

## WELLBEING AND INTRAPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

**Valentina Cillo**

Universidad de La Sapienza. Roma - valentinacillo@hotmail.it

**Valeria Caggiano**

Universidad de ROMA TRE

**Costanza D'Emilia**

Universidad de Burgos

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### ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is study the role of entrepreneurial education in academic well-being and burnout prevention. Based upon the existing literature, it has been reached the elaboration of several hypothesis; first of all the existence of a high level of entrepreneurial motivations among students as well as a low level of academic burnout in a condition of organizational wellbeing. Hence, the further hypothesis that between the two constructs there is a direct correlation of negative sign and the conclusion that where these requisites are present university is effectively entrepreneurial and in condition of academic wellbeing.

**Keywords:** wellbeing, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, burnout, university

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The birth and growth of economy and the knowledge society depend on the combination of four interdependent elements: the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through information and communication technologies and their use in industrial processes or services of the new type. Lying at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, universities have in hand the key to economy and the society of knowledge (European Commission "The Role of Universities in the Europe of knowledge).

Nowadays, the big challenge for universities is to align the "values" of research and university education to the cultures of innovation in our country and the global scenarios (Granelli a., 2004; Buratti n., Simoni m., 2003).

In this scenario, as also Etkowitz highlights, University is a driving force in the growth of the new economy, therefore, industry and the government play a central role. In order for this triple helix to

be able to connect the academic activities to society as a whole, and universities to industry, it is essential that universities develop an internal organization geared to intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship to promote the growth of economic performance and to develop the flexibility needed in a hostile and ever changing environment (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

Entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial universities are institutions which promote the development of social, cultural and economic value, since education is seen as the key of economic growth.

An entrepreneurial university is characterized by some variables and features, as shown in the OECD paper (2012), useful to set up an entrepreneurial culture. According to it, its features involve:

*Leadership and governance:* entrepreneurship is a major part of the university strategy which could have specific objectives for entrepreneurship with associated performance indicators such as generating entrepreneurial motivation, cognition, and attitudes.

*Organizational capacity, people and incentives:* the university's entrepreneurial objectives are supported by a wide variety of funding sources/investment, including investment by external stakeholders. The goal is to bring internal stakeholders together (staff and students) and to build synergies between them.

*Entrepreneurship development in teaching and learning:* university is structured in such a way to stimulate and support the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and skills; universities wish to be entrepreneurial in their approach, teaching and promoting diversity and innovation in all departments.

*Pathways for entrepreneurs:* an important function of an Entrepreneurial University is to create, amongst staff and students, a widespread awareness of the importance of developing entrepreneurial abilities. Education activities should be integrated with enterprise-related activities, to ensure entrepreneurs are adequately prepared for creating start-ups through their education.

*University – business/external relationships for knowledge exchange:* the university is committed to collaboration and knowledge exchange with industry, society and the public sector and it demonstrates active involvement in partnerships and relationships. It specifically supports staff and student mobility between the academia and the external environment and it links research, education and industry related activities.

*The Entrepreneurial University as an internationalized institution:* Internationalization is a key part of the university's entrepreneurial strategy.

*Measuring the impact of the Entrepreneurial University:* the university monitors and evaluates entrepreneurial teaching and learning across the institution as well as the impact of start-up support.

An entrepreneurial culture can be obtained by promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and skills in young people through education (Urban, 2007).

### 1.1. Intrapreneurial Universities

Universities are educational organizations and for this reason they also need to develop within their internal institution, strategies of intrapreneurship in all their actors and to become themselves more entrepreneurial towards the external contexts to face challenges of change. The main changes that, nowadays, universities have to face, are the following:

*Increased demand for higher education*

*The internationalization of education and research*

*The development of a close and effective cooperation between universities and industry*

*The proliferation of places of knowledge production*

*The reorganization of knowledge*

*The emergence of new expectations: the university must respond to new demands for education and training.*

The European Commission considers that high levels of entrepreneurship can be achieved through entrepreneurship education. (European Commission, 2004).

Much has been said about entrepreneurial universities, while intrapreneurial education remains a largely unexplored field, even if, on the contrary, it plays a crucial role, especially in promoting creativity. Indeed, the intrapreneurial education is necessary to develop the ability to recognize and implement business opportunities. . This involves focusing on the study of intrapreneurial behavior, the acquisition of self- organization abilities and a higher degree of self- confidence among students (Kansikas e Murhphy 2010).

Intrapreneurial education is founded on a practical learning that can generate future innovators who will offer benefits to both industry and the academic community.

Intrapreneurship education is strategically referenced to unstable circumstances, lack of continuance, tolerance of instability and anxiety. For this reason, it is based on the promotion of behaviors and abilities necessary to work and business (Kansikas e Murhphy, 2010).

According to Haller (2014) there are six key ways to build a culture of intrapreneurship:

“Show you mean business”: the concept of intrapreneurship must be truly rooted into an organization’s main practices and linked directly with its goals;

To encourage the behavior across the entire organization;

To identify existing intrapreneurs: to give them sufficient space to pursue their interests and to encourage them to recruit peers;

To make time for innovation and creativity;

To actively promote intrapreneurial activities;

To make failure acceptable and reward success.

Therefore, previous studies can confirm that smart organizations recognize that developing intrapreneurship, as well as entrepreneurship, will be beneficial for their organizational health (Haller, 2014).

### **1.3 Burnout and entrepreneurial motivations in the framework of academic wellbeing**

Educational institutions have a primary role in the promotion and development of competences and in the influence of the attitudes towards innovation and entrepreneurship. Hence, it is fundamental that university develops a good climate of wellbeing which reveals to be a good basis to spread entrepreneurial spirit among students, as it emerges in Samadi & Esehani’s research (2006). As a matter of fact, they highlight that there is a substantial correlation between organizational atmosphere and entrepreneurial spirit, indeed factors pertaining to entrepreneurial spirit, as need for achievement, proactivity, risk taking, self-esteem and internal locus of control, assume important values in wellbeing conditions.

Maslach (2000) conceives burnout, however, as an interaction between individual and organizational factors.

Despite students are not employed or do not have a work, from a psychological perspective their main activities can be considered as “ work”; they attend lessons and they carry out their tasks in order to pass exams and obtain a degree. Consequently the concept of burnout can be legitimately extended to school and university contexts (Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Pietikäinen & Jokela, 2008). It consists of the exhaustion due to the academic requests, cynical and detached attitude towards university and feelings of inadequacy as a student.

We can deduce that, in order to develop entrepreneurial spirit and abilities, every university has to have an adequate climate and an adequate level of wellbeing (Darabi, Neyestani, Ghafari, Maidanipour & Mard, 2013).

On another hand, conditions of inadequate wellbeing determine negative phenomena, such

as decrease of productivity, absenteeism, low level of motivation, stress and burnout, reduced availability to work and lack of trust and commitment.

Some indicators reveal the effectiveness of the wellbeing promotion strategies at university (Abercrombie, Gatrell & Thomas, 1998):

- Involved actors' satisfaction
- Optimal environment management
- Absence of discrimination
- Long run healthy relations with other organizations.

Wellbeing has to be interpreted as a condition of harmony between man and environment, as the result of a process of adjustment to multiple factors which affect life style.

### 1.4 Entrepreneurship as driver of academic wellbeing

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2013) proves that entrepreneurs result to have a higher level of wellbeing, they are happier and satisfied in their work.

According to Vi dut e Seprodi (2013) entrepreneurship can represent an optimal solution to increase satisfaction and wellbeing within an organization.

The most important point in this scenario is represented by self-efficacy which allows to increase the positive assessment of one's value and the sense of control on events. Promoting entrepreneurship in universities means to provide students with those abilities, necessary to face the context challenges and all that can injure their wellbeing (Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas-Clerc, 2006).

In addition, Entrepreneurship education seems to lead to a reduction of the academic burnout conditions, as it emerges from Zhou, Fu & Lu's researches (2013) they underline that when entrepreneurial intentions increase, academic burnout decreases significantly.

This lead us to the following hypothesis:

**H1:** An entrepreneurial and healthy university presents high levels of entrepreneurial motivation among students

**H2:** An intrapreneurial and healthy university presents low levels of academic burnout among students

**H3:** According to hypothesis 1 and 2, academic burnout and entrepreneurial motivations are negatively related, when they are measured among university students

**H 4:** Wellbeing and entrepreneurship are closely related to organizational culture

The main aim is to highlight to what extent entrepreneurship education influences positively students' entrepreneurial motivations and identity. As a matter of fact, positive consequences determined by entrepreneurial education, and so by an entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial culture within university, could lead to a reinforcement of entrepreneurial motivation. The consequent subjective empowerment could bring to a state of engagement towards university and study. It is an energetic, involving and effective state of commitment (Maslach, 2000) and it's conceived as the extremity of a continuum whose opposite side is burnout.

This concept of continuum allows to understand how organizational context can influence personal wellbeing. On another hand, an important implication is that strategies to promote engagement can be important also to burnout prevention.

### 1.5 Research methodology

Data were collected through online platform named Survey Monkey. Referential population is based on university students and it has been made a no probabilistic sampling by a fortuitous selection of university students belonging to universities of Roma Tre, La Sapienza and Tor Vergata at the beginning, then of Roma Tre only. Through this collection, 300 students have answered.

To collect data both on academic burnout and entrepreneurial motivation, two kinds of inventories have been used: "School- Burnout Inventory (SBI)" by Salmela- Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen and Nurmi ( 2009) and the inventory called " Personal Motivations and Factors which Facilitate Entrepreneurship" ( Parreira, Pereira & Brito, 2011).

The former has been made following Schaufeli et al.'s original theory of work burnout (2002) academic burnout exhaustion can be defined as a feeling of academic strain and chronic fatigue resulting from overtaxing schoolwork. School-related cynicism is manifested in an indifferent or distal attitude toward schoolwork, a loss of interest in one's academic work and a poor consideration of its meaningfulness. Lack of school-related efficacy refers to diminished feelings of competence as well as successful achievement and to lack of accomplishment both in one's schoolwork and in school as a whole. The inventory consists of 10 items measuring three factors of school burnout: exhaustion at school, 4 items; cynicism toward the meaning of school, 3 items, and sense of inadequacy at school, 3 items. All items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

The SBI was originally developed from BBI-15, that is Bergen Burnout Indicator 15, for working life, it consists of 15 items that form three dimensions: work exhaustion, cynicism towards work and sense of inadequacy at work. The SBI was constructed by changing the work context to the school context and including 10 items that had the highest reliability scores and best suited the school context.

Scale is based on the measurement of motivations at the basis of start- up initiatives; of social and environmental influences and of the support to start-up initiatives; these have been made on the basis of Society for Associated Researchers on International Entrepreneurship's work, with theoretical contributions of Aldrich, Rozen and Woodward, Baumol, Shapero and Sokol, McClelland's entrepreneurial motivation theories and Pereira's work ones ( quoted in Parreira, Pereira & Brito, 2011).

For the measurement of personality variables Vaz Serra's inventory has been used.

For the measurement of dimensions related to motivations, involved factors and abilities, attractiveness, a 5-point Likert-type scale (1- strongly disagree, 5- strongly agree) and polarities Yes/No have been used; to measure personality variables, as already said, Vaz Serra's inventory has been used.

At the end, for the measurement of socio-demographic variables, they have been identified: age, gender, study area, year of course, marital state, presence of entrepreneurs among family, study condition.

## 1.6 Findings

From data analysis can be deduced several considerations in relation to the hypothesis.

As a start, the first hypothesis is not totally confirmed. In fact, although university results to be not entrepreneurial, as witnessed by the lack of knowledge about entrepreneurship in all its aspects and by the lack of an established entrepreneurial culture, there is a good level of entrepreneurial motivation, shown by values very close or over the main value of the scale equal to 3,00 points; but this is particularly true in the case of students who already work, who have demonstrated to prefer entrepreneurship as a career choice to a greater extent than students who study only. This result is coherent with the lack of knowledge about entrepreneurship within university, since this kind of knowledge is the first to which students, who study only, could refer and the first which creates the entrepreneurial culture they built for themselves, after the one given by family. Moreover, this is confirmed even by the fact that only the 22,8 % of the sample has entrepreneurs in its family.

Further on, the second hypothesis is confirmed only in part. Even if university has demonstrated not to be entrepreneurial, academic burnout seems to present low levels, as can be deduced

from low levels of agreement about anxiety, exhaustion, negative psychological states, which reveal to remain under the related mains. This result can be explained by the presence of a supportive social context, related, however, to the positive tendencies of students to sociability and so attributable to the collaborative context created by them. An influencing factor is also the high level of resilience demonstrated by students, these two dimensions are very important to face and defeat burnout. So, even if academic burnout presents low levels, here it can't be demonstrated that this is due to the hypotized reasons.

Moreover, the third hypothesis too is not entirely confirmed. In fact from the results of the analysis it can't be asserted the existence of a direct negative correlation between entrepreneurial motivation and academic burnout. Instead, it emerges is the presence of a positive correlation between resilience and entrepreneurial motivation; since resilience is an important individual characteristic to face academic burnout, so that its value should decrease, and since when resilience increases, entrepreneurial motivation increases too; so it can be deduced that entrepreneurial motivation and academic burnout have indirectly a correlation of negative sign. This tendency is also corroborated by the correlation between the desired career choice and social context, which demonstrates that the more the social context is supportive, in contrast with burnout, the more the desired career choice is self-employment.

However, in order to be able to confirm with full rights this aspect, a most deepened survey should be made.

Finally, neither the fourth hypothesis can be entirely confirmed. The only thing that can be said, from available data, is that university of Roma Tre is not an entrepreneurial university and that it's not an educational organization which promotes intrapreneurship, since data demonstrate neither a deep knowledge of entrepreneurship in all its aspects nor an established culture of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.

It can't be asserted in this survey that entrepreneurial connotation of university or not, it is directly connected to academic wellbeing.

### 1.7 Implications

This research has been unable to demonstrate, through collected data, though supported by the existing literature, the direct connection between entrepreneurship and organizational wellbeing.

From these conclusions, interesting lines of research are outlined, such as the deep inquiry into the correlation of the two constructs, the focus of this research, and a deeper analysis about the connection between entrepreneurship and organizational wellbeing. Moreover, a series of suggestions are indicated, related to the context of university of Roma Tre; these are aimed to the creation and the reinforcement of its entrepreneurial culture and, as a consequence, of no workers students' entrepreneurial motivations, as well as to the activation of a major support to students for the creation of a supportive social context.

A culture of support to intrapreneurship should be created at organizational level, by creating a safe environment in which recognize and evaluate intrapreneurial activities, incentivize creative and innovative ideas and reward excellences. An attitude of tolerance towards changes and mistakes should be developed too.

It should be promoted also the recognition and the development of autonomous activities within university, activities made by the actors involved whose potentialities can be recognized and rewarded. Moreover, knowledge which is produced should be transmitted and used as an input for social and economic progress of surrounding society.

As follows, by results related to the first hypothesis, entrepreneurial culture should be established and reinforced, above all, in order to increase entrepreneurial motivation even among stu-

dents who study only, even more so as the entrepreneurial culture transmitted by family is not very strong. Even if academic burnout reveals to be not elevated, data have revealed the presence of a moderate level of nervousness among students. It follows that also university has to activate itself in order to create a supportive context which could help the already present social network created by students. This is important to avoid that this state of nervousness could turn into a real state of exhaustion, that could lead to academic burnout.

It would be interesting even try to conduct the research during a different period of the academic year, to prove whether the administering period influences or not the levels of academic burnout.

Another interesting aspect emerging from this survey is the key role of resilience in the growth of entrepreneurial motivation and in the reduction of academic burnout. A deeper research on this aspect should be made and some initiatives useful to strengthen it should be put in action within university of Roma Tre, in order to help students to develop a strong entrepreneurial motivation and to be able to face burnout.

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