CHAPTER IV. ENTREPRENEURIAL COGNITION

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THRESHOLD CONCEPTS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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INTERACTIVE PAPER

THRESHOLD CONCEPTS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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Principal Topic

Within this research project potential concepts concerning the frame of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) will be identified and their importance for the conception of corresponding learning arrangements is analyzed by using the educational framework of threshold concepts. Threshold concepts already have been developed for economics in particular as well as for the area of accounting and management education and have been successfully embedded in corresponding teaching and learning arrangements. In this context, threshold concepts are defined as concepts, which fundamentally transform the learners’ perspective on a discipline as well as on their own identity. Therefore, this research project aims at merging theoretical preparatory work from both the areas of entrepreneurship as well as education literature in terms of threshold concepts in order to investigate the following research question:

Which threshold concepts can be identified within Entrepreneurship Education?

Method

Potential threshold concepts for the field of Entrepreneurship Education have been identified on the basis of a literature research in a first step (1). In this study for instance, the effectuational approach, the role of uncertainty and the non-linearity of an entrepreneurial process are derived out of the literature as transformative and integrative concepts for an individual’s perception on entrepreneurial issues. Secondly, the concepts are implemented in an EE environment within the frame of an empirical study and are examined with regard to their effectiveness (2). Undergraduate students of business administration are randomly assigned to two groups in order to examine the effect of threshold concepts on a learning individual’s cognitive level: The experimental group attends EE-workshops designed along threshold concept principles (content and methods concerning effectuation, uncertainty and non-linearity), the control group is designed along basic concepts like marketing or business planning.

Results and Implications

The results show a significant increase of the perceived behavior control concerning entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention (p<0.01) in the experimental group (n=84) compared to the control group (n=72). There was no significant effect neither for the attitude to entrepreneurship nor tolerance to ambiguity. The results implicate a more sensitive discussion about the impact of EE programs, which may differ depending on the extent threshold concepts are considered.

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