

Chapter 3

Dynamics of Entrepreneurship Education: How Human and Social Capital Interact With Learning

Michela Loi

University of Cagliari, Italy

ABSTRACT

Drawing upon an extracurricular university course on entrepreneurship, this work explores the dynamics among human and social capital and four learning outcomes: entrepreneurial intentions, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and startup activities. Following a longitudinal perspective, the study examined those dynamics in a sample of 66 students. Findings reveal that the influence of human capital decreased by the end of the course, yet played a fundamental role in improving intention and startup activities at the beginning of the course. A different pattern emerged for social capital (e.g., having friends who work as entrepreneurs), which maintained its relevance in enhancing perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and startup activities after the course. Such results support the equalizer function of entrepreneurship education with respect to human capital, as well as underscore the paramount role of peers in sustaining the development of an entrepreneurial mindset.

INTRODUCTION

The current emphasis on entrepreneurship as a potential solution to foster individuals' self-actualization and nations' competitiveness calls for new research on the development of entrepreneurial competences (Van Praag, van Witteloostuijn, & van der Sluis, 2013). To understand entrepreneurial behavior, human and social capital are foundational concepts (Davidsson & Honig, 2003), and previous studies have shown both constructs to positively relate to entrepreneurial intentions (Liñán & Santos, 2007), opportunity recognition (Arenius, & De Clercq, 2005; Fossen, & Büttner, 2013; Sardeshmukh, & Corbett, 2011; Ucbasaran, Westhead, Wright, & Flores, 2010), nascency status (Davidsson & Honig, 2003), venture growth (Cooper, Gimeno, & Woo, 1994; Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011), entrepreneurial

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2835-7.ch003

innovativeness (Marvel & Lumpkin, 2007; Wincent, Anokhin, & Örtqvist, 2010), organizational performance (Vargas, Begona, & Roig-Dobon, 2016), and entrepreneurship education outcomes (Bae, Qian, Miao, & Fiet, 2014; Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013).

Despite being thoroughly investigated, however, social and human capital remains far from being completely understood, and inconsistent results persist, as recent studies have shown (Dimov, 2016; Stuetzner, Obschonka, Davidsson, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2013; Unger et al., 2011). A topic that deserves more attention in particular is the set of links among human capital, social capital, and entrepreneurship education. In fact, only recently have scholars paid attention to the interaction effects among human capital, social capital, and entrepreneurial education outcomes, and much work remains to be done (Bae et al., 2014; Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). For example, not considering the initial conditions of students attending an entrepreneurial course might preclude a complete understanding of the training's actual audience and whether training has worked for them, which could prompt a critical underestimation of the outcomes of entrepreneurship education. As previous studies have shown, students without previous experience are more likely to take advantage of entrepreneurship learning activities than students with previous experience (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Other studies have added that entrepreneurship education acts as an “equalizing” tool that neutralizes the effects of personal characteristics on outcomes of entrepreneurial learning. That effect was found for gender, since women develop a higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy via entrepreneurship education than men, which actually reduces gender differences that would otherwise exist among students in the field (Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). Along that line of research, much effort is needed to identify outcomes that are affected by human and social capital, as well as for which characteristics entrepreneurship education neutralizes differences among students.

In response, the study reported in this chapter marked an attempt to advance current knowledge in the aforementioned direction and, with that aim, investigated the role played by human and social capital in the context of entrepreneurship education. It longitudinally explored the relationship of both kinds of capital and entrepreneurship education in terms of four learning outcomes—entrepreneurial intentions, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and startup activities—the latter of which was measured as the sum of activities implemented in the process of running a business. In so doing, the study extends current literature, particularly studies focused on entrepreneurial intentions related to entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, it enriches the current literature by scrutinizing the role played by peers in influencing the set of chosen outcomes.

From a practical point of view, the findings help to clarify how human and social capital work in a learning environment that relies on the kind of learning-by-doing approach that sustains students in creating their own entrepreneurial ventures. It moreover identifies results that an entrepreneurship education course is expected to achieve in students in terms of aspects of their human and social capital.

The chapter is organized to provide an overview of the theoretical background on which the work is based. It thereafter presents the research context and the chief findings, followed by a final discussion that addresses results as well as theoretical and practical implications.

BACKGROUND

Human capital refers to the skills and knowledge that individuals acquire through school, on-the-job training, and other types of learning experiences (Becker, 1964; Unger et al., 2011). As a concept, hu-

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/dynamics-of-entrepreneurship-education/186358

Related Content

E-Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation: The Case of On-Line Giving Markets

Morales Gutierrez and Ariza Montes (2010). *E-Entrepreneurship and ICT Ventures: Strategy, Organization and Technology* (pp. 118-136).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/social-entrepreneurship-social-innovation/41151

Mobile Media Usability: Evaluation of Methods for Adaptation and User Engagement

Christian Sonnenberg (2020). *Journal of Media Management and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 86-107).

www.irma-international.org/article/mobile-media-usability/246068

Entrepreneurial Success Measures and Factors for Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Sachin A. Meshram and A. M. Rawani (2019). *International Journal of E-Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (pp. 15-34).

www.irma-international.org/article/entrepreneurial-success-measures-and-factors-for-sustainable-entrepreneurship/229097

Human Resources Management in Social Entrepreneurship

Burcu Kümbül Güler (2019). *Creating Business Value and Competitive Advantage With Social Entrepreneurship* (pp. 161-185).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/human-resources-management-in-social-entrepreneurship/208407

Networks Collaboration in Wine Sector SME: A Study Applied to a Portuguese Wine Region

Maria João Sousa Lima and Luísa Cagica Carvalho (2016). *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurial Success and its Impact on Regional Development* (pp. 858-878).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/networks-collaboration-in-wine-sector-sme/141438