

The Entrepreneurial Journey of Students: An Identity Perspective

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Abstract : While university dropout entrepreneurs are celebrated in the practitioner literature, students' intentions of becoming entrepreneurs have increasingly been the focus of student entrepreneur studies. However, students who are already running a business have rarely been examined. The experience of these students is a phenomenon that requires further research. Entrepreneurial identity represents a gap in the organisational studies literature. This paper utilises studentpreneurs' self-narratives of their entrepreneurial journey. More specifically, the aim is to answer the following question: what are the types of identity work that individuals go through to build their entrepreneurial identity during that journey? Through long interviews, this paper studies the lived experience of 14 studentpreneurs who have achieved \$54,000 in income and who participated publicly in entrepreneurial competitions. A general inductive analysis is performed on their narrative. With its focus on the journey, this paper makes a contribution to the literature on identity work and the entrepreneurial journey. A key contribution is the study of identity work on the journey to becoming an (established) entrepreneur in contrast to routine identity work.

Keywords : entrepreneurial identity, student entrepreneur, identity work, student entrepreneurship

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