Progressing Enterprising Education within Universities:
Asserting Principles of Stakeholder Engagement

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Abstract

This paper discusses the progression of enterprising education and its impact on the institutional stakeholder, in order to ascertain aspects of identification and engagement. This greater understanding of the entrepreneurial context, between delivery and professional support stakeholders aid in the stipulation of actionable principles towards more effective, entrepreneurship-based courses and programmes. This paper highlights, as derived from literature, the many surrounding factors persistent in enterprising forms of education. These include professional recruitment, institutional strategy, and entrepreneurial behaviours and emotions. These factors impact on core elements of the entrepreneurial context including the institutional focus, programme creation, and the overall student journey.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education; Stakeholder Theory; Higher Education; Strategy; Organisational Culture*

1. Introduction

Key reporting from a number of academic and industrial sources, namely governmental and educational supportive influences, have all contributed to the sustained activities and aspirations through and towards entrepreneurship and enterprise education (European Commission, 2008; 2012; 2013; 2015). Universities and colleges deliver and support entrepreneurship programs and activities, by acknowledging and adopting universally accepted techniques, activities, and influential behaviours as outlined in international publications (Beresford & Beresford, 2010; Benneworth & Osborne, 2015; Murray, Crammond, Omeihe & Scuotto, 2018). As agreement is realised concerning the best way forward for this form of education and support within institutions, implied standards and institutional procedures are now becoming widely apparent. With the expansion of many forms of this taught discipline, principles of enterprising education must be established, entrenched, and endorsed in continuing enterprising behaviour and activities towards achieving mutual goals and institutional expectations. Of course, the perspectives, beliefs and cultures associated with the now established myriad of stakeholders must be confronted in the creation of stipulated and assured principles, which this paper outlines. As entrepreneurship and enterprising education develops, a critical understanding of the many contexts and stakeholders who are associated, detailing prevailing issues and qualitative 'events', are more widely witnessed and conceptualised (Anderson & Jack, 2008; Dodd & Hynes, 2012; Marić, 2013).

This discussion paper documents key individuals, and their practices, within education concerning the maintenance and advancement of entrepreneurial programmes and behaviours. Crucially, outlined within this paper are newly-established and fundamental principles upon which institutions should consider when introducing, delivering, assessing, and maintaining taught entrepreneurial programmes and surrounding support. In order for these novel principles to be formed, firstly a review and discussion of the taught field, and the key stakeholders, is conducted. This includes aspects of the evolved field itself, the identification of academics and industry individuals and groups, the levels of engagement witnessed, and the behaviours before, during, and after such exposure to enterprising education and the relevant environments occur. Reflecting on these themes encourages a crystallisation of key activities, the requirements of academic institutions and organisations; with respect to stakeholder aims, ambitions, and emotions. These are displayed as explained principles. Asserting these principles, for practical implementation, aids in the development of enterprising modules, wider programmes, and university initiatives.

The principles stipulated within this paper assert what identifiable stakeholders, within institutions, should idealistically do. This is in the spirit of a progressive, normative rhetoric for enterprise put into practice (Jones, 2010; 2011; 2013). However, the question of what constitutes an 'enterprising stakeholder' presents varied issues across academia. This includes, and is at the mercy of, the financial, human, and intellectual capital available within the institution (Gibb & Hannon, 2006; Rae, 2010). A summary of these related issues are as follows: identification of appropriate enterprising education: What is the relevancy to stakeholders? Expectation of enterprising education: A problem of ambiguity or vagueness? Involvement of stakeholders: A question of

identification and adaptability? Attitude of stakeholders: How to capture attention, interest, and understand the associated emotions throughout the educational journey?

Current entrepreneurship education reporting reinforces this notion of an embracing, progressive, multi stakeholder agenda (Williamson, Beadle & Charalambous, 2013; Miller, McAdam & McAdam, 2014). Reporting on these stakeholders within the educational context includes the impact of educators, industry professionals, governmental representatives towards advancing curriculum and successful start-up or spin-out activity between students, researchers, and university donors (such as university grants, scholarships, seed funding). Evidence of such enterprising activity increasingly supports the normative rhetoric towards pluralistic and inclusive enterprising education, in reflecting business realities (Audretsch, 2006; Aldrich, 2012; Gibb, Haskins & Robertson, 2013). Differing duties, responsibilities, and visions of these institutional stakeholders are converged in meeting with unifying principles that assist in the underpinning of institutional goals and both strategic and operational plans (Clarkson Centre for Business Ethics, 1999).

The following section of this paper discusses the institutionalisation and embracing of entrepreneurship education, which is now commonplace in the 21st century. This has also highlighted the many forms and understandings of what we mean by entrepreneurship or enterprise education, acknowledging the focus, approach, assessment, and audience. From this, this paper wishes to provide its own definition of the educational stakeholder, as enterprise continues to engulf the modern institution. This addresses the delivery and support stakeholder cohesion that is in abundance. As the paper progresses, brief comment is made to the current principles and ideals of entrepreneurship education, towards more inclusive enterprising education and its many forms. When we consider what this implies, and should consider in practice, this paper isolates the key emotions of stakeholder inclusivity and institutional cohesion. These influence the resultant Stakeholder Engagement Principles (SEPEE) that are listed, explained, and reinforced through the literature. The implications of these, in moving the taught field forward, are also discussed as the paper provides closing comments.

2. Literature

2.1 Institutionalising and Embracing Enterprising Education

As universities continually witness the success of their entrepreneurship programmes, a requirement in responding to this success is acknowledging and supporting key individuals within the institution (Galloway & Brown, 2002; Nelles & Vorley, 2010a; 2010b; 2011). Inspirational figures within their departments, and towards the rest of the university, these key individuals support and promote the unique delivery, pragmatic assessment, and developmental mentoring of students who are keen to exercise entrepreneurial skills and abilities (Fitriati, Lubis, Shakuntala & Guntara, 2013). It is now a central responsibility of institutions to reflect business and educational realities, in the 21st century, by continually introducing and maintaining these creative and innovative programmes. In many cases, institutions have seen vocal and practical support from senior management, including principals and programme leaders, as well as notable figures who have previous small business and entrepreneurial experience. This vindicates the entrepreneurial routes that programmes and departments take, concerning course curriculum and experiential-based activities for students and aspiring entrepreneurs within their educational environments. It is now considered, in fully and adequately introducing entrepreneurship education, that departments, faculties, and universities in general respond to student and societal need by recruiting and training multiple personalities that can educate and train the next wave of entrepreneurs.

Enterprising education, whether it be skills (*enterprise education*) or venture-based (*entrepreneurship education*), has remoulded universities, predominantly since the 1980s onwards (Hytti & O'Gorman, 2004). Enterprising education, however, is this transforming and wider approach to education, where a setting for idea generation and regeneration is established. It is a pluralistic endeavour whereby students seek to resolve problems and improve their skill attainment. This can be witnessed within many taught fields and disciplines. As discussed previously, unavoidable factors relating to capacity and capability affect the ability for universities to adopt and advance methods and approaches to educate innovatively and enterprisingly. It is therefore with this championing of enterprise, within willing universities, that a far-reaching and interdisciplinary message can be projected (Binks, Starkey & Mahon, 2006; Dew & Sarasvathy, 2007; Taatila, 2010). Typically, this message can be greatly amplified from senior departments of the institution. However, true, enterprising education flourishes with sustained support in the teaching activities and immediate contact with students and industry.

2.2   Defining Educational Stakeholders

Stakeholder theory and related research has grown considerably since its emergence and development during the 1960s (Arnstein, 1969; Freeman, 1984; 1994; 2004; Freeman & Phillips, 2002; Friedman & Miles, 2006). This has led to managers and employees improving their identification, engagement, and analysis of internal and external environments and stakeholders, respective of their organisation. Stakeholder theory has provided a key, theoretical basis for academics and organisations to collaborate, witness, and forecast market activity. This appreciation and awareness can be transferred from the organisational context to the contemporary, educational environment. The educational environment, which, in itself, is competitive and of course subject to surrounding social, economic, technological, and political factors.

Educators, researchers, institutional support acceleration staff, middle and senior management, and student unions are all part of the student's entrepreneurial journey (Gimmon, 2014). These stakeholders have variable interaction with the student, in terms of the course content and assessment. There also exists variable levels of influence and opportunity to understand and respond to students of their perceptions and ambitions concerning enterprise (Barringer & Ireland, 2012; Benneworth & Osborne, 2015). As this paper suggests, entrepreneurship education equates to a wide variety of stakeholders working together across teaching, research, and industry, with differing descriptions of their inherent responsibilities and roles (Jalal, 2019).

Generally speaking, stakeholders within the entrepreneurship education environment are individuals that can directly or indirectly affect or influence, by partially adopting Freeman's (1984) notion of stakeholders, the development of entrepreneurship teaching, researching, training, and support within universities.

Embracing the entrepreneurial vision of the institution is vitally important from pedagogical, empirical, developmental, and commercial points of view (Hamidi, Wennberg & Berglund, 2008; Jennings, Greenwood, Lounsbury & Suddaby, 2013). At critical points throughout the student's educational journey, the stakeholders are involved with the individuals formal and extra-curricular activities with the purpose of encouraging or enhancing entrepreneurial behaviour. To summarise, this paper lists the following as key stakeholders within the enterprising education, university context: *the student, the educator, the researcher, the higher education principal, subject dean, business development manager, industry and enterprise champion, family and friends, immediate community, local business, local government, other universities, and wider society, in general.*

As expressed before, stakeholder theory is predominantly regarded as abundantly generalised to the organisation construct, whether it is a university or not. Forms of enterprising education, however, present new practical ideologies and valuable conceptions of the educator, and the responsibility of students. These embrace aspects of leadership, mentoring and volunteering, the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and expertise, personal development, and ongoing skills acquisition. These are all realised with the greater inclusivity of internal stakeholders. Directly influencing the introduction and impact of enterprising education, delivery stakeholders are at the frontline of new and innovative programmes. This involves the establishing and curation of appropriate content and supportive activities. Introducing and maintaining the essence, or entrepreneurial spirit, for the educational environment or '*practical spaces*'. These stakeholders also embody the role of supervisors, in expected dissertation projects or longer-term thesis research, and any additional, commercial activities.

2.3   Principles towards Enterprising Education within University

Within its own competitive market, universities should continuously reflect and ask themselves: *What is our fundamental duty? What is unique about us? How do we prepare students for working and professional life? Who can assist in our aims and objectives?* The objective of institutions, first and foremost, is to educate students and society, preparing graduates for employment in their chosen career and assist in small business development (Crammond, Omeihe, Murray & Ledger, 2018; Philpott, Dooley, O'Reilly & Lupton, 2011). Institutions should be hubs of enlightenment and inspiration. Therefore, although a plethora and witnessed spectrum of stakeholders are widely understood, as seen with contemporary literature and supportive publications (Amaral & Magalhaes, 2002), a productive and prescribed structure of interaction with these stakeholders is now a clear need. This adds greater legitimacy to the enterprise agenda and the longer-term objectives of a creative and innovative institution (Czuchry, Yasin & Gonzales, 2004; Fetters, Greene & Rice, 2010). Institutions, as witnessed by many scholars (Martinelli, Meyer & von Tunzelmann, 2008), embrace this notion of delivery, mentoring, and research individuals who now action these objectives in both the front line and internal mechanisms of university teaching and support, much like entrepreneurial organisations (Drucker, 1985). Considered within this paper are the important aspects of *inclusivity* and *cohesion*.

With enterprising education and activity comes the need for greater, stakeholder inclusivity. This is the case

for many reasons. Firstly, it bridges the educational progress and attainment of the student with this notion of reflecting business reality. Secondly, it strengthens ties between university aims and societal need. University cohesion is important. By cohesion, this paper refers to the extent to which academic departments, across disciplines, engage with each other and professional support services within the university. With this cohesion, enterprising education gains greater traction, as it builds on its merits and realises further endorsement amongst the academic and student communities (Czuchry, Yasin & Gonzales, 2004; Blenker, Frederiksen, Korsgaard, Müller, Neergaard & Thrane, 2012).

3. Methodology

This paper is a discussion-based review of associated literature, concerning enterprising education and institutional stakeholder theory, in order to address issues pertaining to enterprise and entrepreneurship education delivery and support engagement. A deductive approach is adopted, whereby central and surrounding themes and topics are reviewed.

Reflecting on, and centralising, an axiological philosophy, this paper extends the literature of this field of entrepreneurship research by considering the issue of principles and values within the progressive, education context. In order to advance this taught discipline, educators and university management must consider what is appropriate and correct practice, in their entrepreneurial teaching, research, and supportive actions.

A thematic appreciation of particular events, perspectives, and journeys witnessed between stakeholders, results in renewed principles being constructed. These principles help towards the enriching of expected, entrepreneurial activity and behaviour.

4. Reflective Comments

Reverting back to the questions stated at the beginning of this paper, this section visits the central discussion points when considering the nexus between universities, the teaching and practice of entrepreneurialism, and significant stakeholders acting upon the educational context.

What is the relevancy to stakeholders?

The research indicates that with increasing variety of enterprising education, and the breadth of topicality, universities are now more accommodating to many stakeholders out with the educational environment. The relevancy is more evident, aims of courses and programmes are more purposive, and are responsive to the local and surrounding communities and regions.

A problem of ambiguity or vagueness?

Institutions, with clearer visions, attract many industries and enrich the university. A key charm of enterprising education, is that the classroom environment allows for this flipped approach where students have control; to develop ideas, themselves, and their working groups.

A question of identification and adaptability?

Upon a unique strategy, or selling-point for an entrepreneurial university, stakeholders can be envisioned and practically included. Universities are powerful sources of knowledge and opportunity. Stakeholder theory dictates that this direct or indirect impact can affect many people of primary, secondary, and tertiary concern to the entity. Therefore, connections with a clear cause enable universities to hopefully establish these enterprising relationships and build legacies and ecosystems.

How to capture attention, interest, and understand the associated emotions throughout the educational journey?

This can be achieved through exciting course structures and approaches, and in terms of relevancy and appreciating the journey: the recruitment of entrepreneurs and industry-experienced individuals where applicable.

The prevailing comments from the literature highlight numerous academic and institutional issues that impinge on the success of enterprising education and stakeholder identification and engagement. These include the professional recruitment of entrepreneurially-experience staff, institutional capacity and realistic strategies,

and contemplating expected entrepreneurial behaviours and emotions during activities within the education environment.

Professional Recruitment

In representing industry and society, this recruitment of true, enterprising experience to achieve a 'broad church' of enterprise, education, and business is vital. These individuals validate the university offering and can endorse wider links and opportunities from which enrolled students can benefit from.

Institutional Capacity

With top-down support, resources and amplified support can lead to this bolstering of capacity and capability for enterprising education. This includes the individuals, the learning spaces, research and grant funding opportunities, and the ongoing investment from university management and principals towards enterprising activity whether it is teaching, research, or consultancy.

Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Emotion

Another benefit of the recruitment of professional, industry-driven individuals is the ability to relate to the practical and emotive journey which is replicated within the classroom, with enterprising forms of education. Students outline hopes and confront fears during these courses. A dynamic setting such as an enterprising classroom leads to dynamic learning events and memorable experiences.

These reflective comments are considered towards a conceptualisation of entrepreneurial stakeholder involvement and impact within developmental, enterprising education. This aids in the formulation of reasoned, novel principles for enterprising education, going forward.

5. Discussion

The previously-discussed notion of *inclusivity* and *cohesion*, when considering the dominant questions and themes above, is advanced further in this paper by the following diagram. Figure 1 illustrates the influences and factors which impact enterprising education (Galloway, Anderson, Brown & Whittam, 2005; Mars, 2007). The overarching stakeholders, which represent both the internal and external environments, are generalised. Given this, complex interactions are realised, and relationships are formed.
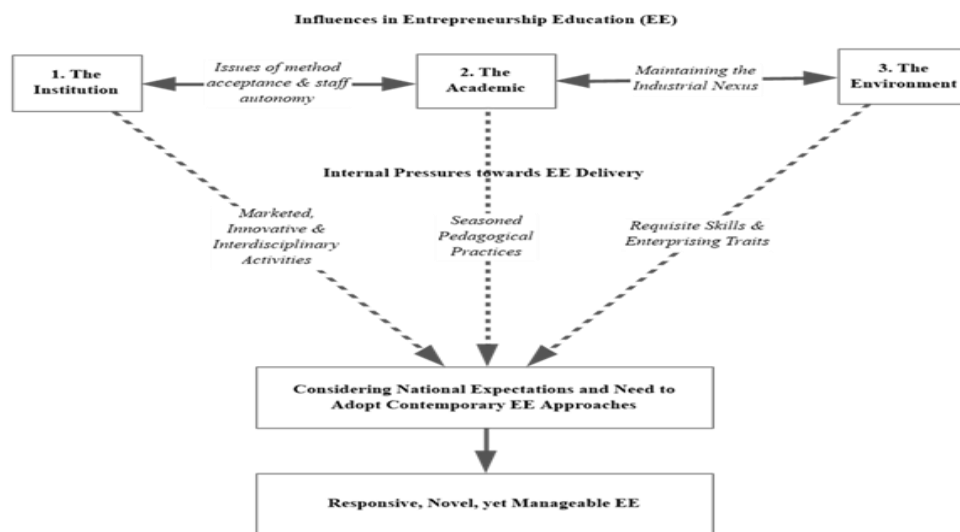

Fig. 1.Enterprising Influences within the Modern University

As these interactions manifest, the aims and concerns of stakeholder groups are witnessed and voiced. Nevertheless, in order to achieve sustained and universally-accepted validation and legitimacy, universities adopt and abide by expected forms of good practice (Palfreyman, 2012; Mason and Arshed, 2013; Mason, 2014). With this in mind, educational institutions must be reactive and proactive, in facilitating novel approaches and forms of enterprising engagement, across academic and industrial walks of life.

Upon acknowledging these issues and understanding and planning for how to resolve these within a respective university, can a meaningful, adaptable form of enterprising education be created for multiple stakeholders? This paper lists six **Stakeholder Engagement Principles (SEP[EE])** to confront this issue. These all-embracing principles are as follows:

1. '*Screen*' the Institution
2. Identifying Proactive Roles
3. Recruiting the Interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship Educator
4. Assert Enterprising Objectives: *Process of Inclusivity*
5. Affirming Human Capital: *Attitude*, *Emotion* and *Perspective*
6. Involve the Local Community: *Building a Systematic Ecosystem*

1. 'Screen' the Institution

Adequate resources, personnel, and finances must be introduced and utilised to ensure relevant and effective enterprising education. Therefore, this first principle addresses the need for those institutions to '*screen*' or audit their own capabilities towards meeting the needs of students, small businesses, and society in general.

2. Identifying Proactive Roles

The second principle, identify proactive stakeholder roles, concerns the need for a strong and sensible relationship between programme leaders, lecturing staff, and researchers within institutional departments. A certain meeting of minds, and shared practices and beliefs must be evident in order for programmes and departments to attain the support from management and university chiefs. This would result in periodic and substantial funding and opportunities towards recruitment, research opportunities, and external engagement projects.

3. Inter-disciplinarian Recruitment

As expressed occasionally in this paper, universities wishing to embrace and develop a wider, enterprising network must do so by recruiting staff from all relevant walks of life. Students have many diverse ambitions, and as a university, it must cater to this by opening up many other opportunities for them. Enterprise and entrepreneurship education has now evolved in cross-industry topicality; staff must reflect this.

4. Assert Enterprising Objectives: Process of Inclusivity

In attracting new students and staff, the university must assert top-level objectives towards enterprise. Largely regarded as a past buzzword, enterprising education should be instilled in all programmes, and therefore should be embedded in programmes, and in the mindsets of all educators across departments and teaching faculties. This process of inclusivity should originally reside from senior management to convey a strong message.

5. Affirming Human Capital: Attitude, Emotion and Perspective

If enterprising education does not enrich the lives of students and educators, then it is not effective. Universities should challenge the current social situations and look to assist students in mapping out their futures. During the course of an enterprising, or entrepreneurship course, stakeholders impact on the emotions and provide differing perspectives. This pluralistic approach emboldens students and should aim to inform them of the wider world and the implications and benefits of an entrepreneurial economy and society.

6. Centralise Community: Building a Systematic Ecosystems

The last principle concerns the expected, longer-lasting aim, which should be set by entrepreneurial universities: the building and sustaining of a systematic ecosystem. *Which stakeholders continue this significant surge to enterprise? Who should be sought after as bearers of knowledge and experience for the classroom?* A university and its immediate community should establish shared goals and visions, in order to respond to these questions. A resultant ecosystem provides a channel for incubator, accelerator, and scale up opportunities for students and staff. This can of course involve collaborative efforts.

Formulating these principles encourages greater introduction and maintenance of purposeful and contemporary education, through a process of institutional realisation, capability and activity. These principles urge university management, educators and supportive departments to address enterprise within higher education both systematically and progressively, through incremental action. The principles provide a set of processed, comparable identifiers of related operations, with regards to recruitment and strategic planning, educational

facilitation in terms of delivery method and student engagement concerning supportive influencers and external practitioners.

6. Implication to Research and Practice

The novel illustration within this paper, and its six, stated principles of stakeholder engagement, adds to existing literature within the field. These document the continual strides to be taken by educators delivering this education, and the university's supportive staff, which are required in progressing enterprising education further. Succinct adoption of related publications, delivery techniques, and experiential-based learning activities will all enhance the entrepreneurial experience. Of course, as anticipated, these desired sources of enhancement are subject to economic and institutional fluctuations and challenges that could prohibit university objectives and ambitions being achieved.

Practically, this paper also acknowledges the critical aspects of educational engagement, by stakeholder identification, which is relevant to the many forms of enterprising education. The nature of this paper assists in developing the ever-present importance of influential individuals upon the educational context and adopting an inclusive mind-set across disciplines and industries.

7. Conclusion

This discussion paper has reflected on enterprising education and stakeholder theory research, addressing the need for institutions to affirm the commitment to evolving enterprising and innovative curriculum, concerning contemporary, practical entrepreneurship and enterprising education. The novel approach seen within this paper includes asserting the six, stated principles above, which can aid and advance enterprising education within creative and innovative higher education institutions today.

The evolution of universities, when considering entrepreneurship, has led to institutions redefining and reimagining their purpose and reach. A solely '*top-down*' view of the university does not adequately answer the call for enterprising activity, taught, research, or otherwise, within universities. A more progressive, grounded assessment of the unique abilities and capabilities, which should start in the classroom, must be appreciated. An advancing of stakeholder theory within the educational context, enriches the journey between students, academics, and support staff. Furthermore, it represents the new approach of able and aspiring universities in embracing and evidencing the enterprise agenda. With a focus on all three of these groups, primarily, defining the ongoing delivery and support mechanisms, aids in principles being established and reasoned.

The generalised and progressive nature of these principles, that attempt to include multiple stakeholders, imply that institutions assess and align their contributions to students. This includes the adequate recruitment of innovative and entrepreneurially-experienced individuals, and the redesign of teaching and research responsibilities and objectives. It presents human resource and financial challenges to senior managers and principal-level staff, to satisfy strategic, commercial, and socially-minded objectives which the principles of this paper allude to. These principles transcend the pedagogical, personnel, and institutional challenges that universities face when attempting to support the student experience. This influences individuals and groups, in the designing and development of programmes and institutional endeavours.

8. Future Research

The stipulation of novel, actionable principles guide educators and university professionals in asserting unique approaches to enterprising education and aid in necessary, multi-level resource allocation. These principles can form managerial, educational, and technical procedures within higher education institutions.

However, future studies should develop this axiological approach, concerning forms of enterprising education, conducting empirical investigations of principles and institutional values amongst academics, supportive staff, and taught cohorts within university. This, for example, could be in the form of longitudinal research, where cross-comparison of university approaches and aims are scrutinised against expected institutional strategy and good, pedagogical practice.

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