

## Entrepreneurship Studies in University Education

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Education in entrepreneurship poses a major challenge in EU today, as it is closely related to creativity, innovation and the launch of new business ventures. It is although regarded as a key instrument for mobilizing economic and social advancement, education and training in entrepreneurship still suffer from inadequacies in the methods and practices followed and the lack of comprehensive educational models. Here, we present the findings of an empirical survey on the educational programs in entrepreneurship in the "top" European Business Schools (EBSs), according to the FT 2011 ranking list. We adopt a content analysis approach in order to examine the objectives and the structure of such programs, reveal their characteristics and further analyze their educational approaches.

### Methodology

In this paper we adopt a content analysis approach in order to examine the objectives and the structure of such programs, reveal their characteristics and further analyze their educational approaches. Information about the entrepreneurship programs was gathered by content analyzing the programs' official websites. Content analysis has been extensively employed in the Management literature (Bergh and Fairbank, 2002; Scandura and Williams, 2000), and the Entrepreneurship literature as well. However, as Smith and Duchon (2009) highlight relying on the information posted on various university and college websites can be problematic. For example, website information can be expected to present a "best face" view of a program that may not coincide with student accounts of their experience, or outside "objective" reviews. Yet, peer evaluation and "objective" data are important parts of the programs' ranking. Thus it is reasonable to accept accounts of what the programs claim they are doing because even if the claims cannot be fully substantiated, the claims at the very least represent what the programs believe they ought to be doing. In order to materialize our intentions we used the list of the Financial Times European Business School Ranking for 2011.

### Analysis of the Results

Entrepreneurship as a distinctive course or an organized program of studies is offered in all the levels of university education: undergraduate, graduate, or a specific training course (professional, summer school, etc). The majority of the institutions of the sample include such a course in their curricula. Either as a distinctive organized focus or as an option embedded within their existing structures. Thus, entrepreneurship has been delivered even as a workshop, executive, postgraduate, summer school topic. The courses reported were: Entrepreneurship; Business plan; economics of entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship management; Entrepreneurship in tourism; Family entrepreneurship. Here we focus our analysis on reporting some preliminary results on the descriptive statistics of our study and on the embeddedness of entrepreneurship courses in the programs of the EBSs.

The findings of our study reveal the attitude of European Business Schools (EBSs) towards entrepreneurship education. The majority of the EBSs of our list (65%) provide educational programs in entrepreneurship (Table 1). Those programs are usually limited in a number. Thus, the 40% of EBSs provide only one program in entrepreneurship. There are though, although limited in numbers EBSs that offer two or even more programs in entrepreneurship, recognizing the importance of this discipline in business studies.

Number of Programs	Number of EBSs	Percent
0	26	35%
1	30	40%
2	14	19%
3	4	5%
4	1	1%
Total	75	100%

Table 1: Entrepreneurship in Educational Programs in EBSs

Additionally, as seen on the following table (Table 2) the majority of programs offered are usually developed at the postgraduate level (57%). Undergraduate studies remain away from teaching entrepreneurship and this takes place in a limited only number of schools (9%). This is an important finding of our research since it highlights the weak embeddedness of entrepreneurship studies in the undergraduate programs of the EBSs. At the same time, it is important to notice that there is only one institution offering both postgraduate and undergraduate programs in entrepreneurship.

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	7	9%
Postgraduate	43	57%
Postgraduate + Undergraduate	1	1%
Training	25	33%
Total	76	100%

Table 2: Type of Programs

We should also emphasize on the role of training since 33% of the institutions of our sample operate training courses in entrepreneurship. This result is another fact relevant to the weak embeddedness of entrepreneurial studies in the curricula of EBSs. Although, they do recognize its importance as a field of study they prefer to offer distinctive courses on the topic rather than employ and add those courses within their existing programs.

### Conclusion and Discussion

This paper is the first part of a greater research setting aiming to develop curriculum and educational models for teaching entrepreneurship. The empirical survey of the practices of the top European Business Schools is a starting point that offers a valuable input towards this process. Here, we presented the findings of an empirical survey on the educational programs in entrepreneurship in the "top" European Business Schools (EBSs), according to the FT 2011 ranking list. We adopt a content analysis approach in order to examine the objectives and the structure of such programs, reveal their characteristics and further analyze their educational approaches. The findings reveal the attitude of European Business Schools towards entrepreneurship education. Today, there is already a large number of the (top) European Business Schools provide educational programs in entrepreneurship which are usually developed at the postgraduate level or as independent training programs. The analysis of the structure and the curriculum content of those programs reveal the most important topics of interest and at the same time help us to highlight best practices for the education of future entrepreneurs.

The above analysis took a broader view on entrepreneurship to understand the trends and to highlight the importance of universities in facilitating and promoting entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is seen as a crucial factor in enhancing economic activity and development. The analysis of European Union policies, OECD guidelines and consulting agencies indications demonstrated that entrepreneurship is vital for the economic development of a region. This analysis pointed forward the benefits of entrepreneurship as well as the constraints that the full development of entrepreneurship faces. The promotion of entrepreneurial spirit and competence within education is the basic approach to promote the entrepreneurial learning of individuals, social settings and organizations.

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