

Developing Social Responsibility Values in Nascent Entrepreneurs through Role-Play: An Explorative Study of University Students in the United Kingdom

Authors : David W. Taylor, Fernando Lourenço, Carolyn Branston, Paul Tucker

Abstract : There are an increasing number of students at Universities in the United Kingdom engaging in entrepreneurship role-play to explore business start-up as a career alternative to employment. These role-play activities have been shown to have a positive influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Universities also play a role in developing graduates' awareness of social responsibility. However, social responsibility is often missing from these entrepreneurship role-plays. It is important that these role-play activities include the development of values that support social responsibility, in-line with those running hybrid, humane and sustainable enterprises, and not simply focus on profit. The Young Enterprise (YE) Start-Up programme is an example of a role-play activity that is gaining in popularity amongst United Kingdom Universities seeking ways to give students insight into a business start-up. A Post-92 University in the North-West of England has adapted the traditional YE Directorship roles (e.g., Marketing Director, Sales Director) by including a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Director in all of the team-based YE Start-Up businesses. The aim for introducing this Directorship was to observe if such a role would help create a more socially responsible value-system within each company and in turn shape business decisions. This paper investigates role-play as a tool to help enterprise educators develop socially responsible attitudes and values in nascent entrepreneurs. A mixed qualitative methodology approach has been used, which includes interviews, role-play, and reflection, to help students develop positive value characteristics through the exploration of unethical and selfish behaviors. The initial findings indicate that role-play helped CSR Directors learn and gain insights into the importance of corporate social responsibility, influenced the values and actions of their YE Start-Ups, and increased the likelihood that if the participants were to launch a business post-graduation, that the intent would be for the business to be socially responsible. These findings help inform educators on how to develop socially responsible nascent entrepreneurs within a traditionally profit orientated business model.

Keywords : student entrepreneurship, young enterprise, social responsibility, role-play, values

Conference Title : ICEEP 2019 : International Conference on Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : March 28-29, 2019