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Entrepreneurial Studies in Higher Education: Some Insights for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this paper is to assess the state of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions in Europe (which are not universities for Economics) comparing the academic developments in the field of entrepreneurship in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Western Europe (WE).

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: To fulfil the objective of the paper such research methods as literature review and Internet research were applied.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The process of arguments presented in this paper was systemized in two parts. Firstly, there was discussed the theoretical background of academic entrepreneurship education. Secondly, based on own Internet research there was presented and discussed the educational programme in the field of entrepreneurship at selected European universities.

RESEARCH RESULTS: There are discrepancies in teaching entrepreneurship between universities in Europe. West-European universities offer a richer entrepreneurship programme than those in South-Europe. Moreover, universities in CEE lag behind those in WE in entrepreneurship education. Poland is an exception, which offers a range of specialist subjects in the field of entrepreneurship, which Polish academics seem to specialize in.

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CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The paper focuses on examining the entrepreneurship as a single subject (compulsory or optional) of university curriculum. It is recommended to analyze, if universities have specialist chairs for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship centres offering a comprehensive entrepreneurship programme.

KEYWORDS:

entrepreneurship, university, education programme, Europe

INTRODUCTION

Europe's competitiveness, innovation and economic growth depend on being able to produce future leaders with skills and attitudes to be entrepreneurial in their professional lives, whether by creating their own companies or innovating in larger organizations. Entrepreneurship education is the first and arguably the most important step for embedding an innovative culture in Europe.

This paper discusses and evaluates the state of entrepreneurship education in academic institutions in Europe, comparing the developments at universities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with universities in Western Europe (WE) and outlines a number of recommendations for them. The paper raises a question whether European Universities indicate the similar trends in teaching entrepreneurship. Do WE universities have a richer didactic offer in the field of entrepreneurship than those from CEE? Is the level of academic entrepreneurship education in Europe sufficient?

In the theoretical part of the article, the main trends in academic entrepreneurship education are discussed. In the empirical part, there were researched didactic programmes in the field of entrepreneurship at selected non-Economics universities in Europe, analyzing both Economic and non-Economic majors.

The paper contributes to business literature as it attempts to compare the state of teaching entrepreneurship at universities of CEE and WE facilitating the understanding of shortcomings of academic entrepreneurship programmes. It tries to answer a burning question concerning the efficiency of the level of the academic education system in the field of entrepreneurship.

ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The knowledge-based economy generates new challenges towards the world of science. Previously, the academic environment was on the margins of economic processes, cultivating its traditions and values. Nowadays, the elite model of the Humboldt university prevailing for the last 200 years based on the unity of scientific research and education, contemporarily needs to be extended by the third function – entrepreneurship (Matusiak, 2006, pp. 73-77).

There can be recognized the manifestation of academic entrepreneurship in many fields of university's cooperation with business practice, which results in commercialization of research outcomes (Lackéus, 2015, p. 9). On the other hand, academic entrepreneurship also embraces diverse forms of supporting students and graduates' business initiatives. The idea of an "entrepreneurial university" occurs not only due to commercialization of technologies developed at universities, but also launching entrepreneurial graduates, who are proactive and innovative with risk appetite (Cieślik et al., 2011).

In recent years, there has been observed a revolution in approaches to entrepreneurship education at the academic level. In high developed countries, universities tend to include specialist educational programmes in the field of entrepreneurship in their curricula (Matusiak, Kuciński, & Gryzik, 2009, p. 164).

Didactic programmes implemented at universities aim to not only provide practical knowledge, instilling the spirit of entrepreneurship already during the period of studies, but also encourage to choose establishing a business as an attractive professional career path. Unlike programmes targeted at a traditional small business, university educational initiatives prepare to start undertakings of high potential growth based on innovations and using knowledge gained during the study period.

Spectacular successes in the field of entrepreneurship education have been achieved by American high education (see: Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). Entrepreneurship has been part of the curricula in higher education institutions in America for over fifty years. Universities of other high developed countries have been trying to catch up with

American ones. Canadian, Australian and Scandinavian universities are playing a leading role in this field. In Europe, entrepreneurship only substantially began to enter the curriculum in the last ten years, although a few institutions started earlier (Twaalfhoven & Wilson, 2004).

For the last several decades, apart from quantitative changes concerning an increase in the number of universities teaching entrepreneurship, there have been observed qualitative changes. Previously, it was believed that only people with specific in-born aptitudes can be successful in business. Nowadays, the majority claims that not only born entrepreneurs have a chance to run a successful business and the probability of a successful business can be increased while gaining specialist knowledge in frames of educational programmes. The qualitative changes cover the following issues (Charney & Libecap, 2000):

- Entrepreneurship was previously mainly associated with running a small business; nowadays there has been observed a division between managing a small company and entrepreneurship associated with innovativeness;
- Entrepreneurship was taught as a less important subject at bachelor's degree studies; currently it is included in curricula of master's degree and doctoral students, which is connected with an increase of the rank of this subject;
- Previously, the main aim of teaching entrepreneurship was preparing students and graduates for creation of their own businesses; "new business creation" is still the basic subject taught; however, entrepreneurship education is understood in a broader sense – as shaping entrepreneurial attitudes, which are the key competence of a university graduate;
- Diversification of subject connected with entrepreneurship are offered in curricula;
- Change of the role and function of didactic units offering entrepreneurship programmes; moving away from traditional model of a chair to multifunctional entrepreneurship centres.

Proliferation of entrepreneurship programmes in Europe has been positive in terms of validating interest in the field, but more depth is needed to ensure that entrepreneurship courses and materials are of high quality. Curriculum development is of particular importance

in helping to ensure entrepreneurship's rightful place among the academic disciplines (Wilson, 2008).

In curricula, entrepreneurship and innovation must be deeply embedded to ingrain a new entrepreneurial spirit and mindset among students. In Europe, entrepreneurship tends to be offered in stand-alone courses rather than being integrated in the content of courses in other departments or disciplines. A range of entrepreneurship research and teaching topic areas are being addressed in Europe. Apart from the basic subject called "new venture creation" there has been gradually introduced (Wilson, 2008):

- Specialist functional subjects; students can deepen their knowledge in such areas as: gaining funds for development (business angels, venture capital), entrepreneurial marketing, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) management, family business, franchise, entering foreign markets);
- Specialist subjects concerning the specific sectors and industry groups (singling out the direction of technological entrepreneurship with the separation of specific groups of high-tech industries (IT, biotechnology); furthermore, considering the specification of other fields (tourism, health protection, food manufacturing);
- Subjects considering a specific cultural and social context – gender/minority issues.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE – OUTCOMES OF THE INTERNET ANALYSIS

To answer the questions raised there was conducted an analysis of educational programmes in the field of entrepreneurship provided by higher education institutions in ten European countries (Belarus, Czech Republic, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia and Sweden). For teaching entrepreneurship, in each country, there were analysed five non-Economics universities considering Economics and non-Economics majors in the field of Business and Economics, Technology and Engineering and Art and Design.

Table 1
Entrepreneurship education in the Netherlands

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Zuyd University of Applied Sciences | Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation |
| | Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship in the Service Industry |
| Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurial Mindset |
| | Innovation and Creation |
| | Start Up Your Business |
| Radboud University | Sustainable Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Finance |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Finance |
| Eindhoven University of Technology | Technology Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurial Marketing |
| | Entrepreneurial Finance |
| | Technology Entrepreneurship and Management |
| | Co-Creative Entrepreneurship |
| Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship Theory |
| | Entrepreneurial Dynamics |
| | Sustainability & Entrepreneurship |
| | Setting Up Fashion Business |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

In Europe there are major divergences in academic entrepreneurship education between separate countries. There are not only discrepancies between universities of CEE and WE, but also within these regions. On the one hand, countries like the Netherlands (Table 1), Finland (Table 2) and the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway: Table 3 and Table 4) are ahead in terms of teaching entrepreneurship. They have a wide range of entrepreneurship programmes provided at both Economics and non-Economics majors (mainly Technology, Engineering and Computer Science). Their didactic offer covers not only the basics of entrepreneurship, but also specialist subjects, such as creative industries, family business, franchising, international

entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in health protection, social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship of advanced technologies. Although in the field of Business and Economics a number of credit bearing entrepreneurship modules are offered, there is a shortage of entrepreneurship education in other fields.

Table 2
Entrepreneurship education in Finland

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aalto University | Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management |
| | Entrepreneurship and Managing Innovations |
| | Entrepreneurship and Society |
| | Researching Entrepreneurship and Innovation |
| | Sustainable Entrepreneurship |
| | Venture Formation |
| | Venture Ideation |
| | From Science to Technology and from Innovation to Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurial Approach to Materials and Technology |
| | Inno-Project |
| | Introduction to IT Business and Venturing |
| | Technology Entrepreneurship |
| | Management of Technology Venture |
| | Real Estate Business and Entrepreneurship |
| Real Estate Economics and Entrepreneurship | |
| University of the Arts Helsinki | Arts Management and Entrepreneurship |
| University of Eastern Finland | Entrepreneurship programme was not found |
| Tampere University of Technology | Business Management Cases, Literature Study in Business and Technology |
| Lappeenranta University of Technology | Creativity and Entrepreneurship in New Product Development from Silicon Valley's Perspectives |
| | Entrepreneurship Theory |
| | International Entrepreneurship Challenge |
| | Entrepreneurship, Ownership and Family Firms |
| | Software Projects, Processes and Entrepreneurship |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

Table 3
Entrepreneurship education in Sweden

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lund University | Entrepreneurship: Social Innovation – Strategy for Sustainability |
| KTH Royal Institute of Technology | Entrepreneurship |
| | Technology-Based Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Gender |
| | Entrepreneurial Leadership in Practice |
| | Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries |
| | Entrepreneurship and Innovation |
| | Entrepreneurship – Personal Development |
| | Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and New Business Development |
| Karolinska Institutet | Bioentrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship in Life Sciences |
| Uppsala Universitet | Entrepreneurship |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

Table 4
Entrepreneurship education in Norway

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| University of Tromsø | Entrepreneurship and Corporate Entrepreneurship |
| | Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship, Economics and Organization |
| | Development and Intrapreneurship |
| | Creativity and Innovation |
| University of Stavanger | Editorial Project Development and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Business Plan |
| | Introduction to Business Administration and Entrepreneurship |
| Sogn og Fjordane University College | Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Student Company |
| NLA University College | Innovation, Freelancing and Working in Change |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurship Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| University of Nordland | Innovation, Freelancing and Working in Change |
| University of Agder | Entrepreneurship in Food and Nutrition |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

On the other hand, in South European countries (Spain, Portugal) there are far fewer entrepreneurship programmes (Table 5, 6). The educational programmes cover the basics of entrepreneurship, which is mainly an addition to curricula of Economics majors.

Table 5
Entrepreneurship education at universities in Spain

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| University of Barcelona | Entrepreneurial behaviour |
| Autonomous University of Madrid | Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up |
| Autonomous University of Barcelona | Entrepreneurship |
| | Business Start-Up and Innovation |
| University Complutense Madrid | Creation of Companies |
| | Innovation Economics |
| University of Navarra | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurial Management |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

Table 6
Entrepreneurship education in Portugal

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| University of Coimbra | Business Economics and Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| University Porto | Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| | Technological Entrepreneurship Laboratory |
| | Economics, Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| Portuguese Catholic University in Lisbon | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurial Corporate Project |
| | Social Entrepreneurship |
| | Strategic Management of Innovation |
| | Business Model Innovation |
| University Institute of Lisbon | Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Technology Management |
| | Innovation and Organizational Change |
| University of Algarve | Economics of Innovation and Entrepreneurship |
| | Innovation and Land Use Management |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

As far as the CEE universities, such as: Belarus (Table 7), the Czech Republic (Table 8) and Slovakia (Table 9) are concerned, they lag behind the WE universities in the field of entrepreneur education. Academic programmes cover preliminary the basics of entrepreneurship and are provided at Business and Economics. In other fields entrepreneurship is hardly taught. The entrepreneurship programme in Slovakia is more diverse than in Belarus and the Czech Republic and includes also specialist subjects. However, Poland stands out from the CEE countries in terms of teaching entrepreneurship (Table 10). Polish universities offer a wide range of specialist courses, aimed at setting up a business. Entrepreneurship is taught not only at Economics, but also non-Economics majors. Poland is catching up with the leaders in academic entrepreneurship teaching.

Table 7
Entrepreneurship education in Belarus

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Belarusian State University | Entrepreneurship |
| | Basics of Business and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship in Media Technology |
| Belarusian State Technical University | Technological entrepreneurship |
| | Organization of Entrepreneurship and Investments |
| | Accounting in Entrepreneurship |
| | Financial and Statistical Statement in Entrepreneurship |
| | Analysis in Entrepreneurship |
| | Audit in Entrepreneurship |
| Management Accounting in Entrepreneurship | |
| Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno | Economic Analysis of Enterprise |
| Francisc Scorina Gomel State University | Entrepreneurship |
| | Economy of Small Business and Entrepreneurship |
| Brest State Technical University | Entrepreneurship |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

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Table 8
Entrepreneurship education in the Czech Republic

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Czech University of Agriculture in Prague | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship in Woodworking and Furniture Industry |
| | Administration Entrepreneurship |
| University of Ostrava* | Entrepreneurship is not taught |
| University of Pardubice | |
| Jan Evangelista Purkyně's University in Ústí nad Labem* | |
| University of defence in Brno | Entrepreneurship is not taught |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

Table 9
Entrepreneurship education in Slovakia

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava | Entrepreneurship – Profession Entrepreneur |
| Comenius University in Bratislava | Entrepreneurship Management of Start-ups and Small Enterprises |
| | Development of Entrepreneurial Skills I |
| | Support of Entrepreneurship Development |
| | Development of Entrepreneurial Skills II |
| | Small and Medium Entrepreneurship |
| Technical University of Kosice | Enterprise and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and New Venture Management |
| | International Forms of Entrepreneurship |
| University of Prešov | Entrepreneurship in SMEs |
| Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra * | Entrepreneurship is not taught |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

Table 10
Entrepreneurship education in Poland

| University | Entrepreneurship programme |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| University in Gdańsk | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship in Contemporary Surroundings |
| | Economics and Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship vs Market |
| | Entrepreneurship Theory |
| | International Entrepreneurship |
| | Basics of Micro-Entrepreneurship |
| | Small Venture Creation and Management |
| | SMEs Management |
| | Project Management and Entrepreneurship |
| | Information Systems in Entrepreneurship |
| Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and Professional Career Planning |
| Medical University in Warsaw | Entrepreneurship is not taught |
| University of Technology in Śląsk | Entrepreneurship |
| | Entrepreneurship and IP Protection |
| | Small Venture Management |
| | SMEs Management |
| University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn | Entrepreneurship |
| | International Entrepreneurship |

Source: own elaboration based on Internet research.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the findings discussed there are discrepancies in teaching entrepreneurship between universities in WE. South-European universities lag behind other West-European leading universities in entrepreneurship education. This can be explained by the stronger input from the particular governments in WE in the form of financial incentives for universities, numerous support initiatives, both national and regional and the widespread courses on offer at all educational levels.

As research indicates it is essential to extend the didactic offer in the field of entrepreneurship in European academic institutions, especially non-Economics ones. This applies particularly to universities of CEE, which lag behind the universities in WE in the field of academic entrepreneurship education. The entrepreneurship programmes should be expanded and cover not only the basics of entrepreneurship, but also specialist subjects. Entrepreneurship should not only be treated as a domain of Business and Economics, but also offered to students of other fields.

In the field of entrepreneurship, universities of CEE can use the “latecomer advantage” to catch up with other West-European universities; they can use the experience of other leading European universities. The knowledge gained by top researchers all over the world concerning the organization of the teaching process is easily available nowadays due to implementation of new technologies. Universities of CEE have the unique opportunity to learn from models around the world and focus on integrating the most relevant and high-quality practices into their academic institutions.

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