Chapter 26
Learning Entrepreneurship in Higher Education Through Flow Theory and FLIGBY Game

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ABSTRACT

This article performs an exploratory study of the potential of flow theory and FLIGBY game to contribute to develop entrepreneurship competencies among higher education students. For this purpose, this study considers the use of a focus group consisting of eight students enrolled in the entrepreneurship course in a higher educational institution in Portugal, in which students for two months explored FLIGBY. The results obtained allowed us to conclude that FLIGBY was also suitable to be explored in the context of entrepreneurship classes. Students emphasized the potential of the game to be applied for training of management skills, the recognition of their leadership skills, and the exploration of new approaches to the management challenges. Finally, it should be noted that the benefits offered by FLIGBY were experienced differently by students with professional experience in IT and management fields. Those students emphasized the application of the game to the real world and the potential offered for FLIGBY for allowing students to explore new skills and actions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years entrepreneurship has been identified as one of the main socio-economic trends and an engine of innovation, competitiveness and economic development (Toma et al, 2014; Ferreira et al, 2017). This increase importance of the entrepreneurship role has encouraged the emergence of new companies, typically of small and medium size, and supported by high-tech products and services.

In this sense, education for entrepreneurship gains more relevance. Acquiring attitudes, knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills on students become a differentiating factor to be successful in this increasingly competitive market. The acquisition of entrepreneurship skills does not only manifest itself in the creation of a new company, but it is also valued in the labor market, since these competencies help students to perform leadership, responsibility and teamwork activities (Di Fabio 2016).

Universities have responded to this growing demand by creating technology transfer offices, workshops, conferences, and business ideas competitions. Simultaneously, a significant number of science parks and incubation centers have emerged through national and municipal policy initiatives, offering a set of specialized structures to support the first steps of launching and managing a start-up.

Classrooms have been one of the primary places for acquiring entrepreneurship skills. Curricular units focused on teaching entrepreneurial competencies have appeared, in which subjects such as innovation, entrepreneurship, management of companies and business plans are addressed. Contents covered are typically quite broad and distinct for each educational institution, since the structure of each course is necessarily different. Several challenges are posed to teachers, namely: What are the ideal competencies that a successful entrepreneur should have? How to motivate students to the topic of entrepreneurship? How to teach students with multidisciplinary skills in the same class? How to organize students in working groups and how to evaluate the new business proposals?

Several studies have reported the use of Flow theory in several areas, such as the promotion of student motivation in the classroom (Egbert 2003; Mustafa et al. 2010) and in leadership management (Buzady 2017). However, this article intends to address an unexplored area that consists of applying the concept of Flow, initially developed in the area of psychology, and adapting it to a new context of using it in a serious game for the learning of entrepreneurship in a higher education institution. Five research questions (RQs) are established in order to analyze the potential of FLIGBY[1] as a serious game platform to help students acquired entrepreneurship competencies:

RQ1: What is the perception of the students about the FLIGBY experience?
RQ2: What are the main benefits offered by FLIGBY?
RQ3: Do the benefits experienced by students are different considering their course profile?
RQ4: Do the benefits experienced by students are affected by their professional experience in the IT or Management fields?
RQ5: What are the main limitations of FLIGBY?

The manuscript is organized as follows: we initially perform a revision of literature on the Flow theory, and we present the FLIGBY. After that initial phase, we introduce the adopted methodology and we discuss the main results. Finally, the conclusions of this work are drawn.

2. THE CONCEPT OF FLOW

2.1. Flow and Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is a branch of the discipline that relies on scientific understanding and effective intervention to aid in the achievement of a good and socially productive life, one of the founding fathers of positive psychology, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, focused his research on entrepreneurial mind of be-

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