WHAT TO LEARN FROM ENTREPRENEURIAL SUMMER SCHOOLS? A LOGICAL TYPOLOGY

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In the last decades, it seems to be a hype for every entrepreneurial university to organize a kind of a summer school for entrepreneurship. In the adverts of these events there are many promises, but what is it they actually do? The name 'summer (or winter) school' sounds universal. Contradictory, the programmes seem to be unique for each university. It is obvious that a short entrepreneurial support programme, like a summer school, is a popular instrument to contribute to the economic development of a region. Not every region has its own summer school yet. Governmental ambitions throughout Europe make that soon every region will have an entrepreneurship-stimulating instrument like a summer school. To learn from the established summer schools, a qualitative study of 38 of them was carried out in the United States and Europe. Comparison of the gathered data shows that there is a broad scope of goals and aims, as well as the size, cost, duration and financing. Noticeable differences found between Europe and the United States, as well as between the West, East and South of Europe. The findings of the study have resulted in a logical typology of entrepreneurial summer schools.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Summer Schools

In the last decade, the premise that entrepreneurship has been an important factor in the economic development of a region, as affirmed by many scholars (Ahmad & Hoffmann, 2008; Gries & Naudé, 2009; Sijgers, Hammer, Horst, Nieuwenhuis, & Sijde, 2005). It has been shown that a high level of entrepreneurial activity contribute to innovation, competition, economic growth and job creation (Carree & Thurik, 2003). For this reason, politicians on European, national and regional level, started to encourage activities that promote and stimulate the start of new ventures. The aim is to create more starting ventures and therefore create more jobs, economic traffic and thus more welfare and less poverty. Especially after the abandon of the largest share of the manufacturing industry of a region to low-wage countries such as East Europe and Asia, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) seems to be the major economic factor. A large group of scholars presume that the start of a new venture is the result of the execution of a number of activities, which are framed to phases (Bhave, 1994). The process of entrepreneurship can be divided into four phases: The first phase is the development of the intention to start an enterprise (Krüger jr, Reilly, &

Carsrud, 2000; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). The second one is the recognition of the opportunity, with the result of the conceptualisation of a business concept. The third phase is the preparation of the opportunity where resources are assembled and the blueprint of an organization is fixed (Baron & Hannan, 2002). The process ends with the exploitation of the opportunity, plans are executed and the exchange with the market begins. After this phase, the process starts all over again from the second phase (Shane, 2000). Within a region, an overwhelming arsenal of instruments is deployed to stimulation of entrepreneurship. In the last years, the summer school has become a more and more popular instrument. In literature, there is a lack of empiric data on this phenomenon. From experience of the authors, it seems that not a single summer school of entrepreneurship is the same. A recent request from local authorities to establish a summer school for the region evoked the demand to structuralize the framework of design criteria for summer schools. Presumably existing summer schools do have raisons d'être and therefore they might open up directions for a kind of classification. In this paper, we evaluate the existing summer schools with the intended purposes to reveal common structures or dimensions, to achieve more understanding of it. With these data, a typology is proposed, to help authorities decide what criteria their summer school of entrepreneurship must meet.

Empirical study

Our research is based on an empirical study among existing summer schools. The collated data were collected through an internet search among all possible forms of summer schools in the field of entrepreneurship. For practical reasons, the internet search was carried out in the English language. The authors are aware of the fact that this might result in biased outcomes because the sample may not cover the population; however, for the purpose of this study a clear research scope is considered more important than the size of the sample. Search engine Google was used to find the internet appearance and with that, the gateway to other information of current and past Summer Schools of entrepreneurship. The results of this search and the expressions used on the search engine are shown in table1. The time frame of the collated data was the period between the first of June and the fifteenth of August 2011.

Table 1. *Search expressions and results*

Search expression	Search Results
Summer school	18.000.000
entrepreneurial summer school	2.430.000
entrepreneurial summer school	817.000
Summer school entrepreneurship	521.000
summer school entrepreneurship	3.960.000
summer school business plan	262.000.000

From the summer schools that were found, available data were put together. Missing data were completed by a call for information to the concerning host. In cases that no entity was identified or no information was found, the summer school involved was taken out of the research. Before data processing, all records with insufficient data were removed. A data set was marked as complete when sufficient information was gathered to make a proper distinction between the different programmes. For the distinguished

ones , scholars in educational science often use the 'curricular cobweb' of *van den Akker* (2003). He identified a reduced number of practical distinguishing aspects to characterize an educational programme in order to match design requirements with development aspects. These aspects are: time, location, grouping, materials & resources, learning activities, content, aims & objectives and assessment (Akker, 2003). For this research, this model was modified with elements of entrepreneurship. An overview is given in table 2.

Table 2. *Items of data collection*

Variable	**Interpretation**	**Unit**
Duration	The time period of execution	Days
Location	The region of the execution	Continent
Target group	The population which the programme is aiming for	Nominal
Aim	To what phase of the entrepreneurial process is the programme aiming?	Phase in the Entrepreneurial process
Theme	The specific topic of entrepreneurship in the programme?	Nominal
Funding	Type of basic funding of the programme.	Nominal
Costs	The participation fee	Euro's
Host	Type of organisation of the host	Nominal
Assessment	What is the type of assessment at the end of the programme?	Ordinal
Reward	Is there a reward when after succession?	Closed

From *van den Akker's model*, the materials & resources, learning activities and the content are taken out. From the research method used, these data were nearly found were as the number of completed data sets would reduce too much. Therefore, the item 'theme' is introduced to identify if there is a specific topic to be addressed. Furthermore, the way of funding, the attendance fee and the type of host organisation is stated. The final characteristic is the attribute of rewarding as entrepreneurs favour (Driessen, 2005).

Findings

From the data sets acquired, we searched for patterns of characteristics. In table 3, the variables and their frequencies are put together. We will start with the evaluation of the single variables; after which the remarkable combined findings are discussed. Based on the grouping of the variables, the most common types of summer schools are listed. At the end of this paragraph, a typology of summer schools will be proposed, to help authorities identify their criteria for building their summer school of entrepreneurship.

Table 3. *Variables and their frequencies*

Variable	**Unit**			
	frequency			
Duration	**1-7 days**	**8-21days**	**>21days**	
	20	7	11	
Location	**United States**	**N & W. Europe**	**S. Europe**	**E. Europe**
	7	24	3	3
Target group	**Non-student**	**Student**		
	8	30		
Aim	**O. recognition**	**O. preparation**	**O. exploitation**	**Exit**
	3	33	2	0
Theme	**Non**	**Social Entr.**	**High Tech.**	
	24	7	7	
Funding	**Non**	**Public**	**Privat**	
	22	11	5	
Costs	**€ 0**	**€ 1 - € 150**	**€ 151 - € 500**	**> € 500**
	18	5	3	12
Host	**Non University**	**University**		
	3	33		
Assessment	**Non**	**Attendance**	**Plan**	**Pitch**
	16	6	12	4
Reward	**Non**	**Yes**		
	25	13		

Single findings

Regarding the duration, we distinguish three groups: 1-7, 8-21, over a period of more than 21 days. Based on this scale, we can see the largest group in 1-7, over a period of 8-21 days which is the smallest group. This can be explained by for the approach of the summer school: a short course during the summer or summer-long schools. The latter and the fast 1-7 days group had both a full programme every day. When looking to the location, there are far more summer schools in Western Europe, which can be caused by the chosen methodology. Other regions can have summer schools in their native language and therefore advertise this on the internet. These findings may also indicate that in Western Europe there is still a more international focus, whereas in the south the focus is on French and Spanish and in the East on Russian. Most summer schools conducted by a university are addressed to their own students, the ones with the ambition to start an enterprise. The summer schools that target entrepreneurs are the summer schools that are mostly concentrated on enhancing entrepreneurial skills and expanding the business (eventually seeking investors). A clear sign is given in the aim of the programme, where most are only focusing on the opportunity preparation, flanked by some elements of opportunity recognition and exploitation. About a third of the programmes have a theme, where forms of social entrepreneurship and a high tech context were the only two that were mentioned. The funding of the programme was mostly provided by the schools' internal hosts. Remarkably there was a broad range of attendance fees. We identified four groups; free, two mid-range groups (to state the gap to the top of the fees, which was more than 25 % of the programs, mostly the longer ones) and the top, expensive group. The maximum fee paid was 7000 euros. As expected the vast majority of the summer schools is hosted by a

research university or University of Applied Sciences. With regard to the assessment and reward, there is a full overlap. Only half of the assessed schools is rewarded with a price or study-credits. It can be argued when attending; you should be a better entrepreneur, which can be seen as a reward. These situations were indicated as not rewarded.

Remarkable combined findings

When combining the findings above, more aspects that are remarkable were detected. From the high tech summer schools, they all assessed, 80% funded by the public and free of attendance fee or a small fee. This contradicts the notion that the social entrepreneurship summer schools are all non-funded and that their attendance fee is predominantly expensive (> 500 Euro). The summer schools from the United States of America are all for students and mostly concern a long duration, expensive or free, assessed (various assessments) and rewarded. On the other hand, the Northwestern European schools mostly concern short periods (1-7 days). In Eastern Europe, the target group consists only of students and no one is rewarded, but some are assessed. The Eastern European summer schools are neither assessed nor rewarded and the attendance fee is high. The vast majority of the non-student summer schools are not assessed and not rewarded. The regular (most common) summer school is for students, hosted by a university, free of attendance fee, aiming at opportunity preparation, located in Northwestern Europe, assessed on the basis of the business plan and not rewarded.

Proposed typology

From the findings we can extract four types of characteristics which can be influenced by the designer of the programme and can determine which programme the participants are going to take part in. The first type is the focus (aim) of the programme; on what phase of the entrepreneurial process the programme is focussed. This is in line with the theory on the entrepreneurial process (Shane, 2000). The second type is the rewarded assessment; on what how and on what aspects will the attendant be assessed and is there a tangible reward to distinguish the results. The third type is the target group. From research it is known that the failure rate of students is much higher than those of non-students and the latter is often more experienced (Bosma, Praag van & Witte de, 2000). The last type is the theme of the summer school. As shown in the findings, there is a difference in audience, programme and organisation if the summer school is on social entrepreneurship, high tech, or has no theme. The typology is summarized in table 4.

Table 4. *Typologies of entrepreneurial summer schools*

Typology	**Use**
Focus	It can be determined on which phase of the entrepreneurial process the program is focused. This affects the content and outcome of the summer school
Assessment & reward	For attendants it is most helpful knowing what to deliver and stay focussed on the objectives set.
Target group	The distinction between students and non-students effects on the attendance fee, program content, assessment and reward.
Theme	Shaping a specific context for the summer school is affecting the program on given examples, assessments and costs.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the setting of entrepreneurial summer schools, many universities offer a summer school of some kind. The variation between the programmes is extensive. When taking a closer look some patterns can be seen. Assessing these patterns among educational principles some useful information for policy makers or authorities can be highlighted. The use of the typology for entrepreneurial summer schools gives them a powerful tool to establish a more precise instrument to stimulate entrepreneurship and so contribute to economic development. The chosen methodology implies that the sample was not representative for the whole population of entrepreneurial summer schools. It is therefore highly recommended that further research is executed in other languages. It is also recommended to study the effects of the different configuration of summer schools.

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