FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: IMPACT OF SPECIALIZATION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Dev K. Dutta  
*University of New Hampshire, USA*, dev.dutta@unh.edu

Jun Li  
*University of New Hampshire, USA*

Michael Merenda  
*University of New Hampshire, USA*

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol29/iss23/2

This Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Entrepreneurship at Babson at Digital Knowledge at Babson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research by an authorized administrator of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.
SUMMARY

FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: IMPACT OF SPECIALIZATION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Dev K. Dutta, University of New Hampshire, USA
Jun Li, University of New Hampshire, USA
Michael Merenda, University of New Hampshire, USA

Principal Topic

Even though university-based entrepreneurship education programs have grown substantially over the last decade (Katz, 2003; Vesper and Gartner, 1997), a question that remains unanswered is what should be the most desirable educational mix of inputs for fostering entrepreneurship. This is especially because of the time lag that normally exists between graduation and actual venture creation. Further, in the coming years entrepreneurship education will have to deal with many challenges: (i) academia-business incongruence, (ii) the field’s maturity/complacency/stagnation trap, and (iii) an acute shortage of faculty, all of which will significantly affect the quality of the education offered (Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005).

Method

Given these competing needs and challenges, it is important to identify a judicious mix of knowledge inputs likely to be of the highest benefit to students pursuing entrepreneurial careers. Therefore, in this paper we examine the relationship between specialized entrepreneurship education and diversity of university educational experiences in fostering future entrepreneurial events. Our research proposes a conceptual model grounded in two alternate forms of knowledge relevant in entrepreneurship education:

Specialized Entrepreneurship Education: Knowledge specialized in terms of entrepreneurship-related content. Diversity of Educational Experience: Knowledge incorporating diversity of educational experience from courses and/or programs in other disciplines. We hypothesize that specialized entrepreneurship education and diversity of educational experience jointly lead to future entrepreneurial events. By considering the two independent variables and their joint impact on entrepreneurial events, we are able to propose and test a typology of entrepreneurs.

We test the model using a field survey of graduates (over a twenty year timeframe) of an established entrepreneurship program in a major public university in north-east US. Currently, our research is in the data collection and analysis stage. In February 2009, a web-based survey was sent to 2100 alumni. We have received 201 responses to date (approximately, a 10% response rate). Our survey will end on April 15. Our preliminary analysis shows that the indicators representing the independent and dependent variables share underlying relationships. In the coming days, our objective will be to test the conceptual model and the hypotheses proposed therein.

Results and Implications

This study aims to enhance our understanding of how prospective entrepreneurs benefit from specialized entrepreneurship education combined with diversified educational experience. The results of the study will have important implications for entrepreneurship educators, policy makers, as well as nascent entrepreneurs.

CONTACT: Dev Dutta; Dev.Dutta@unh.edu; University of New Hampshire, U.S.A.