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Experiential Pedagogy and Entrepreneurial Intention: A Focus on University Entrepreneurship Programmes

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Keywords

Experiential Pedagogy, Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurial Implementation Intention, University Entrepreneurship Programmes.

Introduction

The findings of various researches such as Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud (2000) supported by Peterman & Kennedy (2003) as well as Liñán (2004) have provided evidence that entrepreneurial intention is a compelling and undeniable determinant of the expression of entrepreneurial behaviour. Researchers such as Krueger (2007) Dell (2008) Ismail, Khalid, Othman, Jusoff, Kassim & Zain (2009) affirmed that entrepreneurial intentions offer priceless insights as regards gaining better understanding of the entrepreneurial process. This is based on the assumption that entrepreneurial behaviour is better predicted based on the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. Krueger (2007) also stated that intentions precede opportunity recognition and choice of business startups. However, regardless of the result of several studies suggesting a favorable relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, quite conversely some studies such as Wang & Wong (2004) supported by Oosterbeek, Prag & Ijsselstein (2008), Göksel & Aydintan (2011), Graevenitz, Harhoff & Weber (2010) as well as Hill (2011) have argued that entrepreneurship education is averse to the development of entrepreneurial capabilities and skills of university students, hence a deterrent to the development of entrepreneurial intention. Nabi, Holden & Walmsley (2006) have also argued that even though there are some evidences that entrepreneurship education plays some positive role on student entrepreneurial intention, however the impact of university entrepreneurship education has been questioned particularly regarding the effect on transition of students' intention to engagement in entrepreneurial activities at graduation. It is pertinent to state that experiential pedagogy in entrepreneurship education motivates the ability of students to see socio-economic problems as challenges. This may propel them to express entrepreneurial actions as a response to the socio economic challenges identified (Sahlberg, 2010). This is important particularly because the expression of entrepreneurial actions by university students substantiates readiness or intentions for a career in entrepreneurship. To this end, this study posit that the expression of entrepreneurial actions by university students, motivated by an effective experiential pedagogy increases the propensity of undergraduates to engage in entrepreneurship even

after graduation (Middleton, 2010; Reitan, 1997). The critical issue here is that the expression of entrepreneurial actions by university students, should be the primary goal of university entrepreneurship programme hence, experiential pedagogical approaches in entrepreneurship education can help drive and achieve this goal (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). Universities are considered as incubators for entrepreneurial initiatives in any society thus, emphasis must be placed on adopting experiential approaches as regards pedagogy in order to foster a collective emphasis on expression of entrepreneurial actions by undergraduates (Sadeghi, Mohammadi, Nosrati & Malekian, 2013). Consequently, studies such as Middleton (2010), Aja-Okorie & Adali (2013) and more recently Nasiru, Keat & Bhatti (2015) on entrepreneurship pedagogical issues in university education have recommended the design of challenging learning activities to motivate the development of creative problem solving abilities in order to enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions. Nevertheless, considering the salient role of experiential pedagogical approaches in fostering entrepreneurial development of university students, one aspect of keen interest that many studies have ignored, is the extent to which experiential pedagogy motivate university students' to express entrepreneurial actions in service of an entrepreneurial career at graduation. Over the years, there have been many research articles exploring university entrepreneurship programmers and the development of entrepreneurial intentions and thus several models of entrepreneurial intentions have been promulgated. However, two models have been prominent and have provided the foundation for theoretical advancements. Consequently, this research seeks to achieve the following:

- a. To provide conceptual clarifications and linkage for and between the concepts of experiential pedagogy and entrepreneurial intentions.
- b. To provide a theoretical framework for the concept of experiential pedagogy.
- c. To review the two prominent intention theories with a view to highlighting the limitations and attempt to bridge the theoretical gaps identified, by proposing an intention model considered salient to increasing the propensity of university students' engagement, in entrepreneurial activities at graduation.

Conceptual Development

Experiential Pedagogy

Moses, Akinbode, Olokundun & Agboola (2016) defined entrepreneurship pedagogy as a combination of knowledge and skills, necessary for effectiveness in teaching entrepreneurship. In support of this, Krueger Reilly & Carsrud (2000) described entrepreneurship pedagogy as a highly dynamic blend of theoretical understanding and relevant practical skill. Sahlberg (2010) supported by Periz Otiz et al. (2016) stressed that within a particular variety of procedures, diverse pedagogical approaches work differently, considering various groups of students and peculiarity of the context. In the same vein,

Reitan (1997) stated that while representing the collective wisdom of culture, as well as upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, entrepreneurship pedagogy must also be a critical and analytical regarding the capacities of students. In other words, it is safe to state that good entrepreneurship pedagogy specifically involves a broad collection of approaches and sustained responsiveness to what produces student learning. However, Neck & Greene (2011) supported by Rodríguez-Félix et al. (2016) posit that the pedagogical approach salient to entrepreneurship education is experiential pedagogy. This notion was supported by Meyers & Jones (1993) who stated that experiential learning focuses on learning by doing; hence it is regarded as one of the best instructional techniques in entrepreneurship, because it provides students with opportunities to internalize material and comprehend instructions given to them. Neck & Greene (2011) supported by Rodríguez-Félix et al. (2016) argued that experiential learning approach in entrepreneurship education creates an environment where learners come with various useful and valuable experiences, from life outside the classroom, which can be employed to promote equality and diversity and explore learners' views and challenges. Knowles, Holton & Swanson (2011) in line with Chapman et al. (2016) stressed that learning from mistakes is considered a vital component of experiential learning, which provides valuable practical entrepreneurial experiences. Zapeda (2013) in line with Park & Choi (2014) indicated that the use of role play activities and case studies and interdisciplinary teams in experiential learning approach, enhance learners to learn from each other and experience real life challenges, in the business world. This was supported by Moses, Akinbode, Olokundun & Agboola (2017) as well as Breunig, (2017) who suggested that experiential learning approach allows students to learn that making mistakes is a characteristic of product development.

Concept of Entrepreneurial Intentions

Entrepreneurial intention is defined as the willingness of an individual to express entrepreneurial behaviour and engage in entrepreneurial activities associated with self-employment initiatives and new business startups (Dell, 2008; Dohse & Walter, 2010). According to Ajzen (1991), intention is the immediate determinant of behaviour; hence Davidsson (1995) asserted that individuals would consider a career in entrepreneurship based on their perceptions of its suitability and desirability. In the same vein, Barringer & Ireland (2010) argued that individuals will consider careers in entrepreneurship, based on their perceptions that such efforts can enhance the achievement of personal goals, pursuit of ideas and the realization of financial gains. Zain, Akram & Ghani (2010) supported by Liñán & Fayolle (2015) opined that entrepreneurial intentions are a reflection of inner courage, ambition and a sense of independence. This was supported by Khalid, Jusoff, Rahman, Kassim & Zain (2009) who opined that an individual's potential to become an entrepreneur may not find expression, except they have intentions to become entrepreneurs. According to Bird (1988), entrepreneurial intentions, reflects an individual's state of mind targeted at new venture creation, development of new business models and value addition within existing business enterprises. This suggests that intentions represent an important factor, in the processes associated with new venture creation, business growth and survival. In the same vein, an implementation intention is defined as a volitional phase consisting of actions to initiate an intended behaviour (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). According to Edelman, Brush & Manolova (2010) entrepreneurial actions such as generating a business idea, identifying a business

opportunity and other similar actions involved in the entrepreneurship process could be considered as evidences of an individual's intention for engagement in entrepreneurial behaviour and activity. Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, (2000) explained that these entrepreneurial actions, can initiate an intention based cognitive process, that leads to engagement in entrepreneurial activity and behaviour. Therefore entrepreneurial actions such as idea generation, innovation, opportunity identification, business plan writing and implementation intentions are closely connected because studies such as Gollwitzer & Oettingen (2011), Gollwitzer (1999) & Golwitzer and Sheeran (2006), have argued that an individual who expresses these actions, show more likelihood for engagement in entrepreneurial pursuit. To this end, Kourilsky (1995) affirms that for entrepreneurship education to achieve its goals, it must successfully educate students to initiate actions towards engagement in entrepreneurial activities and behaviour.

Experiential Pedagogy and Development of Entrepreneurial Intentions

The study of Solomon (2007) on the role of pedagogy in entrepreneurship education suggests that pedagogies should expose learners to the unstable and dynamic nature of entrepreneurial experience, so that they can develop the focus and energy required for tackling the challenges of an entrepreneurship career. Sexton & Upton (1984) suggested that entrepreneurship education programmes should involve more of individual over group activities in order to reinforce focus. In the same vein, Ronstdt (1990) posited that the design of these activities should not be monotonous but unstructured, to give learners the opportunity to express entrepreneurial actions such as business idea generation, opportunity identification, business startups in a bid to proffer creative solutions to challenges in situations of risk and conditions of instability. Cubico et al., (2015) stated that theoretical and methodological uniformity, pedagogical fragmentation and segregation have been an issue of contention in entrepreneurship education. According to Anderson & Jack (2008), adoption of experiential pedagogy in entrepreneurship programmes consistent with motivating a focus in students towards acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and expression of entrepreneurial actions is a step in the right direction. Consequently, teaching entrepreneurship in universities may require an experiential pedagogical approach which engages learners in practical activities and motivate focus for expression of entrepreneurial actions.

Theoretical Foundation and Analysis

Experiential Learning Theory

The experiential learning theory was postulated by Kolb (1984). According to Kolb (1984) learning involves the process of knowledge creation through transformation of experience. In the same vein, Zapeda (2013) stated that experiential learning theory is hinged on the assumption learning takes place between individuals and the environment. Knowles, Holton & Swanson (2011) argued that adults learn effectively when new information is presented in real-life situations. Using a problem-solving approach in classroom activities rather than the traditional content-knowledge practices represents an example of

a real-life situation approach to learning. Hence, experiential learning theory views learning as a social process of adaptation which employs a dynamic and holistic perception of learning (Zapeda, 2013; Baldwin, 2015). Experiential learning theory is classified as a constructivist learning theory particularly because individuals transform their experiences into new knowledge using cognitive and social properties (Zapeda, 2013; Park & Choi, 2014). Consequently knowledge is considered as subjective and created as a function of the interaction between content and experience (Rodriguez Felix et al., 2016). However, the transformation of the experience is core to the learning process based on the fact that it requires the use of various learning approaches. The Kolb's learning cycle is considered a more effective and less traditional approach to teaching entrepreneurship. The cycle suggests that entrepreneurship can be taught through creating significant learning experiences that encourage learning through engagement in entrepreneurial activities. Figure 1 features the four stages in the Kolb's model of experiential learning. It suggests that individuals learn through the process of experience, reflection, thought and experimentation.

Figure

Figure 1: Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning

Kolb's learning cycle involves two interrelated ends which are grasping and transforming experience. In Figure 1 above the vertical axis illustrates the grasping mode of experience beginning from concrete experience as the initial stage to conceptualization. Both stages refer to the various approaches adopted by individuals geared at the acquisition of information from the real world through either apprehension or comprehension. Apprehension is achieved as a consequence of the tangibility and qualities of an immediate experience, while comprehension is reached as a consequence of the conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation of experience. As suggested by Knowles, Holton & Swanson (2011), the initial stage of Kolb's model which is concrete experience, can be achieved through the use of simulations or entrepreneurial related games, demonstrations and presentation with real world experiences and social problems. These teaching methods will ensure that students are fully involved in new and concrete experiences. In the same light entrepreneurship educators, can use more creative pedagogical methods such as sharing content, conceptual mapping and project based learning particularly in the active conceptualization stage of the learning cycle. The goal here will be the usage of appropriate pedagogies that motivate students to know how to think and not what to think as regards entrepreneurial related goals. Gibb (2002) argued that entrepreneurs are considered as individuals who are action-oriented, whose learning is typically experientially based. However, Neck & Greene (2011) has noted that little has been done about the design of entrepreneurship programmers to be consistent with the development of learners as reflective entrepreneurs. In Figure 1 the horizontal axis illustrates the dimensions of transformation of experience via intention or extension. The transformation of experience through intention is tagged reflective observation, which suggests that individuals internally reflect upon the various components of their experiences and ideas. In the same vein, the transformation of experience through extension is tagged active experimentation, which implies that individuals learn through an active testing or experimenting of ideas and business opportunities in real life situations. The cycle when viewed holistically illustrates that the two dimensions of grasping and transforming information culminates in four ways of learning and creating novel knowledge.

As suggested by Scon (1983 & 1987) supported by Stevens & Cooper (2009), the reflective observation stage of the Kolb's learning cycle can be achieved via the adoption of pedagogical methods such as reflection practice, class discussions and journal keeping. These approaches will strongly motivate critical reflection and keen observation of learning experiences and enhance the creation of a course of action for their on-going entrepreneurial development. Active experimentation which represents the last stage of the Kolb's learning cycle can be realized through business plan writing. The business plan functions as a linkage between the theory and practice of entrepreneurship when learners experiment with the process of business creation via actual creation and offering of new products and services into the market. In summary, the experimental learning theory motivates the employment of holistic teaching methods and pedagogies that attempt to inculcate entrepreneurial skills as well motivate entrepreneurial intentions of learners (Neck & Greene, 2011).

Intention Models

The concept of entrepreneurial intention requires the use of a predictable and strong theoretical structure that can reflect start-up intentions. Different reviews and researchers have proposed various intention models, notable among these models are; Bird's (1988) model further developed by Boyd & Vozikis (1994), the Shapero model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982) which was validated by Krueger (1993), Azjen's model (1988, 1991) and Davidson's (1995) model, which was likewise created and tested by Autio, Keeley, Klofsten & Ulfstedt (1997). The two prevailing intention models that have been distinguished in the literature and have been progressively utilised since 1990's are Ajzen theory of planned behaviour & Shapero theory of entrepreneurial event (Autio, keeley, Klofsten, Parker & Hay 2001; Shook, Priem & McGee, 2003). Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was first postulated by Ajzen (1988). The theory emphasises that intention is determined by attitude towards behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event was first postulated by Shapero (1980). The model emphasizes that intention formation is a function of interactions among contextual factors which impacts individual's perception. However, another intention model that is hardly considered in entrepreneurship education literature is implementation intention theory. The theory was first postulated by Golwitzer (1993) who stressed that intentions can be substantiated through actions initiated in pursuit of a goal. Hence these three theories of intention will be reviewed as a basis for proposing an intention model considered appropriate for university entrepreneurship programmers.

Shapero's Model of Entrepreneurial Event

Shapero & Sokol (1982) developed the Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model (See Figure 2). With regards to SEE, goal intention formation is a function of interactions among contextual factors which impacts individual's perception. This model emphasizes that entrepreneurial intentions comes from

perceived desirability which also means the attractiveness for a person to start up his/her own business and perceived feasibility which implies the degree to which people see that they are able to start their own business actuating an affinity to act in the face of opportunities (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). The model assumes that inertia in human behaviour is changed by a negative or positive external event, the "trigger event" that alters an individual's circumstance or future goal. In the context of entrepreneurship education, the model suggests that students' participation in an entrepreneurship programme is considered a positive trigger event that can motivate the development of entrepreneurial intentions, which predicts future engagements in entrepreneurship.

Figure

Figure 2: Shapero's Model of Entrepreneurial Event

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour was derived from the theory of reasoned action (TRA) postulated by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980). Perceived behavioural control was employed to predict human behaviours that are not completely under voluntary control. TRA was able to predict behaviour based on intentions with the assumption that all behaviours are voluntary and under control. However, not all intentions translate into actual behaviour which informed the premise for the introduction of perceived behavioural control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). The concept of perceived behavioural control asserts that control beliefs give rise to either perceived ease or difficulty in the performance of behaviour. This implies that intention is a direct determinant or antecedent of behaviour performance while perceived behavioural control, Attitude and subjective norm are regarded as the antecedents of intention (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1988 & 1991) has developed as a standout amongst the most predominant and well known conceptual frameworks for the investigation of human activity (Ajzen, 2002) and specifically the individual's intention to take part in different activities. TPB has a major place with intention models and has been consistently connected to the field of entrepreneurship; given validated research outcomes (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). The focal point of the TPB is the individual's intention to carry out a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In essence, intention is best anticipated by attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control hence, with regards to entrepreneurship education, it suggests that participation in a program can influence an individual's attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm in the development of students' intention to create new businesses (Fayolle & Gailly, 2004)

In Figure 3 above, the model shows that students' entrepreneurial intention is determined by the attitude of students towards an entrepreneurial career, their perception of the challenges associated with an entrepreneurial career (perceived behavioural control) and what individuals important to them think about how successful they will be in pursuing an entrepreneurial career (subjective norm). Consequently, the development of entrepreneurial intentions translates into expression of

entrepreneurial behaviour or goal. This suggests that students' participation in an entrepreneurship education programme affects the antecedents of intention (attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm) translating into the development of entrepreneurial intentions which is considered as a reliable predictor of future entrepreneurial engagements.

Figure

Figure 3: Theory of Planned Behaviour Model

Limitations of Ajzen Theory of Planned Behaviour and Shapero Theory of Entrepreneurial Event

It is important to state here, that Ajzen's (1991) postulation of three independent determinants (i.e., attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) and Shapero & Sokol (1982) postulation of perceived desirability and feasibility posit that goal intention is a predictor of subsequent behaviour. This suggests that these models are founded on the basis that goal intentions motivate the expression of future expression of desired behaviour. However, Golwitzer & Sheeran (2006) supported by Morris et al. (2012) argued that goal intention mostly accounts for only 20% to 30% of the variance in future behaviour, which is an indication that many individuals intending to perform their desired behaviour may end up not achieving the goal. Therefore this may imply that many entrepreneurship students who intend to become entrepreneurs at graduation may end up not achieving their goals based on the theoretical foundations of Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour and Shapero's theory of entrepreneurial event.

Proposed Model of Entrepreneurial Intention

Implementation intention model was postulated by Golwitzer (1993). The model emphasizes the mental act of relating a foreseen critical circumstance, to an effective goal directed response. This implies that an association is framed between mental representations of determined signals considered as critical situations and the method for achieving goals which might be alluded to as behavioural responses. Golwitzer & Sheeran (2006) argued that goal intentions stipulate what one wants to achieve, while implementation intentions stipulates the behaviour/action that one will perform towards goal attainment and the particular situational context in which one will perform. Hypothetically, it implies that if situation X occurs, then an individual will initiate goal-directed response Y (Gollwitzer, 1999). The formation of an implementation intention involves an individual identifying a response that is instrumental for goal attainment as well as anticipating a critical signal to initiate that response (Golwitzer, 1993). The theory asserts that the mental linkage created by implementation intentions, enhance goal attainment based on psychological processes associated with both the anticipated situation and the intended behaviour. This owes to the fact that the formation of an implementation intention involves the selection of a critical future situation; hence the mental representation of this situation becomes actively heightened and activated.

In the context of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, Figure 4 above suggests that participation in entrepreneurship education could be regarded as the critical situation 'X', which could stimulate behavioural responses and entrepreneurial actions 'Y' such as; identification of business opportunities and idea generation. These behavioural responses and entrepreneurial actions become instrumental to the attainment of the desired goal thus, increasing the propensity for the attainment of desired goal 'Z' which in this case is engaging in entrepreneurship at graduation (Gollwitzer, 1999; Golwitzer & Sheeran, 2006).

Figure

Figure 4: Implementation Intention Model: an Adaptation

Conclusion and Implications for University Entrepreneurship Education Programmes

Generally, in the context of university entrepreneurship education, incorporating real life practices into entrepreneurship pedagogy is considered valuable and effective at motivating students towards application of entrepreneurial skills in proffering solution to real life issues and challenges. This is why experiential pedagogy is considered salient to university entrepreneurship programmers because it motivates the employment of holistic teaching pedagogies and practices, which facilitates the expression of entrepreneurial actions in service of students' engagement in entrepreneurship at graduation. This study extends the application of the theory of implementation intention by proposing a conceptual model based on the theory. The model above suggests that the adoption of experiential pedagogy in an entrepreneurship programme can favourably motivate undergraduates to express entrepreneurial actions in service of entrepreneurial goals and aspirations at graduation. These actions could be expressed in entrepreneurial activities such as idea generation, identification of business opportunities, business start-ups, writing business plans and product innovation. The theoretical underpinning of model 5 above is that there is a stronger propensity for undergraduates to engage in entrepreneurial activities at graduation, if such activities had already begun in school. The model can be employed to enhance the effectiveness of an entrepreneurship programme in a university setting with the aim of increasing the likelihood of students' engagement in entrepreneurial activities at graduation.

The goal of this research was to provide conceptual clarifications and linkage for and between the concepts of experiential pedagogy and entrepreneurial intentions. The study also provided a theoretical framework for the concept of experiential pedagogy and the theories of Planned behaviour and Entrepreneurial event were reviewed with a view to highlighting the limitations of the theories and also attempt to bridge the theoretical gaps identified by proposing an intention model considered salient to increasing the propensity of university students' engagement, in entrepreneurial activities at graduation. The conceptual and theoretical propositions of the study are consistent with prior studies such as Olokundun et al. (2017) who showed that experiential pedagogy motivates a shared vision and identification of business opportunities by university students. It also supports the study of Leal-

Rodríguez & Albort-Morant (2018) who posit that experiential learning, learning by doing and management simulations have implications for students' actual and potential learning skills.

In conclusion, this study contributes to entrepreneurship education research by proposing a conceptual linkage between experiential pedagogy and university students' entrepreneurial intentions based on a theoretical foundation. These propositions might be helpful for the development of supplemental pedagogical policies aimed at enhancing university students' propensity for expression of entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus, the propositions of this study provide support for this claim. Additionally, this paper sheds light to the entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial intentions debate by revealing that experiential pedagogy leads to expression of entrepreneurial actions theorized in this study as implementation intentions. Therefore, this paper suggests that providing university students with more experience-based entrepreneurial learning opportunities leads to the development of implementation intentions which increases the propensity for job creation by university students at graduation.

However, this article paper involves certain limitations. It was based on a theoretical approach with emphasis on undergraduate university education. Hence, caution must be applied on generalizing the propositions. Future research should be directed toward the exploring empirical validation of the propositions established in this paper.

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