Impact of Entrepreneurial camp on Students' Entrepreneurial Attitudes

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial career choices are impacted by entrepreneurial mindset, family background and cultural values. Entrepreneurial mindset includes for example innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking capacity, and entrepreneurial education has been found out useful in enhancing these qualities. Here the interest is to see how the intensive 3-weeks innovation and entrepreneurial camp impacts on the students' entrepreneurial attitudes compared to international data sample. The 95 students representing mostly USA and European countries filled in the questionnaire which focused on identifying qualities they would need if they would start own business. This data set was compared with the data over 1000 students from various countries. Several differences were found, indicating that those students, who have learnt profoundly about entrepreneurship emphasize different qualities than those with more general level knowledge.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Education, Innovativeness, Needed Qualities for Entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is defined as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action (European Commission, 2020). Entrepreneurial career choices are impacted by entrepreneurial mindset, family background and cultural values (e.g. Harris & Gibson 2008; Roberts & Robinson, 2010). Entrepreneurial mindset includes innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking capacity.

Studies have contradictory findings about impact of the entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial attitudes, and self-efficacy. Some have positive results, (e.g. Jones et al. 2008; Bae et al. 2014), while some studies have findings of negative impact (e.g., Oosterbeek et al., 2010). Similarly, some of the studies exert positive effects on entrepreneurial self-esteem and propensities (e.g. Jones et al. 2008; Zhang et al., 2014), while others report a negative impact (e.g., Oosterbeek et al., 2010). It has been found that entrepreneurial skills can be learned in the context of entrepreneurial behavior (Mayhew et al., 2012; Kuratko 2005). Jones and Iredale (2010) distinguish between enterprise education with a focus on personal attributes and skills that can be used in a variety of contexts and entrepreneurship education with a focus on starting and running a business.

Bae et al. (2014) meta-analyzed studies examining the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions and found a significant but a small correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions. This result was consistent with the findings by Martin et al. (2013), who also found a small but positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions.

The issue of the impact of entrepreneurship education is still very complex (Henry et al., 2004), and there are plenty of possible reasons for these contradictory results, e.g. culture, gender, self-efficacy, initial level of intentions, or motivation may have a role in the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions (Packham et al. 2010; Fayolle & Gailly 2013). It may be also that the impact of entrepreneurship education programs might only become apparent after some time as Fayolle et al. (2006) stated.

Here the interest is to study 1) the students' innovativeness and proactiveness qualities and entrepreneurial intentions, and 2) students' needs for qualities and attitudes for entrepreneurship.

1.1 Innovativeness and Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurs are inherently creative and innovative (Schumpeter, 1934). Psychological and personality characteristics have been shown to be the major determinants that predict the individuals' innovativeness. While some believe it is possible for all individuals to be innovative, it appears that due to personality factors, creating new ideas is easier for some than others. It has been noted that a preference for innovation clearly differentiates entrepreneurs from managers (Timmons, 1990). Managers tend to be more adaptive (Buttner & Gryskiewitz, 1993), and to be rewarded for their competence and efficiency (Schein, 1985) rather than for innovation and creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1934).

Entrepreneurial mindset includes innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. Harris and Gibson (2008) found that personal control, innovation, self-esteem and achievement with respect to business involvement were correlated with intentions to become an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial mindset has positive impact for example on firm performance, profitability, growth and product innovation (Johan & Dean, 2003; Moreno & Casillas, 2008).

Numerous studies have described the attributes of innovators. Innovators are persistent, self-confident, open to experience, original, independent and they have tolerance for ambiguity (e.g. Hurt et al., 1977; Sandberg et al., 2013). Innovators are willing to change (Hurt et al., 1977), eager to try new ideas (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971), and have tendency to advance problem solving (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Additionally, there are positive correlations with three personality preferences; openness, extraversion, and creativity (Bender et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2013).

In a business setting, a preference for innovation refers to a willingness and inclination towards experimentation and creativity when developing and introducing new products and services (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Innovation alone is not sufficient. There is need for proactive action to progress the ideas further. Proactive individuals scan the environment for opportunities, show initiative, and persevere until they bring about change (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

Florin et al. (2007) have studied student attitudes which promote entrepreneurship and found that innovation, nonconformity, proactive disposition, self-efficacy and achievement motivation are crucial in this regard. Other researchers studying students used a variety of measures for entrepreneurial attitudes that included a mixture of attitude and trait measures, often including items referencing risk-taking and innovativeness (Macko & Tyszka, 2009; Zampetakis et al., 2009; Wanasika et al., 2022) as well as proactivity (Zampetakis et al., 2009).

1.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour and Entrepreneurial Intentions

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) is one of the models in the study of entrepreneurial intent in different countries (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Moriano et al., 2012). Ajzen (1991) postulates that behaviour is a function of beliefs that influence a certain behaviour. These beliefs are considered important premises that determine personal attitude, intention and perceived behaviour control. The more favourable the subjective norms and attitudes towards behaviour, the greater the perceived degree of control of the individual, leading to a stronger intention to perform a certain behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Previous studies have used TPB to predict certain variables that are related to entrepreneurship. These variables include entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. Entrepreneurial skills and attitudes are necessary antecedents in the process of effective entrepreneurship. Skills and attitudes are developed through learning, experience and environmental factors. Intention plays a central role in TPB by connecting norms, attitudes and behavioural control with enacted behaviours. Entrepreneurial intention is the "self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future" (Thompson, 2009, p. 676). Entrepreneurial intention is the first step towards taking entrepreneurial action such as contemplating a start-up. The second variable of interest is entrepreneurial behaviour. Based on the TPB, intentions are correlated with behaviour and linked to behavioural control.

The TPB can also be used in evaluating the outcomes of entrepreneurship education. Fayolle et al., (2006) found that the entrepreneurship education programs assessed had a strong measurable impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of the students.

2. Methodology

The European Innovation Academy (EIA) (https://www.inacademy.eu/portugal/) is the 3 weeks study camp fostering innovativeness and entrepreneurship with students. Students will form the enterprise with international teams during camp. They will get help from mentors with the business background. The best ones will get rewarded after the final pitch day. The questionnaire about their experiences were sent to them at the last week of the camp, so they already had knowhow and experience about entrepreneurship. The data was analyses with statistical program SPSS using t-test.

2.1 Sample

Totally, 95 students responded to the questionnaire of psychological capital. Altogether the camp includes about 300 students, so the response rate is quite good. 53% of respondents were women and coming from Europe (62%). Representatives from USA were 38%. Most of the respondents (72%) were between 21 years – 30 years old. 59% of respondents were students, and 30,5% were students having the job or own company. 80% of respondents were university students, 10,5% at applied sciences, and 4,2% were having doctor degree. The interest was to see if the students will have the interest to become entrepreneur after the EIA-camp. Results were:

- 1,1% will not definitely start own business at the future
- 7,4% will not probably start own business at the future
- 34,7% did not know if they will start own business at the future
- 34,7% will probably start own business at the future
- 21,2% will definitely start own business at the future

The respondents were divided into two groups comparing 1) those with entrepreneurial intentions, and 2) those without entrepreneurial intentions

2.2 Questionnaires

Innovativeness and proactiveness questionnaire bases on the global questionnaire (see e.g. Brandt et al., 2022) and here the factor analyses (Varimax) produced two dimensions as it was planned. Alphas were 0,873 for innovativeness and 0,842 for proactiveness.

Qualities needed for entrepreneurship. The question was "What qualities or attitudes you would think you would need if you become as entrepreneur". There were 13 items asked to be rated in Likert-scale 1-7.

3. Results

In the Table 1. the results are presented, in case of innovativeness and proactiveness. When compared to global dataset (Wanasika et al., 2022) it can be seen that in both cases EIA-students have both the innovativeness and proactiveness higher. When looking the statistical analysis, the t-test shows that there were statistically significant differences between the students with entrepreneurial intentions and those without entrepreneurial intentions. Those EIA-students with entrepreneurial intentions had highest means in both Innovativeness and Proactiveness than comparison groups. When looking the means, those without entrepreneurial intentions had still higher means than global dataset.

Table 1: Innovativeness and proactiveness means, comparisons and t-test comparing intention to start the business

	Global dataset (n=1081) Mean	Alldata (n=95) Mean	YES Entrepreneurial intentions (n=53)	NO Entrepreneurial intentions	t-test two-sided p.
Innovativeness	5,05	5,79	6,03	5,47	<,001**
Proactiveness	4,50	5,08	5,41	4,70	<,001**

When looking the list of the qualities (Table 2), the students with entrepreneurial experience had different ranking than the global sample (Brandt et al., 2022). The first quality they thought they needed was Team to build up the business, secondly risk-taking and thirdly Decisiveness. The last quality for them was More knowledge about entrepreneurship. Ranking with the global sample was 1) Good business idea 2) Motivation and 3) Mentor to help me.

Table 2: Qualities needed for entrepreneurship EIA-students vs. Global data

	EIA-students	Global (n=994)	Difference (Global-EIA)
Team to build up the business	5,84 (1)*	5,67 (7)	-0,17

	EIA-students	Global (n=994)	Difference (Global-EIA)
Risk-taking	5,52 (2)*	5,69 (6)	0,17
Decisiveness	5,48 (3)*	5,73 (5)	0,25
Mentor to help me	5,45 (4)	5,21 (3)*	-0,24
Motivation	5,44 (5)	5,93 (2)*	**0,49**
Persistence	5,44 (6)	5,84 (3)	**0,40**
Resilience	5,42 (7)	5,62 (10)	0,20
Courage	5,34 (8)	5,74 (4)	**0,40**
Self-Esteem	5,27 (9)	5,58 (11)	**0,31**
Innovativeness	5,25 (10)	5,63 (8)	**0,38**
Good Business idea	5,20 (11)	6,02 (1)*	**0,82**
Optimism	5,17 (12)	5,30 (12)	0,13
More knowledge about entrepreneurship	5,03(13)	5,63 (9)	**0,60**
Mean of the qualities	5,37	5,66	0,29

4. Conclusions

This study was focused on the students who were experiencing international entrepreneurship camp at summer 2022. The point was to study, if the camp had impact on their entrepreneurial qualities, when comparing their results on the international data set. When the students were filling in the questionnaires at the end of the camp, they already had quite much knowledge about entrepreneurship.

These results confirm earlier results that innovativeness and proactiveness are strongly connected with entrepreneurial intentions. It seems that students who apply on the camp are more innovative and proactive than students overall, when comparing to the global dataset. It may be that the intensive entrepreneurial camp increased those qualities even more. Interestingly, EIA-students with no intention to start own business had still higher innovativeness and proactiveness when compared to global data set.

When looking the qualities and attitudes needed for entrepreneurship, total means of the global data are higher than EIA-students, indicating that entrepreneurial camp might decrease the needs and give important qualities in regard of entrepreneurship. The biggest differences were in Good business idea, Motivation, Persistence, Courage, Self-esteem and Innovativeness. EIA-students regarded most important the Team to build up the business, Risk-taking and Decisiveness, when Global data set emphasized Good Business idea, Motivation and Mentor. It seems that students with EIA-experience think that good team overcomes good business idea. Maybe they did learn at the camp, that if the team does not work, it is very difficult to do business. Also, their responses reflect the environment of the camp, where the target was to make global business, thus risk-taking is necessarily. It may be that students attending to the camp were already having some qualities more than on average and also, they might had gain those at camp. All in all, this study shows that entrepreneurial camps might have huge impact on students' entrepreneurial qualities and attitudes.

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