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EDITORIAL

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MULTIPLE NATIONALITIES FOR THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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The purpose of this editorial is to introduce the special edition of the Iberoamerican Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business (REGEPE) on entrepreneurship education (EE). To this end, this editorial contains a brief contextualization, makes considerations on the theme, summarizes the main reasons for rejection of articles not included in the edition, and highlights contributions of the published articles, in order to boost the improvement of research on the theme in Brazil. The call for the edition challenged researchers to present different visions, theories, and practices of EE using the study of critical issues, such as needs for knowledge and differentiation from traditional education.

In response to the call, REGEPE received 109 manuscripts. According to the editorial board's desk review, only 18 of these were in conditions to advance to the double-blinded review. Finally, only five articles were approved for publication, even though there were 11 places in the edition for articles approved after evaluation. The fact that only about 5% of the articles were approved in the call, without filling the space provided by the journal, is worrying and suggests that the area of studies in Brazil still has basic problems to be solved.

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The reasons for most rejections were:

- Lack of robustness in theoretical construction and research methods;
- Lack of adequate characterization of relevant and promising research needs to generate contributions;
- Construction of incipient models supported by insufficient exploitation of theories;
- Excessive focus on experiences related to teacher-student interaction in the classroom;
- Attempts to organize the theoretical field without critical analysis or recommendations for progress;
- Reuse of theories and models with no contribution to push the knowledge frontier;
- Definition and use of concepts without enough rigor;
- Only descriptive mapping of EE initiatives without deepening the lessons learned;
- Inappropriate and / or imprecise use of terminology.

Some of these limitations are also identified by Kyrö (2015), who points out the importance of refining the concepts of EE seeking to consistently expand knowledge on the subject. The systematic review by Pittaway and Cope (2007) already indicated the importance of making robust theoretical and methodological constructions for the benefit of knowledge and practice in EE.

Thus, this editorial reaffirms the relevance of the call and the need of development of the research on EE, which is already pointed out in previous studies in Brazil (Lima et al., 2015; Lopes, 2017; Lopes & Lima, 2019) and internationally (Kuratko, 2005, among others). It is also important to mention the need to integrate the contributions of research in education to the study of EE (Araujo & Davel, 2018).

Some limitations of the EE in Brazil can be overcome with better research inspiring better practices. These limitations include (Lima et al., 2015): a) an exaggerated concentration of the EE on business planning even though many students do not want to be entrepreneurs; b) the need for EE to be carried out using a practical approaches; and c) the problem of more EE leading to lower levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention, something that has the low quality of EE as one of its possible reasons. Overcoming these limitations can also be useful to



improve EE, more generally and consistently integrating it in the diversified high education context (Neck & Greene, 2011). However, this integration is already considered necessary and difficult in regions such as United States and Europe (Gibb & Hannon, 2006). What could we think about the same integration in less developed countries with a more fragile institutional system such as Brazil?

Considering the challenges for the development of practices and researches on EE, this special edition was proposed. This edition includes three guest articles in addition to those articles accepted through the double-blinded review process. The three invited articles have co-authors whose work has generated a particular impact on EE reflections, studies and practices, and on entrepreneurship in general. Among them are: Jacques Marcovitch, author of books on pioneering entrepreneurs in Brazil; Alain Fayolle, prolific in the study of EE; and Saras Sarasvathy, also prolific, but in the theoretical approach of effectuation that she created (Sarasvathy, 2001) and which has been shown to be influential in the study and practice of EE (Günzel-Jensen & Robinson, 2017; Mäkimurto-Koivumaa & Puhakka, 2013).

Saes and Marcovitch present advances in Brazilian EE in their guest article, especially in the State of São Paulo, but not only regarding higher education. The authors also consider current challenges that should guide the development of EE in the coming years. The emphasis they place on non-university EE and the initiative of political actors is welcome, as both are very present in reality and remain little studied in Brazil.

In the article with Fayolle as co-author, Foliard et al. deal with the legitimacy of entrepreneurship teachers (ETs) from a multidisciplinary perspective based on a literature review. Addressing the legitimacy of ETs is important, but unusual – since the recognition of the professional status of teachers is a rarely researched topic, despite the impact it has on teaching. According to the authors, it is recommendable to use the best professionalization process possible of ETs and keep in mind that having an experience as entrepreneur is an important legitimizer for ETs.



In turn, Sarasvathy, Foster, and Ramesh use the characters of Goldilocks and Forrest Gump as metaphors in their essay for two distinct behavioral profiles of entrepreneurs. Based on the metaphor and effectuation theory (Sarasvathy, 2001), they complement the experimental economy with the design of at least three favorable mechanisms to start a new business and build a organization that lasts. In the children's tale Goldilocks searches, in the house of the three absent bears, for things with predetermined and precise characteristics: a soup at the ideal temperature, as well as an adequate chair and a comfortable bed. The type of entrepreneur represented by this character acts in the same way, guided by predetermined orientations, such as objectives and plans.

Forrest Gump, on the other hand, is guided by the idea of his mother, who tells him that life is like a chocolate box: nobody knows what chocolate can be picked up each time we try to get one out of it. This character represents the entrepreneur who is open to the unpredictable and works in relative comfort with unexpected events, which can even benefit her. The essay is positioned as the last publication of the special edition to be a provocation for reflections complementary to the contributions of the other articles. Since it does not deal directly with EE, we consider the essay in some detail bellow to make a connection with the topic.

Formal education at any level, particularly regarding management, focuses on teaching the formal rational approach so students can use it in the work they are prepared for. However, market suffers from a shortage of professionals coming from management programs with less traditional behavioral skills and competences, such as soft skills (McMurray, Dutton, McQuaid & Richard, 2016). Today the formal education system favors rationality with analytical procedures, prevision, planning, and anticipated decision for action. In this approach, objectives must be pre-established to determine the resources and steps to be taken to carry out something (causation – Sarasvathy, 2001).

Hence education promotes the alignment of large contingents of students with the characteristics of Goldilocks, but insufficiently develops Forrest Gump's characteristics in them. Competences related to intuition, improvisation,



entrepreneurial bricolage, and/or effectuation are often necessary to face problems that cannot be solved with formal rationality. Thus, there is an imbalance in education that still needs to better prepare students to face unpredictable circumstances and deal with situations of little or no adherence to formal rationality. Education needs to balance the development of capacities and skills respectively associated with the left and right hemispheres of the human brain (Labaki, 2013; Yarlott, 1986).

The imbalance also occurs in EE. Entrepreneurs are often unprepared to deal with unexpected events (as Honig, 2004 has highlighted more than 15 years ago) and with emotional aspects (Labaki, 2013). It is common for EE programs to focus on teaching techniques at the expense of learning in practice, which is so important in entrepreneurship according to Neck & Greene (2011). It also ends up being common the focus on technical knowledge in EE offered in programs outside the business area (Turner & Gianiodis, 2017).

This general picture of the education, in particular of the EE, does not harmonize with the high relevance of soft skills, non-rational aspects and behavioral competencies that characterize entrepreneurship. Because of this relevance, Nabi et al. (2017) explain the importance of studying EE paying attention to themes such as emotions, mental framework, and aspects related to the transition from entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial behavior.

In the same vein, there is a large concentration of Administration courses in preparing employees for large organizations (Ferreira, Gimenez & Ramos, 2006; Hameed & Irfan, 2019). This tends to restrict teaching to pre-established, relatively complex and expensive techniques, which are not suitable for new and/or small organizations, which are the majority of the existing organizations. In addition to the lack of training to face contingencies and explore alternatives and complementary approaches to formal rationality, this type of education remains deficient to train entrepreneurs. These actors must often deal with unforeseen events, surprises, innovations, difficulties, lack of resources, and even crises from the onset of their careers (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Nelson & Lima, 2019; Sarasvathy, 2001). In addition, entrepreneurs tend to start with the creation of small



organizations, with simple structures and operations. Organizations of this type, because they are not like the big ones (Welsh & White, 1981), need a different administration than those that is predominantly the focus in education. Generally, they are poor in resources (Welsh & White, 1981) such as financial capital, knowledge, personnel, and technical capacity, among others.

Therefore, an old question remains having a lot of potential to contribute to the improvement of education, particularly EE: *How do we offer a balanced education, guided by the development of skills complementary to formal rationality, aiming not only to meet the needs of future employees but also of entrepreneurs and small organizations?* The question can be thought of for educational institutions alone (by their directors separately) or for a number of them at the same time (by representatives institutions and/or those responsible for public policies). This way, the freedom to generate a wide variety of responses to be carried out with the collaboration of the institutions is maintained, aiming particularly at certain needs, activities or people, but without leaving entrepreneurs and small organizations without useful and quality education. Such questioning can also benefit the training of employees.

Employees benefit from the intrapreneurial skills that tend to be developed with EE, as this should strengthen students' capacity for initiative, innovation, and creativity, something that is not necessarily limited to benefit those who will be entrepreneurs (Duval-Couetil & Long, 2014 ; Ward & Baruah, 2014). In fact, there are reports of EE developing intrapreneurial skills in students in general, as seen in Dewan and Singh (2017).

THE DOUBLE-BLINDED REVIEWED ARTICLES

The five reviewed articles appear in the special edition in the same order they are discussed below. They also help to review what is currently thought and done in EE, which has long been carried out under the aegis of traditional practices, even if using a contemporary appearance (Rae, 2017; Lackéus & Middleton, 2015). The edition call sought studies whose contributions included the challenge of traditional



education to open perspectives for pedagogical renewal, using creativity, developing socio-emotional skills, creating value, curiosity, co-creation, and thought-provoking questions. These factors, according to Neck and Greene (2011), are necessary for the execution of new EE strategies in institutional environments promoting quality training.

Ribeiro and Plonski contribute with their article about pedagogical renewal and present the results of their systematic review of 934 articles from the international literature on EE. Their results show that there is a great concentration of publications on relations between EE and entrepreneurial intention. They reveal three thematic fronts of research needs: 1) new teaching approaches in the classroom; 2) EE based on ecosystems and with students as central actors; and 3) a cluster of emerging themes that include culture, gender and social entrepreneurship. The development of research inspired by these indications can inspire better and more efficient practices for EE.

The special edition also looked for experiences and models that differ from those commonly adopted, bringing critical and reflective approaches to EE. To boost entrepreneurship, EE needs to go beyond the conventional integration of theoretical knowledge, assimilating various practices related to processes, techniques, games, simulations and reflections (Neck & Greene, 2011). Illustrating how this can be done and advancing on the thematic fronts of research needs outlined by Ribeiro and Plonski, the authors Ghobril et al. describe the structure and processes the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT or Illinois Tech) adopted in Chicago to achieve the status of an entrepreneurial university, with high involvement of its students and professors and a strong connection with the regional ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation.

At IIT, professor Dr. Alexandre Nabil Ghobril, who works for the Mackenzie Presbyterian University in Brazil, could know in detail the strategies for developing a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation by studying them in loco in 2016. That same year, one of the co-authors of this editorial, Edmilson Lima, had the opportunity to visit the institution over two days. From these visits, it was possible to notice that



some of the people responsible for the development and implementation of the mentioned strategies are co-authors of Professor Nabil. The co-authorship shows the Brazilian researcher's close collaboration with relevant actors in the studied field, which facilitated the detailed development of the article.

For Ghobril et al., three aspects from their data proved to be central to explain IIT's progress towards the condition of an entrepreneurial university: an explicit and specific strategy aiming at this condition, carried out counting on the engagement and collaboration of the stakeholders; the creation and operation of entrepreneurship units (entrepreneurship center, innovation laboratories, entrepreneurship academy) to allow and support initiatives at different levels; and the involvement of students in a continuous EE to develop entrepreneurial competences. As the title of the article suggests, EE overflowed at IIT beyond entrepreneurship programs, courses, and classes occurring in a wide variety of intra and extra campus activities.

In this sense, the IIT case exemplifies the implementation of the recommendation that EE should be taken as central and aim at excellence to sustain the transformation of an institution into an entrepreneurial university (Fayolle & Redford, 2014; Gibb, 2005; Gibb & Hannon, 2006). Progression towards this status, the university approaches the condition of making full use of its potential to foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and development in its ecosystem (Hannon, 2013). With this, it develops more and is even more useful to society and more attractive to receive investments, entering a spiral of improvements and generation of benefits.

In the next article, Velasco details different conceptual relationships of the entrepreneurial intention and contributes to the validation, using structural equations, of the instrument "Evaluation and Development of the Potential Entrepreneur". The data used to validate it were collected from students at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico. With his differentiated contribution and increasing the variety of nationalities of the articles, Velasco brings yet another perspective to consider in EE studies. His article also assists in a more detailed understanding of the multiple conceptual relationships and methodological considerations to keep in mind when studying the interactions between entrepreneurial intentions and EE. Such assistance helps in the



reasoning and in the transition to reading the following articles, those by Barbosa et al. and Vasconcelos et al.

The contribution of Barbosa et al. focuses on identifying the relationship between the personality traits called Big Five (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) and EE based on a comparison of the entrepreneurial intention of elementary and high school students who had Junior Achievement's EE with that of students who did not have the same EE. According to the authors, their results show that EE acts on personality traits and positively impacts the intention to be an entrepreneur, in addition to opening the way for further researches, including on how EE should be carried out.

The focus of the study by Vasconcelos et al. was students in higher education. The authors' interests were to contribute to the understanding of how the factors explaining the entrepreneurial intention of university students from a Brazilian higher education institution can influence the development of initial entrepreneurial behavior, considering the economic recession variable. The study shows that entrepreneurship in Brazil still occurs significantly as an alternative to self-employment in times of crisis. It is a type of entrepreneurship that occurs less by vocation and more by necessity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The eight articles bring relevant contributions, show that it is fruitful to develop and study EE in a multidisciplinary way, and help to give due value to the role of EE, the variables that impact it (personality traits, entrepreneurial intention etc.), and the need for improved EE knowledge and practice.

A promising perspective shown is focused on the dynamics, characteristics, and interactions of EE actors and influencers. The perspective relies on the focus on students, dealing with topics such as their entrepreneurial intention and behavior (see the articles by Velasco, Barbosa et al., and Vasconcelos et al.), as well as the focus on teachers (Foliard et al.) and multiple stakeholders on and off campus (Ghobril et al.), including authorities (Saes & Marcovitch).



The set of articles suggests that (and illustrates how) the integration of multiple approaches can be useful to generate efficient and effective EE solutions.

One cannot lose sight of the fact that the university is not the only locus of EE, as illustrated by Saes and Marcovitch, as well as Barbosa et al. It is increasingly considered that EE occurs beyond university borders, although Brazilian studies pay little attention to the fact. Therefore, expanding the understanding, presence, and efficiency of EE in various learning contexts remains a theme for the next steps of research on the theme in Brazil.

Of course, there are more challenges to face in order for this research to mature. Among them, there is a lack of progress with more impactful contributions and exciting news to effectively lead to the development and dissemination of good research and teaching practices. However, this reality should not be seen as demotivating. The difficulties reveal great opportunities for the development of new researches.

Some recommendations can be developed based on the eight articles in the special edition and this editorial to explore such opportunities:

a) It is necessary to employ new perspectives and more opportune perspectives constructing knowledge;

b) It is important to have solid foundations for future knowledge and great feasibility of its application in the Brazilian reality, especially with regard to small organizations, including micro and small enterprises, since they are a very frequent means of fruitful entrepreneurship;

c) It is recommendable to use more robust and convincing methods, which are able to overcome the challenges of studying EE without falling in the face of criticisms;



d) It is necessary to deal with inter and transdisciplinary issues to break thematic and methodological boundaries, in addition to expanding theoretical and practical contributions which are relevant to the area;

e) It is necessary to think of EE as a foundation for development and social change, as well as an important topic on the political agenda in favor of socioeconomic improvements for the population with entrepreneurship.

We thank the authors, reviewers, and readers of the special edition with a strong desire of seeing more advancement in this important area of study.

Good reading!

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