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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INITIATIVES: DOES ACTIVE LEARNING REALLY MAKE DIFFERENCE? (SUMMARY)

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Principal Topic

We propose and test a model of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) based on an educational evaluation research perspective (Chen, 1990, 2005; Patton, 1997) to assess the impact on the participants in terms of conative, cognitive and behavioral outcomes (Bloom’s revised taxonomy of educational objectives, Krathwohl, 2002; Anderson, 2006; Kraiger et al., 1993). As we are interested in the antecedents to an individual’s decision to become an entrepreneur, these dimensions are operationalized with respect to entrepreneurial cognitive literature (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; De Noble et al., 1999; Markman et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2007). Research has also recognized the importance of experience (Delmar & Shane, 2006) in entrepreneurship. Actual experience can link learning, thinking and doing. Field experiences will not only motivate students to learn current course materials but also increase their intrinsic interest in further learning. Thus, we pose three questions: Does active pedagogy provide greater improvement in perceived entrepreneurial competencies? How do entrepreneurial intentions vary when affected by experiential vs. cognitive learning? Is active pedagogy more efficient in terms of learning performance?

Method

We applied a repeated survey design on a sample of 360 participants from two EE initiatives. We consider the first “EE1” as a cognitive learning program (focused on theory/knowledge acquisition) and the second “EE2” as experiential learning (students are asked to develop a business plan). Our key measures were extracted from the literature to the extent possible and we took into account students’ performance. We used multivariate analysis of co-variance to determine if significant differences exist between the two programs on the three dimensions. We also used regression analysis to determine the impact on the students and compare regression coefficients.

Results & Implications

Our preliminary results show greater improvement in perceived competencies following EE1 and more importantly after EE2. Entrepreneurial intentions decrease after EE1 and remain stable after EE2. Further refinements are being made to test our hypotheses within subgroups and also to test mediating and moderating effects. We conduct a piecewise regression to test and measure variation in the effects of the two initiatives in terms of entrepreneurial interests and intentions (conative components), perceived competencies (cognitive) and learning performance (behavioral).

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