

Chapter 3

Influence and Perception of Innovation and Creativity in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Universities are committed to preparing students to think creatively and entrepreneurially. According to Pinto, a university is a place of professional education that promotes the articulation of more effective pedagogical alternatives, the integration of theory and practice, and the resolution of real-world problems through the generation of critical and reflective actions informed by concrete experiences. Educational innovation influences the transformation of methodologies, instructional methods, and students' learned skills. Combining innovation and learning increases public awareness of this issue. This chapter aims to determine whether innovation is incorporated into teaching, whether it is incorporated into course planning, what is the students' perception of it, and the differences between cultures – taking into consideration higher education institutions from Portugal and Poland.

INTRODUCTION

In this age of creativity and technology, innovation has become a mantra for anyone wishing to convey and implement their ideas effectively. Many social, economic, and educational problems are solved through innovation. In particular, innovation has emerged as a crucial component and a valuable asset in developing solutions that benefit humanity and the globe. To confront the challenges of a continuously

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changing and global economic environment, innovation and its efficient application are critical (Gaspar & Mabic, 2015). According to Sternberg (2006), the field of creativity and innovation as people know it today owes a great deal to J. P. Guilford (1950) and E. Paul Torrance (1962, 1974).

When the term “creativity” or “innovative person” is used, the most prevalent connotations are made with artistic ability and other forms of expression. However, the concept of innovation encompasses a considerably broader range of activities and has incalculable significance for human life. The innovative person is distinguished by their enormous work capacity and mental minimization of effort; patience, associated with long-term interests; a great curiosity transformed into the engine of all existence; a firm control of emotions, the high energy consumption of the creative process being achieved through focus and redistribution; and a high tolerance for ambiguity (Suciu, 2014). Innovation and creativity are critical in everyday life and professional contexts because they exemplify a crucial feature of human flexibility (Runco, 2007). The term is typically characterized as the potential to generate unique and beneficial ideas, behaviors, or goods. It is viewed as a complex capacity influenced by various personal, environmental, and cultural elements (Runco, 2004).

Teachers are critical in developing students’ innovative mindsets is a reality. Teachers’ responses to their students’ ideas, opinions, and suggestions during lectures will likely influence students’ subsequent efforts and availability to generate new views, opinions, and proposals. Positive teacher well-planned comments will naturally encourage additional student efforts, but early and unfavorable teacher reactions will prevent students from conducting a further creative inquiry. In short, instructors are uniquely positioned to foster students’ creativity through their regular interactions with them (Soh, 2015).

Education has played a unique role in creativity and innovation since the 1950s. The point was to demonstrate that education should focus on developing and nurturing creativity (Papaleontiou-Louca et al., 2014). Numerous studies have been conducted in response to this interest in creativity in education. In 2014, a survey of academic teachers revealed the core characteristics they associate with being highly creative in eight distinct areas, including the following: “being imaginative, being original, being curious with an enquiring disposition, being resourceful, being able to combine, connect, synthesize, being able to think critically and analytically, being able to represent ideas and communicate effectively” (Jackson et al., 2006). This implies that educators will develop their constructive definitions of innovation as a critical teaching skill (Gaspar & Mabic, 2015).

This chapter aims to assess whether innovation is integrated into teaching if incorporated into course planning and how students perceive it and examine cultural differences – considering a Higher Education Institution (HEI) from Portugal and Poland.

BACKGROUND

Innovation

Developing a new idea and transforming it into a new product, technique, or service that results in dynamic national economic growth, increased employment, and pure profit for an inventive corporate business is known as innovation. This concept is never a one-time event but a prolonged and cumulative process encompassing many organizational decision-making processes covering the phases of idea generation through execution. An original idea is recognizing a novel customer demand or a unique manufacturing approach (Urabe et al., 2018). It is created through time through knowledge accumulation in conjunction

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