

Students' Views on Entrepreneurship and Implications for Entrepreneurial Education – Emerging Findings of a Survey Study

Paul Joseph-Richard, Darryl Cummins and Margaret Morgan
Ulster University, Northern Ireland, UK

Abstract:

The aim of this survey study is to understand undergraduates' views on entrepreneurship. Scholarly interest in embedding entrepreneurship across the university curriculum is increasing, both within the UK and globally in the university sector. However, there remains ongoing debate about what entrepreneurship is, what characterizes entrepreneurs and distinguishes them from other organisational and social actors, and how can the entrepreneur be identified? Within the area of entrepreneurial education curriculum provision, definitional clarity is critical for designing, delivering and evaluating academic programmes. In this qualitative descriptive survey design, we collected the views of a purposive sample of undergraduates (n=223). Our content analysis reveals a narrow view of identifying business owners, who are male and relatively well-known individuals from the USA, as entrepreneurs is predominant among the respondents. Reference to entrepreneurial context, sources and types of entrepreneurs is almost absent. Seventy-three per cent of students show limited or no entrepreneurial intention, which tends to decrease during the third year of the 4-year programme. We discuss the pedagogical implications of the findings and argue for the need to address definitional ambiguity, while emphasising the importance of context and the possibility of everyone's ability to create entrepreneurial impact within organisations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, STEM, Business and Management, Undergraduates, Survey, Entrepreneurship Education.