POCKETS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN FORMING PERCEPTIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AND PRACTICES (SUMMARY)

Salla Rausmaa  
*Aalto University, Finland*

Mikko Jääskeläinen  
*Aalto University, Finland, mikko.jaaskelainen@aalto.fi*

Marina G. Biniari  
*Aalto University, Finland*

---

**Recommended Citation**

Available at: https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol36/iss3/12

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 editor of Digital Knowledge at Babson. For more information, please contact digitalknowledge@babson.edu.
POCKETS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN FORMING PERCEPTIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AND PRACTICES

Salla Rausmaa, Aalto University, Finland
Mikko Jääskeläinen, Aalto University, Finland
Marina G. Biniari, Aalto University, Finland

Principal Topic

Recent studies suggest that the founders’ identity and perceptions of entrepreneurship imprints their ventures by affecting the actions and choices of the entrepreneurs, thereby leading to distinctly different trajectories at the venture level (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009; Powell & Baker, 2014). But if founder’s perceptions and practices imprint their ventures, how these perceptions are imprinted on the entrepreneurs?

We seek to answer this question by tracing the impact of social context on entrepreneurial behavior. We examine an emerging self-defined entrepreneurial community – a student-led Aalto Entrepreneurship Society. We explore how such communities serve both as the context within which a shared understanding is formed about the “entrepreneur” social category, and as the context in which members experiment with the entrepreneurial role identity (Deaux & Martin, 2003). Drawing on the role identity and planned behavior theories, we suggest that social context-dependent antecedents shape entrepreneurial behavior. Those antecedents include 1) attitudes, norms, and other behavioral expectations consisting of shared attitudes towards “entrepreneurial behavior”, 2) shared conceptions of what constitutes legitimate “entrepreneurial behavior”, and 3) shared role models that symbolically embody such behavior.

Method

The data consists of over 2200 discussions threads and documents capturing the internal and external communications of the community from its emergence and until its formalization. We adopted an inductive coding strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and analyzed the discourse on the practices and identity work the community employed to define its mandate and organize its operations.

Results and Implications

Our results indicate three pillars of community identity: 1) normative statements of entrepreneurial practices; 2) statements of “we”, and 3) dissociative statements highlighting the distinction from what the community perceived as non-entrepreneurial behavior and outsiders. In particular, the distinctiveness of the community’s identity was defined through references to specific institutions and cultural aspects of the community’s local context, suggesting that its members’ perceptions of entrepreneurial role identity is contingent on the local context. Our results contribute to the integration of the social context to the micro-level of entrepreneurial behavior by illustrating the significance of legitimization processes of “entrepreneurial” identity and of practices within an immediate social context.

CONTACT: Mikko Jääskeläinen; mikko.jaaskelainen@aalto.fi; (T): +358505923470; P.O.Box 15500, Aalto University, FI-00076.