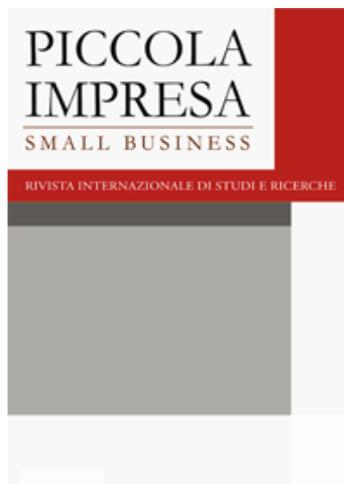


# **Piccola Impresa/Small Business**

## **Call for papers**

### **“How to develop entrepreneurial skills? The role of education”**



#### **Guest editors**

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As Fayolle (2006) stated some years ago, ““Can entrepreneurship be taught?” is no longer a relevant question”, and the affirmative answer to this question is now widely shared by scholars and practitioners. Evidence of this is the growing interest in entrepreneurship education (EE), and the high number of courses, programs and initiatives that have been spreading in recent years. The underlying assumption of these programs is the belief that not only *can* entrepreneurship be taught, but it *should* be taught, as EE is deemed beneficial to promote participants’ entrepreneurial skills and encourage the creation of new ventures, which in turn foster job creation and economic growth and development (Greene & Saridakis, 2008; Neck and Greene, 2011; Hahn et al. 2017; Moira et al., 2019). Benefits ascribed to EE relate not only to training people “to become entrepreneur”, but also helping them to develop personal skills and talents and “to become more enterprising” (Fayolle, 2006).

In recent years, EE has also emerged as a thriving research area, which has prompted a number of publications (Aparicio et al., 2019). Scientific journals dedicated to EE have also been created and several entrepreneurship journals have published special issues on EE.

Despite this proliferation of EE studies and programs, EE effectiveness has not been scientifically proven and to date investigations on this topic have produced conflicting results (Nabi et al. 2017; Hahn et al., 2020). Some of them have suggested positive effects of EE on entrepreneurial skills (Tkachev & Kolvereid, 1999; Fayolle et al., 2006; Ripa et al., 2020) while other have shown no impact (Franco et al., 2010), mixed (Karlsson & Moberg, 2013) or even negative effects (Oosterbeek et al., 2010). Some scholars have also tried to explain reasons behind these inconsistent results and some have criticized the adoption of not strictly rigorous methodological and statistical approaches and identified some weaknesses (e.g., lack of longitudinal analyses or control groups) (von Graevenitz et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2013; Rideout & Gray, 2013; Bae et al., 2014; Nabi et al. 2017).

The time horizon used to measure EE effectiveness has also been discussed. Nabi et al. (2017) note that studies on this topic have mainly considered participants’ entrepreneurial attitude and intention. However, they question the relevance of short-term and subjective indicators while arguing that the impact of EE should be measured in the long run by measuring the actual creation of new ventures and their performance.

Other scholars have questioned the impact of the pedagogical approach adopted in EE programs. In this regard, a general consensus exists that active and experiential approaches are more effective than theoretical approaches in developing entrepreneurial intention and skills (Walter & Dohse, 2012; Fayolle, 2013; Karlsson & Moberg, 2013; Cesaroni & Sentuti, 2014; Lange et al., 2014; Salvato et al., 2015). However, these teaching methods have been often adopted without a clear

theoretical foundation and methodological rigour, so that it is difficult to assess their actual effectiveness, whether they concern encouraging the creation of new businesses or helping attendees to become entrepreneurial individuals.

While several analyses have investigated the most effective teaching approach to promote participants' entrepreneurship, few have explored how participants' characteristics can influence the outcomes of EE programs. Fayolle & Gailly (2015) have found that EE programs are more effective when students' previous entrepreneurial exposure has been weak or inexistent. More recently Hahn et al. (2020) have shown that the characteristics of students' exposure to an enterprising family and the type of EE (elective vs. compulsory) are two complementary boundary conditions that must be taken into account when evaluating the outcomes of EE.

Finally, few studies exist on the role of educators in promoting EE and increasing its effectiveness. Some scholars have pointed out that to make EE effective, teachers' perceptions of EE should be addressed by providing them with knowledge and tools to embrace entrepreneurial skills and thinking in their courses (Teerijoki & Murdock, 2014). However, few studies have shown how to increase teachers' perception of EE. Moreover, some scholars have recognized that teachers' creativity (Wibowo & Saptano, 2018) and their entrepreneurial experience (Diegoli & Gutierrez, 2018) may positively affect EE. However, other teachers' influential characteristics and skills have not yet been properly investigated. The role of educators "as arbiters of entrepreneurship education" remains a relevant gap in EE research, especially concerning classroom dynamics and students' emotional reactions to EE (Jones & Underwood, 2017).

In conclusion, research on EE and factors that can affect its effectiveness is still ongoing and there is room for further investigation on these topics.

This Special Issue aims to contribute to advancing research on EE effectiveness. We are seeking **conceptual** (including meta-analyses, critical literature reviews, or "state-of-the-art" articles) and/or **empirical** (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods) contributions. Authors are also encouraged to propose different and **novel theoretical** and **methodological approaches** for advancing knowledge on EE.

Contributions may address, but not limited to, the following **questions/topics**:

- Which are innovative and effective methods and approaches in EE?
- What skills and knowledge should educators have to be effective in teaching EE?
- What is the role of emotions in EE?
- How can the effectiveness of EE be evaluated? Which time horizon should be considered?
- Which factors may affect, as mediators or moderators, the effectiveness of EE?
- How can EE ability to "nurture personal development" (EU definition) be assessed?

- Can new and digital technologies affect EE effectiveness?
- What is today the role of university in EE? And the role of schools?
- Is EE only for students? Or should other target groups also be involved in EE programs?
- Has the Covid-19 pandemic affected EE initiatives?

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## **Timeline and submission information**

### **Deadlines**

- Submission of full papers: April 30, 2021
- Notification of acceptance/rejection/revision: July 30, 2021
- Deadline to submit revised version: October 30, 2021
- Notification of final acceptance/rejection: November 30, 2021

All articles will be subject to the standard double-blind review process. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in **early 2022**.

Full papers should be submitted through the online platform <http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/>. The platform can be browsed also in English by using the button “selection language” on the top right side of the home page. Authors will be first requested to fill in the section “Registrazione/registration”; then, they will need to click on “Nuova Proposta/New proposal” in the section “Cruscotto/Dashboard” to upload the files related to their submission. All the papers need to strictly adhere to the specific guidelines of the journal that can be found at this link: <http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/index.php/piccola/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>. The guidelines can be also browsed in English by using the button “selection language” on the top right side of the webpage.

### **About the journal**

Piccola Impresa/ Small Business Journal aims to contribute to the study and diffusion of knowledge on small-sized entrepreneurial firms. It is an academic journal with international vocation, dedicated specifically to the investigation and theoretical reflection on the administration and management of small businesses, their role in the economy, as well as the policies and regulations they face.