

Starting Early: The Impact of Experience Based Education on Entrepreneurial Intentions of High School Students

Rodney R. D'Souza
Northern Kentucky University

John E. Clarkin
Northern Kentucky University

Abdullah Al-Bahrani
Northern Kentucky University

We examine the education-entrepreneurial intentions relationship and the effects of experiential entrepreneurship education. Relying on the theory of planned behavior and the theory of human behavior, we develop and test hypotheses to enhance the knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship education. This study discerns ways in which experiential education in entrepreneurship can positively affect the attitudes and intentions of students, and to further the base of knowledge in the link between education programs and intentions. Results suggest that problem based experiential learning does indeed impact how students think about entrepreneurship as a career and their perceived level of control.

INTRODUCTION

“All learning is experiential” (Joplin, 1995).

Experiential learning is not a new concept, with its underpinnings in Lewin's integrated approach to analyzing, understanding and bringing about changes in thinking developed more than 70 years ago (Burnes, 2006). Coincident with Lewin's death in February 1947 in Newtonville, Massachusetts,¹ and less than six miles away, the first entrepreneurship class in the U.S. was taught by Myles Mace at Harvard's Business School (Katz, 2003). It is no coincidence, however, that the evolution of Lewin's approach to what is now known as *experiential learning* has become an integral part of many entrepreneurship education programs. A closer examination of the impacts of experiential learning programs on individual attitudes, motivations, and intentions is the primary focus of this study.

The trajectory of entrepreneurship publications and educational programs throughout the world in the 20th Century has been well chronicled (e.g., (Katz, 2003); (Kuratko, 2005)). The promise of entrepreneurship as an emerging field of academic research (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), as an economic engine through the ventures created (Kirchoff, 1991), and as a means of creating wealth for individuals (Hitt, Ireland, Camp, & Sexton, 2001) captured the attention of academics, policy makers, and

aspiring entrepreneurs. This broad range of interest fueled growth in training and education programs designed to create more and better entrepreneurs through the development of human capital through knowledge and skill development (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013). The efficacy of entrepreneurship education programs has been the subject of several studies that support them (e.g., (Gorman, Hanlon, & King, 1997); (Pittaway & Cope, 2007);(Solomon, 2007)), while others question their impact or reveal limits on their success (e.g., (D'Intino, Ross, Byrd, & Weaver, 2010); (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003)). Of particular note is a conclusion in the Peterman et. al. (2003) study, in which the authors found evidence to support the further development of intentions models when examining the effects of entrepreneurship education programs.

Unlike other traditional academic disciplines, entrepreneurship educators “have the responsibility to develop the discovery, reasoning, and implementation skills of our students so they may excel in highly uncertain environments” (p. 55) (Neck & Greene, 2011). The debate of whether or not entrepreneurship can be taught, one that plagued early efforts to implement entrepreneurship education programs, has been suppressed as the field gradually gained credibility, but several of the pedagogical issues remain as topics of interest (DeTienne & Chandler, 2004); (McCaffrey, 2016); (Souitaris, Zerbinati, & Al-Laham, 2007). Nearly 30 years ago, Vesper & McMullan (Vesper & McMullan, 1988) argued that entrepreneurship courses should be differentiated from traditional business curriculum by exercises in *divergent thinking*, “a mode of thought suppressed in most traditional business courses” (p. 10) (Vesper & McMullan, 1988). Despite some exceptions, Brush, Neck & Greene (Brush, Neck, & Greene) observed that even though the discipline of entrepreneurship is known predominantly for characteristics such as experimentation, uncertainty, and risk; entrepreneurial education has, for the most part, adopted a very linear, process-based pedagogical approach.

Efforts to better understand the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs has often been limited to small sample sizes and data gathered through cross-sectional surveys. Further, a study by (Bae, Qian, Miao, & Fiet, 2014) found little or no commonality in the measures or methods among the 79 studies their analysis. The study highlighted several potential paths to enhance the knowledge of entrepreneurship education, specifically an “education-entrepreneurial intentions relationship” (p. 242) (ibid.). The importance of entrepreneurship education inspired us to pursue this subject, and Bae et. al.’s article provided the path for us to more closely examine how teaching entrepreneurship in an experiential manner impacts an individual’s intentions and behavior.

One of the challenges to changing intentions and behaviors is the traditional teaching mode of faculty and the passive learning mode of students, a challenge that can be mitigated through a problem-based learning (PBL) approach. Since it was implemented in the 1950’s, PBL’s student-centered learning model can now be found throughout education systems at all levels (Hanke, 2009). The active learning environment created by PBL encourages student learning, encouraging and motivating the learner to individually determine how and what they need to change in order to successfully develop an entrepreneurial mind-set (Bae et al., 2014); (Hanke, 2009). The real question we sought to answer through this study is—Can an entrepreneurship education program using PBL positively affect students’ attitudes, intentions, and behavior?

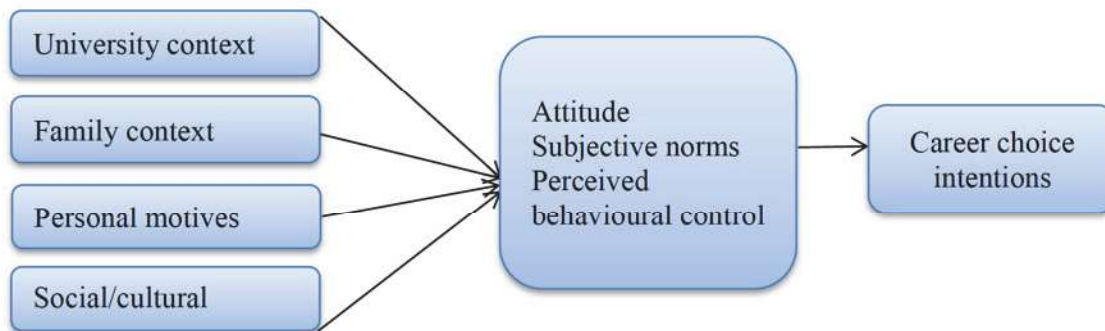
To examine the education-entrepreneurial intentions relationship and the effects of PBL on that relationship, we rely on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977); (Ajzen, 1991), recognized as the most widely used theory to link intentions to behavior. We also use the theory of human capital (Martin et al., 2013); (Volery, Müller, Oser, Naepflin, & del Rey, 2013) to develop hypotheses and guide the process, and enhance the knowledge gained through the evolution of Lewin’s work in the context of entrepreneurship education. Vesper & McMullan observed that an entrepreneurship degree “will not mean that the person is an entrepreneur, just as a degree in journalism does not make someone a journalist” (p. 8-9) (Vesper & McMullan, 1988). Our goal in this study was not to discover ways to create entrepreneurs through PBL, but to positively affect the attitudes and intentions of students enrolled in entrepreneurship education, and to further the base of knowledge in the link between these education programs and intentions.

A review of the relevant literature and definitions of terms used in this study is presented next, followed by a section devoted to methods and analysis. We conclude with our analysis, discussion, and suggestions for further research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For nearly 30 years, Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior (TPB) has been one of the more widely used psychological theories to explain and predict human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). A central theme of the theory posits that the stronger the intention to engage in a particular behavior, the more likely a person is to engage in that behavior. As depicted in Figure 1, behavior is jointly determined by perceived behavioral control and intentions (Saridakis, Iskandarova, & Blackburn, 2016).

FIGURE 1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



TPB has been employed in a wide variety of contexts, including recent studies that examined the socio-cognitive determinants of drivers in France (Lheureux, Auzolt, Charlois, Hardy-Massard, & Minary, 2016), the perceptions of weight gain among pregnant women in North America (Whitaker, Wilcox, Liu, Blair, & Pate, 2016), and proved useful in predicting fruit and vegetable consumption in Australia (Kothe & Mullan, 2015). A central tenet of TBP is that intentions capture “...the motivational factors that influence a behavior” (p. 181); an indicator of the extent to which an individual will exert the effort necessary to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed providing that the person has some ability to decide whether or not to do it.

As a theoretical foundation, support for and evidence of the limitations of TPB and the role of intention as a determinant of behavior may be found in a variety of studies (e.g., (Lukik, Bianchi, Popper, & Pavol, 2016); (Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005). In their meta-analysis of 49 studies that focused on behavioral change, Webb & Sheeran (2006) concluded that “...intentions have strong associations with behavior”, and that “Changes in intention had a larger effect on behavior when participants were rated as possessing more control over the behavior” Webb & Sheeran (2006). This finding supports the conclusions of an earlier study by Bagozzi (1981), who revealed that although attitude also affected behavior, its effect was only through its impact on intention, especially when behavior was volitional.

Given its widespread acceptance as a theoretical foundation applied in a variety of contexts, it is not surprising to see that TPB has been employed in studies of university students to explain determinants of their specific behaviors. Several research efforts sought to provide a better understanding of diverse behaviors among students using TPB, especially where situational contexts involved conscious and volitional choices by students. An example of how TBP was used to predict student behavior that had environmental, economic, and social considerations is in students’ use of cars as a mode of transportation

to and from campus. A sample of 312 university students in Indonesia found that the students' behavioral intentions explained 42.5% of the variance in their actual car use, and that raising awareness of the negative aspects of using cars would change student intentions and result in a change in their behavior (Setiawan, Santosa, & Sjafruddin, 2014). The study found that the link between intentions and behavior among the students in their sample was significant. TPB's value in a wide variety of contexts is also evident in studies where it proved useful in predicting fruit and vegetable consumption in Australia (Kothe & Mullan, 2015), in forecasting tourist's use of bicycles in China (Han, Meng, & Kim, 2016), and in measuring the impact of advertising messages in shoppers' decisions to use plastic bags in grocery markets (Muralidharan & Sheehan, 2016). Another recent example is found in Ansare's (2015) study of 218 U.S. college students, which discovered that students' behavioral intentions significantly predicted their actual use of condoms, a finding consistent with that of several previous studies in other countries. Since intentions have been found to be the best predictor of many planned behaviors, it follows that a better understanding of the antecedents of intentions will increase our understanding of an intended behavior.

Examples of efforts to better understand the precursors of intentions are found in a robust stream of entrepreneurship research. Kolvereid (1996) relied on TPB to predict the employment status choice² intentions of undergraduate students in Norway. In this study, variables were constructed to differentiate a variety of exogenous and demographic characteristics (e.g., family background, gender, past experience) from cognitive or career reasons (e.g., autonomy, economic opportunity). He collected data from 143 university students who were assumed to be making important vocational choices, deciding between a career as an employee or self-employment. Kolvereid's study found that in his sample, intentions were strong predictors of behavior and were determined by factors that may be altered and not by exogenous or demographic characteristics. Similarly, Zellweger et. al's (2011) examination of students with family business backgrounds revealed that while family background, gender, and experience indirectly affected intentions, career choices and behavior are largely volitional, and that the best predictor of actual behavior is intentions. Shortly after researchers turned away from what became a fruitless search for an entrepreneurial trait, a robust approach that focused on intentions emerged (e.g., (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000) ; (Davidsson, 1991). Although a number of studies found support for the link between antecedents of intentions and their effect on behavior, criticisms of empirical models have largely focused on the retrospective or post hoc nature of many studies, or the absence of theoretical foundations (Krueger et al., 2000).

How university students establish and pursue their career goals and the choices they make in pursuit of those goals are likely influenced by a wide variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Experiences in prior classes including grades and testing scores have the potential to affect a student's perceived aptitude in subject areas associated with certain careers in either a positive and negative manner. The influence of parents, teachers, role models and friends also has the potential to affect the perceived attractiveness of certain careers in the minds of students, and differences between male and female students are likely. For some, an ability to make a positive impact in the world is a powerful goal providing motivation for students, while others pursue careers with equal or higher determination based in large part on potential financial rewards.

The career choices and motivations of students have been examined in a variety of contexts that served as a backdrop for this study. Zellweger et. al. (2011) examined career choice intentions of students with family business backgrounds, revealing that students who intend succession differed from founders and employees in their behavioral control and motives. Arguably, a career as an entrepreneur provides a career path with virtually limitless earning potential, and entrepreneurs typically enjoy a level of professional autonomy not possible in a career as an employee.

Gender differences in career choices have been revealed in a study of 2,213 secondary school students in the US, which found that money to be earned in a career was much more important factor for men than women, and that attitudes and behaviors of parents, teachers, counselors and friends (labeled as *Socializers* by the authors) played a central role in a student's choice of career (Dick & Rallis, 1991).

A better understanding of the reasons why individuals choose an entrepreneurial career path was revealed in Carter et. al. (2003). The authors found that differences between males and females revealed in their sample may also be time dependent and speculated that it “may be a harbinger that career paths and interests of men and women are converging” (p. 34). Irrespective of gender and other differences and despite the widely held notion that the perceived improvements in overall life satisfaction might *pull* some individuals into and job dissatisfaction might *push* others out of employment into a career as an entrepreneur, Schjoedt & Shaver (2007) could not confirm either motivation in a study using the PSED dataset.³

AIMS OF THE STUDY AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of this study is to close the gap in the entrepreneurship education literature by examining the role of problem-based experiential learning entrepreneurship education. We continue the stream of research using the theory of planned behavior (TBP) to examine intentions as a predictor of future behaviors and use a pre- and post-survey instrument to quantify the changes in students’ intentions based on a problem-based learning experience. It is widely known that entrepreneurial intentions play a key role in decisions to embark on an entrepreneurial career (Linan & Chen, 2009), and a closer examination of how to affect intentions appeared justified. Our approach offers a new perspective on entrepreneurship education by exploring how these educational efforts can affect attitudes, intentions, and ultimately nascent entrepreneurship behavior. In other words, the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education may be as important if not more so than the content of the curriculum when it is able to change attitudes and increase entrepreneurial intentions of student participants.

We looked for age, gender and other social factors that may influence student attitudes and intentions, and their perceptions volitional control over their future intentions. Although the sample size is comparatively small, the findings have the potential to inform entrepreneurship educators who are considering revamping their traditional, lecture-based education programs to meet the challenges of the future. Drawing on our review of PBL and entrepreneurial intentions, we tested the following hypotheses:

H1: There is no difference in the attitudes and intentions of male and female students.

H2: Education programs have little effect on the subjective norms of students

H3: A PBL-based education program can increase students’ perceived behavioral control of over their decision to pursue a career in entrepreneurship.

H4: A PBL-based education program can increase the level of entrepreneurial intentions.

METHOD

Measures

The survey includes 50 indirect measures of perceptions of entrepreneurship activity. These measures were drawn from the entrepreneurial intention (EI) questionnaire (Linan & Chen, 2009). The EI construct is operationalized by using three dimensions - personal attitude towards entrepreneurship (PA), subjective norm (SN) (family, friends and colleague’s perception of starting a business) and perceived behavioral control (PBC). The construction and validation of the EI questionnaire used can be found in Liñán and Chen (2009). Further, it has been cross-checked following (Kolvereid, 1996); (Krueger et al., 2000); (Linan, Rodriguez-Cohard, & Rueda-Cantuche, 2011); and (Veciana, Aponte, & Urbano, 2005).

Participants and Procedure

Use of student samples is common in entrepreneurship education research (e.g., (Gedeon, 2017); (Linan & Chen, 2009); (Lourenco & Jones, 2006)). Consistent with these and other previous studies, we chose high school students as the subjects of our empirical test since their entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions are unlikely to have been influenced by prior business courses that cover related topics. The context in which this study takes place is an intensive, three-week entrepreneurship education program conducted at a Midwest US university. This program created a context broader than a university course

because it included a portfolio of entrepreneurship and innovation activities. Participants in this program had previously lacked structured opportunities to develop their entrepreneurship acumen and their ability to implement ideas and concepts. This problem-based learning program was designed to introduce students to concepts of entrepreneurship, help them develop critical life and work skills, problem solving, and allow them to assume the risks associated with developing and implementing ideas.

Student participants in the program were screened and selected from a statewide pool of applicants through interviews. This was the fourth year that the program was being offered. The program included instruction and exercises using the lean startup methodology (Ries, 2011), design thinking (Martin, 2009), the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). A number of guest speakers, faculty, and mentors were also involved to help guide students through the program. The culmination of the program was a demo day where student teams presented to a panel of investors. A major goal of the program was to help each student determine whether or not entrepreneurship was a feasible career path for him or her, and students completing the program were expected to be more prepared for a career as entrepreneurs.

To better understand how the program impacted intentions and attitudes, we provided students with the EI questionnaire before and after the three-week program. By measuring EI pre and post program we are able to identify whether or not the PBL entrepreneurship program affected our sample of high school students' perceptions, motivation, and confidence toward entrepreneurship.

This IRB-approved study required participant anonymity. Due to the anonymity requirements, we were unable to match individual student level data between the pre- and post-surveys. Table 1 provides summary of demographic data collected.

**TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

		Pre	Post
Sex	Male	23	23
	Female	21	19
Age	13	1	0
	14	0	0
	15	11	10
	16	22	20
	17	9	11
	18	1	1

Grade	Freshmen	0	0
	Sophomore	8	7
	Junior	25	26
	Senior	11	9
Observations		44	42

Of the 46 students registered in the program 44 of them responded to the pre-survey questionnaire, while the post-survey had 42 respondents. By observing the grade level data, we can determine that three students (one sophomore and two seniors) did not complete the post-survey, and one junior that had not completed the pre-survey participated in the post-survey.

FINDINGS

Tables 2 and 3 presents descriptive statistics for the survey responses, grouped into four categories of variables, with comparisons of the mean values pre- and post-program. We hypothesized (H1) that there would be no difference in the attitudes and intentions of male and female students. While results from table 2 would suggest that both men and women were mostly influenced positively in the areas of behavioral control, what is interesting is that the results suggest that women experienced a shift in personal attitude that isn't present for men, suggesting that this entrepreneurial education program played a role in adjusting personal attitudes for women.

TABLE 2
IMPACT OF EDUCATION FOR EACH GENDER

	Males pre and post	Female pre and post
	T	
Personal Attitude		
Being an Entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me	0.454	2.3359
A career as entrepreneur is attractive for me	1.5733	3.1553
If I had the opportunity and resources, I'd like to start a firm	-0.3288	1.968
Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfaction for me	1.6251	1.8845
Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	1.375	1.8995
PA Index	1.1553	1.1553
Subjective Norm		
Your close family	0	-0.0124
Your friends	0.1321	1.4075
Your colleagues	2.1976	2.5227
SN index	0.8621	1.6468
Perceived Behavioral Control		
To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me	6.4845	5.9028
I am prepared to start a viable firm	4.2831	5.174
I can control the creation process of a new firm	6.7747	6.7403
I know the necessary practical details to start a firm	6.7424	7.302
I know how to develop entrepreneurial project	6.1371	4.6874
If I tried to start a firm, I would have a high probability of succeeding	2.9756	3.7115
BC Index	6.302	6.1662

	Males pre and post	Female pre and post
	T	
Entrepreneurial Intention		
I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	2.142	1.9892
My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	1.907	1.3942
I will make every effort to start and run my own firm	1.1902	0.8777
I am determined to create a firm in the future	1.8283	0.9821
I have very seriously thought of starting a firm	1.502	0.9056
I have the firm intention to start a firm some day	0.7596	1.7776
EI index	1.8172	1.5229
Observations	44	38

Next, we hypothesized (H2) that the educational program would not affect the subjective norms of students. Results suggest that there was a statistically significant difference in how students perceive the support from colleagues, with most indicating that their colleagues support them. This shows no support for hypothesis H2.

We then hypothesized (H3) that the educational program would increase students' perceived behavioral control of over their decision to pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Results provided support for this hypothesis, as we found that Perceived Behavioral Control and Personal Attitude toward entrepreneurship were statistically higher after the educational program.

Lastly, we hypothesized (H4) that this education program would increase the level of entrepreneurial intentions. While the overall measure of attitude did increase, no statistical difference was observed in the questions that made up the category. Hence, there was no statistical difference in students' Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI).

TABLE 3
MEASURES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE (EIQ)

	Pre		Post		Change	T-test
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std		
Personal Attitude						
Being an Entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me	5.77	1.48	6.36	1.23	0.58	1.99
A career as entrepreneur is attractive for me	5.59	1.35	6.40	0.91	0.81	1.31
If I had the opportunity and resources, I'd like to start a firm	6.32	1.03	6.55	0.80	0.23	1.15
Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfaction for me	5.89	1.04	6.40	0.89	0.52	2.49
Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	5.11	1.43	5.81	1.45	0.70	2.24
PA Index	28.68	5.20	31.52	4.40	2.84	2.73

	Pre		Post		Change	T-test
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std		
Subjective Norm						
Your close family	5.95	1.22	5.95	1.56	0.00	-0.01
Your friends	5.82	1.08	6.05	1.01	0.23	1.01
Your colleagues	5.27	1.32	6.10	0.93	0.82	3.33
SN index	17.05	2.93	18.10	2.85	1.05	1.68
Perceived Behavioral Control						
To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me	3.89	1.32	6.07	0.95	2.19	1.68
I am prepared to start a viable firm	4.36	1.28	5.95	0.88	1.59	8.80
I can control the creation process of a new firm	3.77	1.52	6.33	0.82	2.56	6.68
I know the necessary practical details to start a firm	3.64	1.60	6.33	0.72	2.70	9.65
I know how to develop entrepreneurial project	4.36	1.63	6.43	0.70	2.06	7.57
If I tried to start a firm, I would have a high probability of succeeding	4.27	1.45	5.67	1.36	1.39	4.60
BC Index	28.77	8.48	42.14	5.04	13.37	8.84
Entrepreneurial Intention						
I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	4.66	1.49	5.60	1.58	0.94	2.83
My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	4.66	1.63	5.48	1.67	0.82	2.30
I will make every effort to start and run my own firm	5.25	1.54	5.71	1.52	0.46	1.41
I am determined to create a firm in the future	5.34	1.45	5.95	1.40	0.61	1.99
I have very seriously thought of starting a firm	5.93	1.15	6.33	0.98	0.40	1.74
I have the firm intention to start a firm some day	5.36	1.38	5.86	1.41	0.49	1.64
EI index	31.20	7.18	34.93	7.73	3.72	2.32
Observations	44		42			

Bold t-test statistics indicate a statistically significant difference in means between the pre and post measures at the 95% level. The Change column indicates the direction of change. A positive figure indicates that the mean increased in the post test.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It is widely accepted that intentions are strong predictors of human behavior, and that changes in intentions results in changes in behavior. We used a pre-and post-survey of students who participated in a problem-based learning (PBL) program to examine what (if any) changes were evident in their attitudes and intentions.

Our results suggest that the PBL program affected how students thought about entrepreneurship in two important ways: first in the legitimacy of entrepreneurship as a career path, and second as the level of control that they have over that path. The study also revealed that the PBL program had a different impact on men and women in our sample, in terms of personal attitude. We did not, however, find support for our hypotheses related to subjective norms and overall entrepreneurial intentions.

While somewhat surprising, the results may (in part) be explained by the students we chose for our sample. First, the sample size was small, which limited our ability to use more sophisticated analysis. Second, we used a convenience sample of students in this study. Students actively chose to participate in this PBL program, completing a written application and were subsequently screened through formal interviews before admission. Although we can assume that students had not participated in previous entrepreneurship instruction, we can also assume that they had a higher than average level of curiosity and interest in entrepreneurship than a representative sample of their peers. Since the design and goal of the study was to measure change, we expect that a more representative or random sample would reveal a much larger change. It is likely that the absence of change in the subjective norm is also the result of bias in our sample, as support for entrepreneurial thinking and behavior provided in the PBL program is likely to be similar to that provided by family and friends. Mentors and supporters participating in the PBL program likely reinforced and refined concepts as opposed introducing new ones.

Arguably, an effective entrepreneurship education program, especially one designed to target high school students, should focus on the broadly defined aspects of the process of entrepreneurship: such as creativity, innovation, opportunity recognition, and value creation as opposed to the more narrowly defined approach of venture creation. As such, PBL education programs can (and should) include the broad contextual aspects of social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial teams in their curriculum.

IMPLICATION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

The debate of whether or not entrepreneurship can be taught, has now given way to the argument of the best way to teach entrepreneurship. Researchers over the past three decades have studied the various pedagogical issues related to the field and have observed that even though the discipline of entrepreneurship is known predominantly for characteristics such as experimentation, uncertainty, and risk; entrepreneurial education has, save for a few exceptions, adopted a very linear, process-based pedagogical approach. Inspired by the importance of entrepreneurship education we pursue this subject and more closely examine how teaching entrepreneurship in an experiential manner impacts an individual's intentions and behavior.

ENDNOTES

1. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kurt-Lewin>
2. Kolvereid (1996) defined employment status choice based on an earlier work by Katz (1992, p. 30) as “the vocational decision process in terms of the individual’s decision to enter an occupation as a wage or salaried individual or a self-employed one.” (p. 47).
3. The PSED was designed to identify and collect data from a nationally representative sample of 816 nascent entrepreneurs. Use of the PSED in this research is compelling because the database was designed to focus on nascent entrepreneurial processes such as opportunity identification while avoiding the common problem of retrospective bias often associated with entrepreneurship research (Gartner, Shaver, Carter, & Reynolds, 2004).

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