Entrepreneurship research grounded in real world problems

ACE was delighted to host a rather impromptu visit and seminar by a leading Chinese entrepreneurship scholar, Professor Zhong-Ming Wang. Professor Wang who was in town for the AMBA Dean’s conference, made the time to present to us about his entrepreneurship centre and program of research.

Professor Wang is Professor and Director of the Global Entrepreneurship Research Centre at Zhejiang University, regularly ranked as one of the top three universities in China.

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Does the use of “bricolage” make start-ups more innovative?

From the ACE Research Vignette Series ~ In this vignette, Professor Per Davidsson and Associate Professor Paul Steffens consider the links between entrepreneurial “bricolage” and innovation.

Background and Research Question

Out of perceived financial necessity as well as creative ability, business founders often apply improvised, makeshift solutions to make progress with their start-up. They may use whatever resources they already have rather than acquiring the new and “proper” inputs; borrow space or machinery from friends and neighbours; buy used rather than new; apply some retrofitting to make a lawnmower engine or a discarded AC unit run or cool (or heat) something else; ask whatever “free” consultants rather than paid professionals for advice, and assign dressed up friends and their own camera and photo skills to produce a catalogue or website portraying their merchandise. Researchers have recently applied the label ‘Entrepreneurial Bricolage’ for these frugal and creative ways in which entrepreneurs sometimes manage to achieve a lot with seemingly very limited resources.

According to the emerging theory of entrepreneurial bricolage, there are three aspects to this phenomenon....

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The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Regional Development

Baseball 1 – Global Entrepreneurship 0

The third annual ICSB-GW Global Entrepreneurship Research & Policy Conference was held in Washington DC over three days from 11 October 2012 (see http://www.icsbgw.org/). ACE research fellow Scott Gordon was a delegate to the conference, and reports on the meeting. This research and policy conference was organized by Dr. Ayman El Tarabishy and Prof. Paul Reynolds and sponsored by the International Council for Small Business. Events were held at the down-town DC campus of the George Washington University, and at various venues around the city, including an evening reception at the Hall of Flags of the DC Chamber of Commerce, just across the street from the White House.

As with many conferences it was a chance to catch up with colleagues you’ve known for a while and to meet some new ones. The ICSB-GW conference has grown out of the annual PSED (Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics) conference, and it is still a place for PSED researchers to meet and exchange ideas. But it aims to be something bigger. PSED initiator Prof. Paul Reynolds’ vision for the conference is to have a meeting where entrepreneurship researchers and policy makers can evaluate the many databases that exist in order to conduct their research or inform their policy decisions. Policy makers can take stock of the latest research findings, and researchers can identify topics which require attention in order to develop the evidence base for entrepreneurship policy. Perhaps, the main benefit of a meeting such as the ICSB-GW is getting all these different types of people in the same room and focused on the same goal of developing global entrepreneurship.
Qinzhou is a municipal region in Guangxi, and one of the few areas in China expected to experience a rapid growth over the next 5 years. It is also home of the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park, which is set to be a new platform, new engine of growth and new highlight for China-ASEAN cooperation.

During a visit at Qinzhou University Dr. Marcello Tonelli discussed higher entrepreneurship education as a fundamental component of regional economic development strategies. A comparison of cases in Italy, Australia, and China highlighted how a dialogue between university and local businesses is a key aspect in ensuring that skills development moves hand-in-hand with the needs of local entrepreneurs and society at large. Far too often, education lags behind what the economy requires and research is confined at reporting what occurs in the industry, rather than proactively informing practice with new concepts and ideas.

Participants at the meeting acknowledged that the education system can no longer be only responsive to economic and social needs. Universities around the world are facing a crisis, where the value of degrees is rapidly declining and new generations of students consider whether self-taught subjects are in fact more up-to-date, relevant, effective, and of course cheaper than what universities can offer. If we believe that universities can still play an important role in the development of an individual as well as that of an entire region, we need to think differently. Job security is no longer ‘real’, hence individuals across all industry sectors require additional – entrepreneurial – skills that can help them embrace uncertainty, think more creatively, and continually innovate themselves (i.e. awareness of an entrepreneur’s career options). The way entrepreneurship is to be taught also needs to evolve. There is no more space for courses that are rigidly structured, teaching material has to be regularly updated, and, above all, mode of delivery has to include hands-on modules.

Many thanks to Dr. Marcello Tonelli, Collaborative Researcher with ACE, for contributing this story.

**Director’s keynote addresses in Europe**

During his recent “Professional Development Leave” in Europe, ACE Director Per Davidsson was invited as keynote speaker at three different events. The first was at the European Association for Work- and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) conference in Sheffield, UK, on June 28-29, where Per delivered a speech on “Design & Methods in Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities for Psychology”. Thus, the organizers hoped for the participants to be able to draw on Per’s rich experience from empirical entrepreneurship research when conducting their future studies of entrepreneurship from a psychological perspective. This exemplifies the ongoing.

If it’s good enough for the President of the USA, it’s good enough for them: Dr. Scott Gordon (ACE) and Dr. Casey Frid (Pace University) debrief the day’s events over a “chilli half-smoke” at Ben’s Chilli Bowl (“official dog” of the Washington Nationals).

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Earlier this year we were privileged to have both Professor Dean Shepherd and Dr Patricia Greene as keynote speakers at the ACERE DIANA Conference held in Fremantle, Australia. If you would like to view their keynote presentations then please visit the ACE on iTunes U where you will have access to these videos as well as other ACE presentations.

Registrations are now open for the next ACERE Conference to be held in Brisbane, February 5 – 8 2013. Our confirmed keynote speaker is to be Associate Professor Saras D. Sarasvathy, a member of the Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Ethics area and teaches courses in entrepreneurship and ethics in Darden’s MBA program. In addition, she teaches in doctoral programs not only at Darden, but also in Denmark, India, Croatia and South Africa. In 2007, Sarasvathy was named one of the top 18 entrepreneurship professors by Fortune Small Business magazine.A leading scholar on the cognitive basis for high-performance entrepreneurship, Sarasvathy serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Business Venturing and Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal and is advisor to entrepreneurship education programs in Europe and Asia. Her scholarly work has won several awards, including the 2001 William H. Newman Award from the Academy of Management and the 2009 Gerald E. Hills Best Paper Award from the American Marketing Association. Her book Effectuation: Elements of Entrepreneurial Expertise (book overview) was nominated for the 2009 Terry Book Award by the Academy of Management.

We look forward to welcoming you the 2013 ACERE Conference!
trend for entrepreneurship to become a topic of research not only within business schools but also in disciplines like economics, sociology, and psychology.

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