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PhD thesis summary

The impact of entrepreneurship education and experience on entrepreneurial intentions and venture creation

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Summary

Nowadays universities are increasing their efforts to foster entrepreneurial intention and venture creation since these represent a mean for addressing the new economic challenges, creating jobs and fighting social and financial issues. In fact, policymakers are fostering the creation and the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and ecosystem by involving universities in order to enhance students' and faculties' entrepreneurial intention and venture creation. In addition, students are asking for entrepreneurship courses. In line with this, the European Commission has included the “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” as one of the eight key competences that all individuals need. Therefore, it is fundamental to analyse how universities can foster the entrepreneurial intentions and venture creation in order to monitor and improve them.

Entrepreneurship education can improve entrepreneurial intentions and venture creation. Therefore, a remarkable expansion in the number of entrepreneurship programs to all levels of education has been made. However, even if the current literature analysed entrepreneurship education, several aspects still remain to be tested. Some of these gaps are:

1. The impact of entrepreneurship education on the creation of academic spinoffs.
2. The impact of Student-Led Entrepreneurial Organizations on entrepreneurial intentions.

Moreover, this Ph.D. thesis presents an analysis of the strategic role of the Contamination Labs (CLabs) in Italy.

In addition to an Introduction and the literature review, to explore these gaps and the role of CLabs in Italy, this Ph.D. thesis analyses different contexts and applies different methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) in the development of six Chapters.

To analyse the impact of entrepreneurship education on the creation of academic spinoffs, Chapter 3 uses a new dataset built around 1,262 entrepreneurship courses offered between 2011 and 2014 by 80 US universities. Adopting a Poisson panel regression model, this Chapter shows that, in addition to the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) size and university research expenditures,

entrepreneurship education favours the creation of academic spinoffs. Moreover, this Chapter finds that practical – rather than theoretical - entrepreneurship courses favour the creation of academic spinoffs.

To identify the impact of Student-Led Entrepreneurial Organizations on entrepreneurial intentions, Chapter 4 uses a survey that was conducted in 2016 by one of the largest Student-Led Entrepreneurial Organizations in the world: the European Confederation of Junior Enterprises (JADE). Adopting a Logit regression model, this Chapter shows that the more time students spent on JADE and the higher the number of events students attended, the greater their entrepreneurial intention was.

Finally, to explain the role of CLabs in fostering entrepreneurship education and activities in Italy, Chapter 5 uses a multi-case study of four Italian CLabs. Specifically, this Chapter investigates the strategic role of the Italian CLabs as innovative Laboratory aimed at developing an entrepreneurial mindset, creativity and innovation among the university's students enrolled in different programs.

In conclusion (Chapter 6), this Ph.D. thesis presents several theoretical and practical contributions for universities, students and scholars interested in entrepreneurship. Indeed, this Chapter explains how entrepreneurship education is able to overcome informational and cultural barriers, which may limit the development of entrepreneurial actions by both academic faculties and students.