



EDITORIAL

**INTRODUCTION
TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE**

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Abstract

This Special Issue would represent a forum for scholar in the field to further accrue knowledge on student entrepreneurship and the five papers included in the issue are authored by scholars from around the globe on a different array of student's entrepreneurship timely topics.

The relevance of entrepreneurship for local and national economic growth is globally recognized (OECD, 2019) and in more recent years entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly attractive career option among young people and students (Bergmann *et al.*, 2018; Fayolle and Gailly, 2015; Sieger *et al.*, 2011; Fini *et al.*, 2016). The percentage of students who started a business is 25% or more in some Universities like MIT (Hsu *et al.*, 2007; Roberts and Eesley, 2009), Stanford Business School (Lazear, 2005), and Tsinghua (Eesley *et al.*, 2009); between 12 and 36% in the engineering faculties of Halmstad University in Sweden (Eriksson, 1996), and 42% of Chalmers University Business School also in Sweden (Lindholm *et al.*, 2010).

In this perspective, ventures created by students represent significant contributor to university entrepreneurship (Åstebro *et al.*, 2012; Hayter *et al.*, 2017; Wright *et al.*, 2017, Feola *et al.*, 2020).

Over the past decades, universities face an increasing pressure to go beyond their traditional role of new scientific knowledge production and explore the potential of technology transfer and economic valorization of their scientific achievements. Accordingly, academia has been expanding its role beyond research and education to become a driver of innovation in the economic system and assuming the characteristics of entrepreneurial university (Etzkowitz *et al.*, 2000). Based on the triple-helix model of university-industry-government relations (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 1997), entrepreneurial university concept highlights the new role of universities in contributing to the economic and social development (Etzkowitz, 1993; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000; Etzkowitz *et al.*, 2000).

To perform the new role, universities engage in technology transfer activities (Mowery and Shane, 2002) and devote significant attention and efforts to encourage academic entrepreneurship (Rothaermel *et al.*, 2007), a phenomenon that has been connected to processes of technological development and economic growth (Fini *et al.*, 2017).

However, in the context of entrepreneurial university, the focus of academic efforts has consistently been attached to scientific research, patenting and technological transfer activities (Abreu and Grinevich, 2013). On the other hand, studies on Entrepreneurship in University often focus only on senior and professional researchers and on academic spin-offs (Clarysse *et al.*, 2011; Fini *et al.*, 2011; Gulbrandsen and Smeby, 2005; Landry *et al.*, 2007). As a consequence, prior research has tended to not fully consider the role that student entrepreneurship could play (Grimaldi *et al.*, 2011; Marchand and Hermens, 2015) and the fact that their activity cannot be easily connected to the outcomes of scientific research and formal technology transfer activities might be responsible for the underestimation of the phenomena (Politis *et al.*, 2010).

Nevertheless, in the last years, Student Entrepreneurship as a field of research has attracted an increasing number of Scholars (e.g., Bergmann

et al., 2016; Shirokova *et al.*, 2016; Beyhan and Findik, 2018; Wright *et al.*, 2019), and several efforts have been put in place by organizations and Consortia to close that gap. An example is Guesss (<http://www.guesssurvey.org>) that has been carrying out an annual review on Student's Entrepreneurial Spirit since 2003.

This special issue would represent a forum for scholars in the field to further accrue new knowledge on student entrepreneurship and the five papers included in the issue are authored by scholars from around the globe on a different array of student's entrepreneurship timely topics.

The first manuscript, authored by Davide Hahn, Tommaso Minola, Ilaria Cascavilla, Silvia Ivaldi and Mario Salerno, explores Entrepreneurship Education focusing the attention on how entrepreneurship can be taught. Adopting a single case study methodology authors describe the peculiar characteristics of the Healthcare Contamination Lab (HC.LAB), a six months Entrepreneurship Education (EE) program offered by the University of Bergamo (Italy). The study provides some suggestions for the design of EE programs. More specifically the study suggests how conceptual foundations of entrepreneurship and innovative education principles, such as multi-disciplinary, social and experiential-based learning can be applied to the design of EE, thereby combining elements of pedagogy and andragogy.

The second article, authored by Linda Gabbianelli, Angelo Bonfanti, Cristian R. Loza Adauí and Giorgio Mion, investigates the specific topic of Student Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI). Adopting a research synthesis method of peer reviewed scholarly literature on Student Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Intention, the paper provides a detailed analysis of the key factors of SEI through a review of 15 years of research on this topic. The paper identifies three sets of antecedents for SEI (personality trait-related factors, contextual/situational factors and personal background-related factors) and the main theoretical models employed by scholars to investigate factors influencing students' intentions to establish a new business.

The third paper, authored by Tahir Hussain, Nisar Ahmed Channa and Altaf Hussain Samo, investigates the role of family, personality traits and self-efficacy in shaping Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions. Using the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, the paper considers a sample composed of 374 final year university students. The results of the study suggest a significant positive impact of family background and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intentions. Further the findings of the study revealed the link of big five personality traits (consciousness, openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) with EI of students.

The fourth paper, authored by Silvia Rita Sedita and Silvia Blasi, investigates the determinants of student entrepreneurship and of the success of entrepreneurial action. The study suggests that student Entrepreneurship is positively correlated with entrepreneurship education and it is depen-

dent on the university course attended by the student, with STEM courses producing more entrepreneurs. In terms of the determinants of a successful business, the study shows that success of a graduate's business is associated with a match between the field of activity of the company and the type of university course attended.

The fifth paper authored by Mara Cerquetti, Lorenzo Compagnucci, Angela Cossiri, Giacomo Gistri and Francesca Spigarelli, investigates the role of universities in stimulating students' entrepreneurial skills with a specific focus on Social Sciences and Humanities. The study analyzes the correlation between student participation in experiential learning activities and the development of soft skills, and provides practical recommendations for implementing entrepreneurship education in the field of social sciences and humanities. Research results suggest the need to promote a closer integration of learning-by-doing activities in university curricula and programmes in Social Sciences and Humanities.

We hope that the readers of this issue will find inspirations to start new research projects around this fascinating and very promising topic.

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