entrepreneurship at Middlesex University with a PhD from Imperial College. Formerly Head of Sustainability at two companies. 2019 was awarded an Outstanding Teacher award. He is a Judge of the F Factor, National Enterprise Education Awards and international Innovation and Entrepreneurship Teaching Excellence awards.

Vanessa Ratten is an Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She is a Recognised Expert on entrepreneurship and innovation with a specific focus on sport entrepreneurship and technology innovation. She has authored a number of books, including *Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Smart Cities* (2017), and *Frugal Innovation* (2019). In addition, she has edited more than 20 books, including *Knowledge Spillover-based Strategic Entrepreneurship* (2017), *Sport Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (2016) and *Transformational Entrepreneurship*.

Andreas Walmsley is an Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship at the International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship, Coventry University. His research interests revolve around entrepreneurship education, mentoring for entrepreneurship and career transitions into entrepreneurship. He also researches employment/self-employment issues in SMEs, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Lorena del Carmen Álvarez-Castañón is a PhD in Management and Professor at University of Guanajuato. She is the Leader of Track 5 (Development and Sustainability) in the Academy of Management Sciences (MX); Member of the Mexico National Research System. Her academic publications include topics such as innovation management, ecotechnologies, and universities, entrepreneurship and sustainability.

Aldo Alvarez-Risco holds a PhD in administration, Doctor in Pharmacy and Biochemistry, Researcher in international business and sustainability, Speaker in academic events in 23 countries and the Author of several articles and books.

Nikolaos Apostolopoulos is an Assistant Professor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and the Director of the MBA programme at Neapolis University Pafos. He also acts as a Scientific Advisor at the Labour Institute (INE-GSEE). He has participated in many academic articles, policy reports and funding initiatives.

Pilar Arroyo has a PhD degree in Business Administration from the Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico. She is Member of the Mexico National Research System and her academic publications include topics such as outsourcing, reverse logistics, supplier development, green marketing, social marketing for health care and social entrepreneurship.

Anna P. Bagirova is a Professor of Economics and Sociology at Ural Federal University (Russia). She explores issues of human capital, labour economics and sociology of labour. She is a specialist in statistical data analysis. She is a Doctoral Supervisor and a Member of International Sociological Association.

Alessandro Baroncelli is a Full Professor of Management at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan and Director of the Mib Master in International Business. He is also the Director of the International Center of Research in International Business. His main research interest is in football stadia management.

Elda Barron holds a PhD in Business Administration from EGADE Business School, Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico). She is an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship, Universidad de Monterrey (Mexico). She is also the Member of Academia and Research Group of Entrepreneurship, Universidad de Monterrey. Her research interests include science-based entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. She is also the Consultant and Entrepreneurship Mentor.

Daniela Bolzani is a Senior Assistant Professor in Management at the University of Bologna, Italy. Her research spans the multilevel dynamics of entrepreneurship, especially in the contexts of international, academic and migrant business. Her research is published in top international journals and books chapters.

Beatriz Casais has a PhD in Business and Management Studies – specialisation in Marketing and Strategy – and is Professor at the University of Minho, School of Economics and Management.

Raquel Chafloque-Cespedes is a Researcher at the Research Institute of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Human Resources. She has performed Master Sciences in Applied Statistics from the National Agrarian University of La Molina and Economist from the University of San Martín de Porres. She is the Coordinator of field work at national and regional level.

Tracey M. Coule is a Professor at Sheffield Hallam University. Her research focuses on organising and managing work in non-profits and its linkages to wider social arrangements, featuring in journals such as *Business and Society*, *Public Administration* and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. She also publishes on research philosophies and methodological variability.

J. Andrés Domínguez-Gómez is a Doctor in Sociology, Professor at University of Huelva. His teaching, scientific production and knowledge transfer focus on the environment–society relations, both from a theoretical perspective and on the elaboration and application of mixed analysis methodologies of transdisciplinary utility. He is a Founding Partner of the university spin-off EIS methods.

Anthony Abiodun Eniola is with the Department of Business Studies, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Nigeria. He has published many papers in SCOPUS and ESCI-indexed journals. His main areas of research include entrepreneurship, business administration, SMEs management, innovation, intellectual capital management, SMEs finance and management, human resources management, organisational behaviour and accounting.

Carlos-Antonio Gamarra-Chavez is a Professor of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Human Resources of the University of San Martín de Porres and the Faculty of Business of the Universidad Privada del Norte UPN. Master of Business Administration (MBA) from ESAN University, Lima; Master in International Marketing from ESIC, Business and Marketing School, Madrid, Spain; and Bachelor of Biology.

Teresa González Gómez holds a PhD in Sociology and MA in Social Sciences. She is a Professor in the University of Huelva, her research activity revolves around different lines such as values and identities, cross-border cooperation and local government. Most recent publications are found in journals such as *Sustainability* or *Tourism Management*.

Mohamed Yacine Haddoud is a Lecturer in International Business at the University of Plymouth. His research interests are small business management, entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurship and fuzzy-set analysis. He has published in the Journals of Business Research, Small Business Management and Studies in Higher Education among others. He is the Co-editor of the *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.

Lucy Hatt is a Senior Lecturer at Newcastle University Business School with research interests in entrepreneurship education, leadership development and the Threshold Concept Framework. She recently completed a doctoral thesis at the School of Education, Durham University, from which this chapter is drawn. Prior to becoming an academic she was a Production Manager and Management Consultant.

Myria Ioannou is an Assistant Professor in Marketing at the European University Cyprus, and the Chair of the Department of Management and Marketing. She received her PhD from Manchester Business School and published in international journals and conferences on service quality, customer experience and engagement and relationship management.

Andrew Johnston is currently a Reader in the Economics of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University. His research interests focus on open innovation and networks, particularly collaborations between firms and universities.

Paul Jones is a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Swansea University's School of Management. He is currently Editor of the *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research* and Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Management Education*. He is also an Editor of the Emerald Book Series Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research.

Alexandros Kakouris is a Researcher and Adjunct Professor at University of Peloponnese. He also teaches at the Hellenic Open University. He holds two PhDs, in Physics and Entrepreneurship, and an MSc in Adult Education. He pursues research in the areas of nascent and youth entrepreneurship, innovating teams, entrepreneurship education and learning.

Maria Kamariotou is a Researcher Associate at the Department of Applied Informatics, School of Information Sciences, University of Macedonia, Greece. She is an Author and also acts as Reviewer for scientific journals and conference proceedings. Her scientific research interests mainly focus on information systems strategy and innovation management.

Fotis Kitsios is an Associate Professor on Business Strategy and Innovation Management at the Department of Applied Informatics, School of Information Sciences, University of Macedonia. He is currently a Member of the Information

Systems and e-Business (ISeB) Laboratory of the University of Macedonia. His research interests focus on business strategy, service innovation management, strategic information systems and digital transformation.

Aleksei K. Kliuev is the Head of the UNESCO Chair of the University Management and Planning, Director of the School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship and the Member of the Board of Directors of the Russian Association for Entrepreneurship Education (RUAAEE). Professional and academic interests include entrepreneurship education, university management and consulting on strategic management and university management.

Izabela Kwil is a PhD student on the interdisciplinary course, master's degree in agricultural sciences. Author and co-author of several publications in national and foreign monographs and magazines, including in Sustainability journal the article 'Local Entrepreneurship in the Context of Food Production: A Review'.

Matteo Landoni received a Phd in Business History & Management from the University of Milan. He has published about academic entrepreneurship, state-owned enterprises and innovation policies, in particular concerning the space business sector in books and international journals.

Stelios Marneros holds the position of Lecturer, in Hotel, Tourism and Event Management at the Department of Management and Marketing of the school of business. Hospitality education is the focus of his research, and more specifically, the identification of knowledge and competencies required to manage efficiently and effectively.

Gabriel-Mauricio Martinez-Toro is an Industrial Engineer University of America, MSc, in Logistics and Supply Chain Management Lancaster University, UK; Production Engineering Specialist Francisco José de Caldas District University; and Integrated Business Processes with SAP ERP (TERP10) University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. He was Director of Operations (Owner) Matices de Colombia LTDA and Logistics Director and Warehouse Manager at MELEXA S.A.

Felicity Mendoza is a Senior Lecturer in Enterprise & Entrepreneurship at Sheffield Hallam University. Her research interests include nascent entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial identity and student entrepreneurship. Felicity teaches enterprise and entrepreneurship at undergraduate and postgraduate level and is the Course Leader for the MSc Entrepreneurship.

Simona Mihai-Yiannaki is a Deputy Dean of the School of Business Administration and an Associate Professor in Finance. She also leads the EUC-PEAK Innovation Center. She has coordinated several EU-funded research projects and published numerous articles in economics, finance and entrepreneurship. She is an International Project Evaluator, Business Consultant and International Conferences Speaker.

Christopher Moon is Senior Lecturer in Eco-entrepreneurship at Middlesex University with a PhD from Imperial College. Formerly Head of Sustainability at two companies. 2019 was awarded an Outstanding Teacher award. He is a Judge of the F Factor, National Enterprise Education Awards and international Innovation and Entrepreneurship Teaching Excellence awards.

Adah-Kole Emmanuel Onjewu is a Lecturer in Business Strategy at Coventry University. His research interests are entrepreneurship, small business management, tourism and hospitality. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has published in the *Studies in Higher Education*, *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Critical Perspectives on International Business*.

Kelechi Chioma Osigwe, with the Department of Humanities, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, is a Lecturer in English language. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in entrepreneurship and has an interest in women writing.

George Papageorgiou is a Professor of Management & Information Systems, and Director of the SYSTEMA Research Centre. He has published numerous journal articles on Strategy, Management, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Decision Making and Business System Dynamics. He has served as an Expert/Evaluator for EU research projects, and has been a Reviewer for several academic journals.

Stefano Perna has a PhD in Information and Communication Design, researched intersections of design, new media and humanities at the University of Salerno, taught New Technologies for Art at Naples' Academy of Arts. He is a Faculty Member of the Apple Developer Academy at University of Naples Federico II.

Hugo Pinto is a Researcher at Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra and Professor at the Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve (Portugal). He is an Economist, PhD in Governance, Knowledge and Innovation. His research interests are innovation systems and regional resilience, smart specialisation, institutional change and knowledge transfer.

Katarzyna Piwowar-Sulej is an Associate Professor at Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, head of two postgraduate studies. Her research interests focus on HRM. She has experience in managing HR departments, and leading HR and research projects. Author of more than 100 publications and participant of more than 50 conferences.

Krzysztof Podsiadły is a PhD student in the interdisciplinary course, Master's degree in agricultural sciences and Senior Scientist in the RDQ technical centre in one of the world's largest snacks companies. His research area is linked with different aspect of the confectionery industry such as all types of innovations, new technologies, project management and labour market.

Sergei N. Polbitsyn is a Researcher and Professor of Entrepreneurship at Ural Federal University. He is also a Senior Researcher in the Institute of Economy of the Urals Division of Russian Academy of Sciences. His research interests include entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial ecosystems, innovation policies and systems, social and economic development of rural communities.

K. V. D. Prakash is the Dean of Human Resource Development at Centurion University of Technology & Management, Odisha. He has 25 years industry experience in IT education, operations, consulting, leadership and soft skills training, and has travelled extensively across the USA, UK, Asia Pacific and the Middle-East. His research interests are in perception, leadership and training.

Vanessa Ratten is an Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She is a Recognised Expert on entrepreneurship and innovation with a specific focus on sport entrepreneurship and technology innovation. She has authored a number of books, including *Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Smart Cities* (2017), and *Frugal Innovation* (2019). In addition, she has edited more than 20 books, including *Knowledge Spillover-based Strategic Entrepreneurship* (2017), *Sport Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (2016) and *Transformational Entrepreneurship*.

Moritz Philip Recke studied Media Technology and Next Media at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, conducted entrepreneurship policy research at UNSW Business School in Sydney and focussed on sociotechnical imaginaries for his PhD. He is a Faculty Member of the Apple Developer Academy at the University of Naples Federico II.

Paula-Viviana Robayo-Acuña is a Professor of Administration and Organizations for the International Business Administration and Marketing programs and a Research Professor in the CIEN-K Marketing and Organizational Studies Research group.

Linda Elizabeth Ruiz is a Professor of Entrepreneurship at Tecnológico de Monterrey. Her research examines the process of corporate entrepreneurship, the role of gender and the effect of institutions within the activity. Her recent research specifically addresses the effect of equality levels and culture on entrepreneurship.

Ioannis Sitaridis is a PhD Researcher at the Department of Applied Informatics, University of Macedonia, Greece. He holds a Diploma in Computer Engineering and a Masters in Applied Informatics. He has a background as a Scientific Author and Reviewer for journals and conferences.

Arun Sukumar is an Associate Professor at Coventry University. His research interests are technology entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial ecosystems and technology incubation in developing countries. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, the Higher Education Academy and the Member of the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Vivien Szczepanik is a Master of Science in Management by the Faculty of Economics University of Porto.

Despina Varnava-Marouchou has a Doctoral degree in Education with special reference to Business Administration, from the University of Nottingham, UK. Her research focusses on issues regarding student learning and teaching in higher education. She has participated in several research projects related to education.

Wagner Vicente-Ramos is a Doctor in Engineering Systems (UNCP) with a Master's degree in Teaching and Educational Management. He has more than 10 years of experience as a Teacher, Manager and Researcher at various prestigious universities in Peru. He was attached to CLADEA and the College of Engineers of Peru. He conducted research-oriented to the design of organisational systems and software engineering.

Allan Villegas-Mateos holds a PhD in Business Administration from EGADE Business School. Currently, he is an Assistant professor of Entrepreneurship at the Universidad de Monterrey where he performs as the Chair of the Academy of Entrepreneurship and represents the University in the Latin-American Network of Innovation and Entrepreneurship of CLADEA.

Andreas Walmsley is an Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship at the International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship, Coventry University. His research interests revolve around entrepreneurship education, mentoring for entrepreneurship and career transitions into entrepreneurship. He also researches employment/self-employment issues in SMEs, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries.

Aleksandr A. Iashin is the Deputy Director of the School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship. He combines administrative, research and educational activities. His research interests are in supply chain management and entrepreneurial curricula in modern universities.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Lorena del Carmen Álvarez-Castañón</i>	Department of Social Studies, University of Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico
<i>Aldo Alvarez-Risco</i>	Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Santa Anita, Peru
<i>Nikolaos Apostolopoulos</i>	Department of Economics and Business, Neapolis University Pafos, Paphos, Cyprus
<i>Pilar Arroyo</i>	EGADE Business School-Tecnológico de Monterrey, México
<i>Anna P. Bagirova</i>	School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship, Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russia
<i>Alessandro Baroncelli</i>	Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Economia e della Gestione Aziendale, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy
<i>Elda Barron</i>	UDEM Business School, Universidad de Monterrey, San Pedro Garza García, Mexico
<i>Daniela Bolzani</i>	Department of Management, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy
<i>Beatriz Casais</i>	School of Economics and Management, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal
<i>Raquel Chafloque- Céspedes</i>	Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Santa Anita, Peru
<i>Tracey M. Coule</i>	Department of Management, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK
<i>J. Andrés Domínguez-Gómez</i>	Department of Sociology, Social Work and Public Health, Faculty of Social Work, University of Huelva, Huelva, Spain
<i>Anthony Abiodun Eniola</i>	Business Studies Department, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Nigeria
<i>Carlos-Antonio Gamarra-Chavez</i>	Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Santa Anita, Peru
<i>Teresa González Gómez</i>	Department of Sociology, Social Work and Public Health, Faculty of Social Work, University of Huelva, Huelva, Spain

- Mohamed Yacine Haddoud* Plymouth Business School, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK
- Lucy Hatt* Newcastle University Business School, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
- Myria Ioannou* Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Andrew Johnston* Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK
- Paul Jones* School of Management, Swansea University, Swansea, UK
- Alexandros Kakouris* Department of Management Science and Technology, University of Peloponnese, Karaiskaki, Greece
- Maria Kamariotou* Department of Applied Informatics, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece
- Fotis Kitsios* Department of Applied Informatics, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece
- Aleksei K. Kliuev* School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship, Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russia
- Izabela Kwil* Department of Labour Capital and Innovation, Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, Wroclaw, Poland
- Matteo Landoni* Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Economia e della Gestione Aziendale, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, Italy
- Stelios Marneros* Department of Management and Marketing, SYSTEMA Research Centre, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Gabriel-Mauricio Martinez-Toro* Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia
- Felicity Mendoza* Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK
- Simona Mihai-Yiannaki* Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Christopher Moon* Department of Management Leadership and Organisations, Middlesex University, London, UK
- Adah-Kole Emmanuel Onjewu* School of Strategy & Leadership, Coventry University, Coventry, UK

- Kelechi Chioma Osigwe* Department of Humanities, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Nigeria
- George Papageorgiou* Department of Management and Marketing, SYSTEMA Research Centre, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Stefano Perna* Apple Developer Academy, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy
- Hugo Pinto* Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra & Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal
- Katarzyna Piwowar-Sulej* Department of Labour Capital and Innovation, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Wrocław, Poland
- Krzysztof Podsiadły* Department of Labour Capital and Innovation, Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Wrocław, Poland
- Sergei N. Polbitsyn* School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship, Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russia
- K. V. D. Prakash* Centurion University of Technology & Management, Odisha, India
- Vanessa Ratten* Department of Management, Sport and Tourism, La Trobe Business School, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia
- Moritz Philip Recke* Apple Developer Academy, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy
- Paula-Viviana Robayo-Acuña* Fundación Universitaria Konrad Lorenz, Bogota, Colombia
- Linda Elizabeth Ruiz* Entrepreneurship Department, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico
- Ioannis Sitaridis* Department of Applied Informatics, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece
- Arun Sukumar* International Centre for Transformational Entrepreneurship, Coventry University, Coventry, UK
- Vivien Szczepanik* Faculty of Economics, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal
- Despina Varnava-Marouchou* Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Wagner Vicente-Ramos* Universidad Continental, Huancayo, Peru

- Allan Villegas-Mateos* UDEM Business School, Universidad de Monterrey,
Monterrey, Mexico
- Andreas Walmsley* International Centre for Transformational
Entrepreneurship, Coventry University, Coventry, UK
- Aleksandr A. Iashin* School of Public Administration and
Entrepreneurship, Ural Federal University,
Yekaterinburg, Russia

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CHAPTER 1

UNIVERSITIES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Paul Jones, Nikolaos Apostolopoulos, Alexandros Kakouris, Christopher Moon, Vanessa Ratten and Andreas Walmsley

ABSTRACT

Universities are increasingly looking at entrepreneurship as a way to bridge theory and practice. This is important in these challenging times when unexpected events and occurrences take place. It is becoming more important for universities to respond in an entrepreneurial manner to new trends to capitalise on learning and research opportunities. The aim of this chapter is to discuss how universities are acting in an entrepreneurial way by responding to educational and social challenges. This will help to understand fruitful new areas of teaching, research, service and engagement that can occur in a university setting based on entrepreneurial thinking.

Keywords: Education; entrepreneurship; universities; society; learning; entrepreneurial university

INTRODUCTION

Universities are embracing a culture of entrepreneurship through a variety of ways including teaching, research and outreach activities (Ferreira, Fayolle, Raposo, & Ratten, 2018). This has meant that there is an increased recognition about the role of entrepreneurship in society and the way universities can emphasise innovation, sustainability and futuristic thinking (Chen, Tajeddini, Ratten, & Tabari, 2019; Moon, Walmsley, & Apostolopoulos, 2018; Wyness, Jones, & Klapper, 2015). As universities are training the next generation of workers and upskilling current workers it is important to place an emphasis on entrepreneurship. Unlike other topics taught at universities, entrepreneurship has a practical and theoretical component. This enables it to cross-disciplinary boundaries in a way that was previously not possible in other subject areas (Nabi, Liñan, Fayolle, Krueger, & Walmsley, 2017; Neck & Corbett, 2018). For these reasons, the many forms of entrepreneurship education in universities (e.g. Kakouris & Liargovas, 2020) provide a way to encourage creativity and real problem solving.

Heinonen and Hytti (2010, p. 283) state that there has been a second academic revolution ‘with traditional university tasks such as teaching and research being complemented by a third task or mission-economic and social development’. The change in university policy towards a more community model is evident in the need for collaboration between education providers, business and government. The evolutionary change in attitude towards more social interests has been in conjunction with a rise in social responsibility and environmental initiatives in society (Apostolopoulos, Moon, & Walmsley, 2018a; Wyness & Jones, 2019).

In recent times, there has been an entrepreneurial transformation of universities with the introduction of accelerators, technology transfer programmes and spinoffs (Ferreira, Fernandes, & Ratten, 2017). Whilst the main function of a university is to create and disseminate knowledge, the way this has been conducted has changed with the advent of the digital economy. As a result of technological innovations particularly in the form of digitalisation, it has changed how knowledge is used and produced in a university setting. This means the production and diffusion of new knowledge is occurring more in a digital environment thereby changing existing learning models to a more interactive and user-friendly model (Ratten & Usmanij, 2020). This has led to a change in the way teaching is conducted and emphasises more real-time engagement.

The global economy has changed from a managerial one focussing on exploiting existing resources to an entrepreneurial model that emphasises exploration of opportunities (Guerrero, Cunningham, & Urbano, 2015). This has meant knowledge is increasingly recognised as a way to reduce uncertainty. Entrepreneurship is being conducted at all levels of a university from students, alumni, community, managers, academics and researchers (Guerrero et al., 2015). This has meant that increasingly more universities are encouraging interaction with their local communities as a way of facilitating regional growth (Miragaia, Da Costa, & Ratten, 2018), these communities being part of the broader entrepreneurship education ecosystem (Brush, 2014; Wraae & Walmsley, 2020). This is due to universities being service providers in the knowledge economy and is trying to be innovative

as a way to build their competitiveness. Service innovation has the following characteristics: unstable and fuzzy nature, hard to define boundaries, interactive and customer involvement and ad hoc approaches (Gallouj, 2002). These characteristics are evident in the way universities develop new courses as a way to incorporate new needs in the economy. In addition, there has been an increase in global competition amongst universities for student revenue and government funding. In addition, regional trading blocs particularly the European Union have influenced university policy.

Entrepreneurship education can be hard to define due to its practical and complex nature. Brentnall, Rodriguez, and Culkin (2018, p. 405) describe entrepreneurship education as ‘learning “about” (as academic study), “through” (as learning core capabilities embedded across curricula) and “for” (preparation for an entrepreneurial life and business startups or ventures)’ (see also Kakouris & Liargovas, 2020; Lackéus, 2015). This means that universities have had to become entrepreneurial actors due to the need to juggle multiple stakeholder interests (Ratten & Jones, 2018). This has further meant the traditional functions of teaching and research continuing but new functions such as commercialisation programmes and social innovation have become more important. In addition, universities have reduced their reliance on government funding by encouraging alternative sources of revenue. This has led to an increase in science parks and technology transfer offices that mix education with business.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Universities at the time of finishing this book are to deal with the impact of Covid-19, a health pandemic that has tremendously affected teaching and research methods. As a result of this pandemic, there has been a huge increase in distance (Roberts, 2018) and especially online learning, which has both a positive and negative effect (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). On the positive side, it means an increase in digital learning capabilities and online learning. This will help students understand the way digital formats can be utilised and increases digital learning capabilities. This is useful particularly for students in future career endeavours in terms of how they communicate in a digital environment. It also opens up new possibilities in terms of the kind of online materials that are utilised for entrepreneurship. Teaching online means there needs to be more emphasis on real life cases that students can interact with and help solve. Thereby contributing both to the economic and social wellbeing in society (Suseno & Ratten, 2007). On the negative side, online learning and teaching means that there can be a lack of transparency in actually seeing how students respond to educational material. This is due to online avatars being used by students instead of their real pictures, which makes it hard to understand their reactions. In addition, in an online environment certain students may dominate discussions and make it hard for others to provide their input. Another aspect that could prove challenging in an entirely online world is the role mentoring can play, whether formal or informal, as part of an entrepreneurship education programme. Thus, whilst the

emotional support function of mentoring for entrepreneurship has been recognised (Nabi, Walmsley, & Akhtar, 2019), it remains to be seen to what extent this emotional support transfers in equal measure to the online sphere. Thus, despite the potential of online entrepreneurship education, its role and usage is uncertain. Accordingly, although online teaching and learning is a necessity, there are gaps in our knowledge about the best environments for this to take place. It is also essential that online teaching has to be grounded on learning paradigms (e.g. Kakouris, 2017) and appropriate assessments (e.g. Apostolopoulos, Kakouris, Liargovas, Dermatis, & Komninos, 2018b).

The role of timing is crucial in entrepreneurship education and can influence teaching and learning approaches. Time perspectives can be considered as ‘cognitive processes positioning human experiences into past, present and future temporal frames’ (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999, p. 1271). In an entrepreneurship education setting, these time frames can be utilised as a way of understanding different societal phenomena. From the past we can learn about previous entrepreneur’s successes and failures as a way to help build better learning methods. However, the past does not always determine the future particularly if new technological innovations come into the marketplace (Dimov, 2011). Thus, it is important to focus on the present in terms of what is actually happening and how business is responding. This is particularly evident at the moment with Covid-19 influencing a big change in university systems and strategy. Thus, focussing on the present can be difficult due to time contingencies and immediate responses being required. Therefore, it helps to think about the future in terms of potential changes in the economic environment that will influence entrepreneurial intentions. To do this requires some scenario planning in terms of potential environmental conditions. As entrepreneurship is focussed on opportunity recognition having a proactive approach to education is beneficial. This is why the study of entrepreneurship has become so important to the wellbeing of society (Levesque & Stephan, 2020).

There are numerous educational challenges being faced by universities at the moment. The emphasis on blended or having a combination of face-to-face and online learning resources means there has been some uncertainty as to how to do this. This is made more apparent by cultural differences in terms of how students respond to teaching methods. In a classroom setting, non-verbal cues are important in assessing responses but in an online environment this can be hard to do. Therefore, some degree of trust is required in terms of letting students try and experiment with learning tools. Simulation games have increased as a way to embed more practical approach. This means that students can learn by recreating the business environment in an online setting. This is helpful as a way of experimenting and learning by doing.

PROCESS PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOK

A process perspective on university and entrepreneurship is adopted in this book. This enables a focus on entrepreneurial activities that are complex and non-linear, thereby enabling attention to be paid to entrepreneurship that captures the reality

of universities both in practice and theory. Entrepreneurship can be defined as ‘a broad set of activities that result in the introduction of novel goods and services’ (Hemme, Morais, Bowers, & Todd, 2017, p. 94). This captures the way entrepreneurship includes education, marketing and management activities. This allows the way entrepreneurship is embedded in society to be understood. Not all forms of entrepreneurship can be observed so it helps to take a broad approach to entrepreneurship. Moreover, there has been a continued interest in universities and entrepreneurship but there is no unanimous understanding of what constitutes entrepreneurship. Thus, there is a plethora of ways entrepreneurship is understood in a university context depending on the environment. This makes it difficult to ascertain how entrepreneurship exists in a university setting. There are many beliefs about how entrepreneurship applies to universities but this will be based on the researcher or practitioners background. For business scientists, entrepreneurship involves some form of new venture creation whilst for social scientists it refers more to innovative ways of thinking. This makes the study of entrepreneurship very interesting due to the variety of ways it can be applied.

We study and practice entrepreneurship based on our perspectives so all prior knowledge cannot be discarded. Rather the challenge is to build on past knowledge whilst deriving new theories. This will transform our preconceptions and enable the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship to be studied, thereby enabling novel interpretations of entrepreneurship concepts to be made together with new findings. Thus, to truly understand entrepreneurship there should be some self-awareness about an individual’s preconceptions as a matter of reflexivity. This will avoid asking pre-determined questions and enable a more open-minded approach to emerge. This will enable researchers and practitioners to challenge the status quo and to choose new paths for entrepreneurship. Approaching university entrepreneurship in a new way will enable research to move beyond the current restrictions. This will foster a more participant-centric approach to be utilised that takes into account temporal influences, supporting the discovery process of entrepreneurship that often cumulates in interesting findings.

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted experience that can be studied in different ways. Anyone interested in entrepreneurship expresses in either a direct or indirect way a desire to know more about innovation, risk taking and competitiveness. Therefore, entrepreneurship education can create conflict amongst participants due to different views on what it is, how it should be studied and its outcomes evaluated (Decker-Lange, Lange, Dhaliwal, & Walmsley, 2020). For some, it can be studied based on existing theories whilst others advocate an experiential method. Both views have merit and can be taught concurrently depending on availability of resources.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The book is structured around four parts covering recent trends, entrepreneurial intention, social and cultural norms, and learning processes. There are 15 chapters included in this book on a range of topics related to the role of entrepreneurship

in universities. This enables a good overview of the way entrepreneurship is understood based on societal and cultural conditions. As entrepreneurship can be studied at various levels including the individual, organisation or societal level it is important to incorporate a diverse range of perspectives.

Part I: University and Entrepreneurship in Modern World

Chapter 2 titled ‘Entrepreneurship Education and Emotional Intelligence: A State of the Art Review’ by Fotis Kitsios, Ioannis Sitaridis and Maria Kamariotou focusses on an interesting area of entrepreneurship in terms of emotional intelligence. This new approach enables a better understanding about the role of emotions in influencing business intentions.

Chapter 3 titled ‘Entrepreneurial Education in Russian Universities: Achievements, Reflections and Milestones’ by Sergei N. Polbitsyn, Aleksei K. Kluyev, Anna P. Bagirova, Aleksandr A. Yashin and Alexandros Kakouris discusses the progress achieved in entrepreneurship education in Russia and the current trends are presented.

Chapter 4 titled ‘The Role of Alumni Clubs in the Universities’ Entrepreneurial Networks: An Inquiry in Italian Universities’ by Matteo Landoni, Daniela Bolzani and Alessandro Baroncelli focusses on the importance of staying in contact with previous university students. This enables an entrepreneurial network to develop that values experience and knowledge.

Chapter 5 titled ‘Entrepreneurship Education in an Era of Digital Communications’ by George Papageorgiou, Simona Mihai-Yiannaki, Myria Ioannou, Despina Varnava-Marouchou and Stelios Marneros focusses on recent developments on entrepreneurship education in relation with digitalisation.

Part II: University and Entrepreneurial Intention

Chapter 6 titled ‘Effect of Entrepreneurship Training on Students’ Capability of Agency and Entrepreneurship Intention’ by Lorena del Carmen Álvarez-Castañón and Pilar Arroyo focusses on the effectiveness of education programmes. Thereby enabling a better discussion about the role of family and socio-environmental factors in the decision to be an entrepreneur.

Chapter 7 titled ‘Entrepreneurship Education and Venture Intention’ by Anthony Abiodun Eniola and Kelechi Chioma Osigwe analyses the female venture creation amongst students in Nigeria and it offers useful insights for policy-makers.

Chapter 8 titled ‘The Influence of the Field of Study and Entrepreneurship Course in Entrepreneurial Intention Among University Students’ by Vivien Szczepanik and Beatriz Casais discusses the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. This enables a better understanding of the impact of entrepreneurship education on future career choices.

Part III: University, Entrepreneurship Education and Social Norms

Chapter 9 titled ‘The Role of Cultural and Social Norms to Create Entrepreneurship Educational Programmes’ by Allan Villegas-Mateos, Edla Barron and

Linda Elizabeth Ruiz focusses on how to increase the entrepreneurial outputs of students. This includes focussing on how the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor can be utilised in entrepreneurship education programmes.

Chapter 10 titled 'Effect of Sociodemographic Factors in Entrepreneurial Orientation and Entrepreneurial Intention in University Students of Latin American Business Schools' by Raquel Chafloque-Cespedes, Aldo Alvarez-Risco, Paula-Viviana Robayo-Acuña, Carlos-Antonio Gamarra-Chavez, Gabriel-Mauricio Martinez-Toro and Wagner Vicente-Ramos focusses on entrepreneurial orientation and intention in Latin America by analysing data of 3,739 university students.

Chapter 11 titled 'The Social Role of the University Today: From Institutional Prestige to Ethical Positioning' by J. Andres Dominguez-Gomez, Hugo Pinto and Teresa González-Gómez focusses on the changing nature of universities because of the knowledge economy. The chapter discusses how the role of universities is changing based on stakeholder interaction and territorial innovation.

Part IV: University, Entrepreneurship Education and Learning Process

Chapter 12 titled 'An Emergent Narrative System to Design Conducive Educational Experiences' by Moritz Philip Recke and Stefano Perna discusses a challenge-based learning methodology. This enables an understanding about experiential learning in entrepreneurship education.

Chapter 13 titled 'The Triple Helix: A Case Study of Centurion University of Technology and Management' by Adah-Kole Emmanuel Onjewu, Arun Sukumar, KVD Prakash and Mohamed Yacine Haddoud focusses on the development of entrepreneurship within a specific university context. This helps to understand the way social, economic and education perspectives influence the strategic direction of a university.

Chapter 14 'What is Distinctive About Thinking Like an Entrepreneur and How Can We Educate Students To Do It?' by Lucy Hatt analyses the ways of thinking like entrepreneur and the impact of applied this approach on education.

Chapter 15 titled 'Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Identity: Beyond Stereotypes' by Felicity Mendoza, Tracey M. Coule and Andrew Johnston focusses on how individuals identify with entrepreneurship. This means a change in stereotype from an entrepreneur as a hero to an everyday person. Thereby challenging existing assumptions about what entrepreneurship is and how it is contextualised in society.

Chapter 16 titled 'How Polish Universities Develop Students' Entrepreneurial Competences' by Katarzyna Piwowar-Sulej, Izabela Kwil and Krzysztof Podsiadly focusses on the way the Polish National Development Program has utilised entrepreneurship education. Thereby taking into account how entrepreneurial competences can lead to economic competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focussed on the way universities are responding to educational and social challenges. This means taking into account emerging trends related

to entrepreneurship as they become available. One of the most important trends recently has been the shift towards a digital economy that has changed learning and teaching practices. As this chapter discussed, it is important to harness the knowledge capabilities and synergies with society to further improve entrepreneurship education practices.

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