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Special Issue on Extra-curricular Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education - Editorial

**Extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurship education**

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## **Abstract**

Enterprise and entrepreneurship education (EEE) in higher education (HE) is expanding, emphasizing diverse outcomes and teaching methods. This special issue explores extracurricular EEE, which includes voluntary activities like business competitions, networking events, and guest speakers, aimed at enhancing entrepreneurial skills and promoting entrepreneurship as a career. These activities are currently facing challenges in sustainability, engagement and varying availability across institutions. Additionally despite evidence of the positive impacts of employability and entrepreneurial endeavors, research on the value of these activities remains limited. This special issue intends to address this deficit and includes six research papers examining various aspects of extracurricular EEE and, collectively, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers to enhance EEE practices.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship education provision continues to grow rapidly in Higher Education (HE) (Nabi *et al.*, 2017; Barnard *et al.*, 2018; Landström *et al.* 2022, Tiberius and Weyland, 2023). Its expansion has brought with it a broadening of focus on anticipated outcomes as well as teaching methods (Tiberius and Weyland, 2023). This special issue taps into this development by engaging with extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurship education. Alongside the traditional context of in-curricular provision, the literature evidences a growing suite of co- and extracurricular enterprise and entrepreneurship activities designed to enhance students' entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and capabilities (Neck and Corbett, 2018; Preedy *et al.*, 2020).

Extracurricular activities are defined as academic or non-academic activities which sit outside of the main curriculum and are therefore voluntary (Bartkus *et al.*, 2012). A range of activities take place under the umbrella of 'extracurricular enterprise and entrepreneurship' but the most popular include; business competitions, networking events, guest speakers and incubation activity (Preedy *et al.*, 2015; Zozimo *et al.*, 2017; Watson *et al.*, 2018; Jackson & Tomlinson, 2022). Experiential learning opportunities, whereby tutors act as facilitators to student learning, are frequently considered optimal (Kassean *et al.*, 2015; Arranz *et al.*, 2017). Extracurricular entrepreneurial activities have an enterprise or entrepreneurship element often designed to raise awareness of entrepreneurship activity, build entrepreneurial skills and experience and promote entrepreneurship as a future career (Rae *et al.*, 2012; Pittaway *et al.*, 2015).

Increasingly, enterprise and entrepreneurship education aims to educate 'for' and 'through' enterprise with emphasis upon creating entrepreneurial mindsets and enhancement of skills and competencies (Bacigalupo *et al.*, 2016; Davis *et al.*, 2016; Neck and Corbett, 2018; QAA, 2018) including critical thinking, teamworking and leadership, communication, and specific knowledge acquisition (Pascarella *et al.*, 2014; De Prada Creo *et al.*, 2021). In terms of graduate outcomes,

the positive link between engagement in extracurricular activities and employability and/or a students' entrepreneurial endeavors has become a well-established stream within the literature (Thompson *et al.*, 2013; Clark *et al.*, 2015; Griffiths *et al.*, 2017; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2023; Pittaway *et al.*, 2024). Yet research examining the value of extracurricular enterprise activities, an effective platform for learning through doing, remains limited (Pittaway *et al.*, 2015; Preedy *et al.*, 2020; Sansone *et al.*, 2021; Preedy and Beaumont, 2024). Of the few works dedicated to this topic, indicators are that students benefit from skills and knowledge gain (Padilla-Angulo, 2017; Preedy *et al.*, 2020), particularly due to the practical nature of the activities (Jones *et al.*, 2015) which encourage students to experiment with their learning, both individually, and in groups (Pittaway *et al.*, 2015; Toutain *et al.*, 2017; Preedy *et al.*, 2020).

Due to extracurricular enterprise and entrepreneurship activities positioning outside of the core curriculum, they can often be viewed as 'additional activities' and face sustainability and resourcing issues (Rae *et al.*, 2012; Preedy and Jones, 2015). Subsequently, the availability of these activities varies at each university and the design and delivery will be contextualized to the educational provider's facilities and resources (Lilischkis *et al.*, 2015; Pittaway *et al.*, 2015). Engagement can also be an issue as students are primarily focused on completing assessed work from their degree program (Rae *et al.*, 2012; Lilischkis *et al.*; 2015). Concerns have therefore been voiced regarding the limitations of extracurricular enterprise activities (Arranz *et al.*, 2017), namely restrictions in the types of activities on offer (Preedy *et al.*, 2020), the audiences they are available to (Beaumont *et al.*, 2016; Norton and Penaluna 2022) and whether the inclusion of certain activity types such as competitions could act as a hindrance to participants on their entrepreneurial journey (Watson and McGowan, 2019). There is a need for further research that

enables deeper understanding of the pedagogical underpinnings, both in terms of opportunities and limitations of extracurricular enterprise activities.

Over recent years, heutagogical approaches have been gaining traction among the enterprise and entrepreneurship educator community (Neck and Corbett, 2018). Heutagogy's emphasis upon learner responsibility aligns with a guiding principle of entrepreneurial education, to develop students' autonomous and leadership behaviors (Bacigalupo *et al.*, 2016) and with the format of extracurricular enterprise activities as platform for autonomous learning. Those students who acquire the capability to learn autonomously will thrive in environments which are characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity (Neck and Corbett, 2018). The time is pertinent for examination of approaches in entrepreneurial education that enable students to seek out activities best suited to their entrepreneurial ambitions and have the opportunity to tailor, and in some cases lead, the content of these activities (Preedy *et al.*, 2020).

This special issue draws together 6 contemporary research papers in extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurship education to present a valuable precis for enterprise and entrepreneurship educators; academics, practitioners, and influencers (EEUK, 2024) to inform future thinking and practice.

Fauchild's study addresses the very pertinent question "What and how do extracurricular entrepreneurship and enterprise education add to students' entrepreneurial learning and education?" The question's answer derives from a systematic literature review guided by the notions of what, how, why, for whom, and when of EEE. The author draws on Transfield *et al.*'s (2003) review of SLR methods in justifying and presenting the methodology. However, rather than testing a particular hypothesis, given the as yet relatively limited literature on EEE, Fauchild's paper is more akin to a scoping-type study. This is also one of the reasons book chapters, as well

as descriptive and conceptual papers were included in the review. The breadth of the review is further given by the keywords used in the search which cover enterprise as well as entrepreneurship, co-curricular alongside extra-curricular. After inclusion and exclusion criteria had been applied 152 were deemed suitable for the review.

Fauchild's findings confirm a growing interest in EEE, and note the first mention explicitly, i.e. using the term 'extracurricular' was in Pittaway et al.'s (2011) paper. The author confirms a varied and also loose use of terminology around EEE. EEE activities in the sample including pitch and business plan competitions, mentoring, workshops, inspirational talks, courses, and lectures, incubation, and student club initiatives. Fauchild's study culminates in a model that maps the kind of learning support EEE can provide depending on levels of students' prior experience and existing knowledge about enterprise and entrepreneurship. A further key focus of Fauchild's study is the role student motivation and engagement plays in achieving the benefits inherent in EEE. The notion of voluntariness plays an important role in determining both engagement with, and then learning outcomes of EEE. Finally, for engaged students with high entrepreneurial intentions EEE can provide a community of practice.

Similar to Fauchild's paper, Maragh undertakes an SLR though his paper is more aligned with establishing the extent to which the literature on EEE has identified causal connections, specifically between EEE and entrepreneurial intentions (EI), entrepreneurial action (EA) and the entrepreneurial mindset (EM). Maragh deliberately focuses on entrepreneurship as a search term, excluding enterprise as his study aimed to focus on venture creation rather than a general application of enterprise to "all areas of professional life". Given a narrower focus than in Fauchild (Maragh's paper also targets only EEE in higher education and only included empirical papers that identified an impact) eighteen papers were ultimately included for review. Findings suggest a

mixed picture in relation to EEE impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Some positive results were identified but some studies suggested mixed outcomes. EEE was identified as positively impacting entrepreneurial competencies, self-efficacy beliefs and/or social capital. Maragh concludes that while findings are generally positive, more research is required that distinguishes between types of EEE, outcome measures and also research design. With regard to the latter, longitudinal research is advocated to support stronger causal inferences being made.

Wraae et al.'s paper uses an ethnographic case study of a student team involved with an incubator, to establish how the entrepreneurship student develops their entrepreneurial identity; how the student transitions from a student identity to an entrepreneur's identity. The students set up a business and were interviewed and observed during this time. Identity development as part of a team was a key theme in Wraae et al.'s paper, where we can see some overlap with Fauchild's communities of practice. Developing one's own identity alongside that of a 'team identity' and its relation to the 'company identity' really gets to the heart of how nascent entrepreneurs navigate and make sense of the entrepreneurial process with implications for identity development. The paper recognizes transitions between curricular and extracurricular, between formal and informal learning. The paper also offers some recommendations and reflections for those considering implementing an ethnographic methodology, and indeed offers useful details relating how to conduct ethnographic research in entrepreneurship education. Issues surrounding the role of the educator-researcher, how much proximity to the research subjects is required, what data to include with a recognition of the usefulness of journals/logs are all themes worthy of consideration in ethnographic entrepreneurship education research.

An ethnographic methodology is again used by MacNeil et al. to explore a particular type of extracurricular entrepreneurship support most prevalent in the United States and Canada: Dorm-



preneurship. Here, student halls of residence, or dorms, provide both university business incubation and living space linked to living-learning community movements. MacNeil et al. focused on the University of Waterloo, describing it as Canada's most famous entrepreneurship university where almost 60% of incoming students identify entrepreneurship of one of two reasons they chose the University to study at. The stories of four dorm-preneurship programs are presented and an educational design analysis conducted. The authors conclude that although dorm-preneurship programs appear to be the highest order of campus entrepreneurial programming, they yield both positive and negative outcomes and argue that universities should design such programs from an understanding of theory and practice. Perhaps controversially for a special issue focusing on extracurricular entrepreneurship support, MacNeil et al. propose that dorm-preneurship programs take a co-curricular rather than an extra-curricular orientation.

Hammada et al. conducted 22 semi-structured interviews from 22 entrepreneurship experts from 13 countries across the world. Participants were from a wide range of entrepreneurship-related backgrounds including accelerator and incubator managers, venture capitalists, and start-up mentors and had worked with entrepreneurs for at least 5 years. The intention here was to incorporate a pool of entrepreneurship ecosystem experts into the entrepreneurship education process as an important set to improving its outcomes. Each participant was asked what extracurricular activities can be used to improve entrepreneurial competencies among nascent entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial students with a list of 34 such activities generated. A hybrid-approach thematic analysis enabled the generation of a typology of extracurricular activities based on learning theories based on five key themes: Cognitive, Existential, Experiential, Situated, and Social. The authors suggest that the typology produced will enable educators to signpost their

students to different activities based on their competence profile, and further promote a beneficial student-centered approach to learning.

The final paper in the series by Brentnall applies realist evaluation to explore the popular, but under-researched, one-day competition format that is extensively used to provide extra-curricular entrepreneurship education opportunities in secondary schools. A realist approach is taken here in response to a criticism that evaluations of entrepreneurship education are not able to say what types of programmes work in what context and why. As realist evaluation may be new to readers, Brentnall takes us through the methodological steps in depth and provides an extensive set of participant responses. Through the realist journey, Brentnall identifies a set of existing advantageous resources that can help generate more positive effects in one-day competitions, and the negative effects for individual that can reinforce positions of disadvantage. The impact of competitions where there are, by definition, winners and losers is explored.

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