

Innovation and Entrepreneurial University Ecosystems in Euro-Mediterranean Countries

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Universities that are innovative and entrepreneurial are those that adopt an entrepreneurial management style, have teachers, staff, and students who act entrepreneurially, and engage with their surrounding environment (community/region) in an entrepreneurial way. As such, a university will increasingly play an entrepreneurial and innovative role. By planning and developing their entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems to produce societal, technological, and economic value through research, teaching other forms of human capital development, as well as the development of new businesses and entrepreneurial capital, universities can help boost competitiveness and economic growth. The main ambition of the present special issue of IJEMS is to present several great initiatives in Euro-Mediterranean countries.

The influence of various elements of entrepreneurial education on students' entrepreneurial mindset has been the topic of several studies. A case study of several years in innovative forms of teaching entrepreneurship with an emphasis on challenge-based learning is presented in the article of D. Berginc, V. Jošt Lešer and, K. Kraškovic from Slovenia, in which the authors analyse the challenge-based learning interventions and progress in students' entrepreneurial mindset. Senior students provided more solution proposals compared to juniors while their solutions to the problems the company faced in the case study were more multi-disciplinary and interconnected, thus exhibiting more maturity and comprehensiveness of

the overview of the situation. Overall, students in the third year showed a higher degree of entrepreneurial mindset.

[8] This entrepreneurial mindset is often demonstrated by the potential successors of family businesses who have options to proceed with their careers as entrepreneurs, independently of the existing family businesses, or are more inclined to take over family businesses and develop their entrepreneurial careers within them. The study by A. Kume and F. Jaupi from Albania presents important findings concerning the profile of subjects with entrepreneurship intention to establish their own business compared to those who are willing to be part of their intergenerational family business.

A similar, yet different approach was developed by D. Y. Pavlov and S. S. Ruskova from Bulgaria, who investigated the role of a university and the relevant ministry and government support to make university departments more entrepreneurial, which can also be achieved through the concept of the intergenerational family business ecosystem approach.

In a new era of higher education marked by international rivalry, university rankings have grown in significance. Their emergence has been welcomed with a great deal of skepticism, some enthusiasm, and institutional uneasiness. They are frequently contentious and the subject of substantial debate. Ranking systems are unavoidable; thus, it is critical to consider how they will affect the higher education industry and its stakeholders. The authors M. Bojadjiev, I. Mileva, S. Pavlova and V. Krliu from Northern Macedonia acknowledge the need for developing a ranking system within the Balkan region and propose a new ranking system, which would take into account the ambition for a more creative and entrepreneurial orientation study as an outcome of a higher education institution in the region.

The early introduction of the corporate governance ecosystem seems to be important for the potential growing entrepreneurial ventures spinning off from university support initiatives. The paper by K. Gladovič from Slovenia aims to compare the legal framework for corporate governance in selected economies to highlight the progress made so far as well as the shortcomings of the existing



framework. There are several differences between countries in corporate governance approaches: from national approaches to exercising the ownership function; board nomination, composition and efficiency; to equitable treatment of shareholders; implementation of the EU directive on non-financial and diversity information; rule of law; sustainable governance effectiveness and innovation score. [9]

In this special issue we highlight certain theoretical and empirical studies on the effects of entrepreneurial ecosystems and university innovation in Euro-Mediterranean nations. We received contributions from scholars belonging to many management and social science sectors, and believe that the special issue papers provide a significant theoretical contribution in keeping with the scope of IJEMS, along with a suitable methodological approach.