

Diversity in entrepreneurship

Introduction: role of diversity in communities

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Diversity comes in many shapes and forms and is a cornerstone of entrepreneurship research. Most studies on diversity have tended to focus on ethnic and gender areas whilst neglecting other areas of inquiry. The goal of this special journal issue is to take a broad perspective of diversity, thereby incorporating other areas such as Indigenous, religious and minorities. This enables a holistic understanding of diversity in entrepreneurship to emerge. Some under-represented groups in society have become powerful entrepreneurs owing to their diversity. This has meant some minority groups are no longer considered minorities but rather a sub-segment of society. These changes are evident in entrepreneurship studies with sub-disciplines such as women's and ethnic entrepreneurship gaining popularity in the literature. Thus, what is considered diverse in terms of characteristics is determined by societal perceptions (Anderson *et al.*, 2006). In addition, there are trends in research in terms of popular topics that have meant some minority groups have more research focused on them than others. Changing demographic trends such as the ageing population have meant that entrepreneurship studies have had to refocus their attention on these segments of society. Previously there was an abundance of research on young entrepreneurs, but this has altered with the realization age might not have as a big impact on entrepreneurship as previously thought. Moreover, the diversity in minority communities needs to be further analysed (Dana *et al.*, 2008). For example, entrepreneurs with a disability can be classified as one segment but can also be examined in terms of gender and location. This means that a broad categorization of diversity needs to be further discussed in terms of sub-segments.

The globalization of the economy has meant increased dissemination of knowledge about diversity in entrepreneurship. However, at the same time, there are hidden parts of society not considered as attractive research streams. This is evident with social entrepreneurship being a popular topic but within this stream of research there is a lack of consideration for diverse groups that are harder to research. For example, people with disabilities or medical issues are difficult to research owing to ethical constraints. This has limited our understanding of how health conditions help or hinder entrepreneurship. Slowly more entrepreneurship researchers are starting to concentrate on this area but it is still under represented in mainstream entrepreneurship research. Specific health issues such as attention deficit disorder and psychological issues have been targeted as interesting areas for entrepreneurship research because of their link with some famous entrepreneurs (Wiklund *et al.*, 2016). However, other health ailments such as epilepsy and its effect on entrepreneurship have not been studied in detail. Moreover, recent research on challenge-based entrepreneurs identifies diversity but takes a broad approach (Miller and Le-Breton-Miller, 2017).

Diversity to some has meant gender, religious and ethnic orientation, but with increased representation of these diverse groups in the research, it is now more important to look at what has not yet been researched (Saxena and Pandya, 2018). There has been research on sexual orientation of entrepreneurs, which previously was under researched (Galloway, 2012). This has coincided with a societal trend towards gender being a fluid concept and based on environmental context (Ratten and Dana, 2017). There has been a tendency too with diverse groups of society to have high levels of social capital. Thus, the businesses they develop are helped by the reciprocity and sense of solidarity in their



communities (Ratten and Welpel, 2011). The bonding amongst minority groups has enabled them to distinguish their businesses as being unique. This is similar to groups of people who live in a certain way based on specific beliefs.

Overview of articles

This special journal issue comprises eleven articles all focused on the topic of diversity in entrepreneurship. The first article titled “Beyond words and rhetoric-small voluntary organizations and effective refugee integration in the communities” by Dieu Hack-Polay and Paul Agu Igwe focuses on refugee entrepreneurship. Refugees include different diverse communities that are often necessity entrepreneurs. The second article titled “Indigenous business success: a hybrid perspective” by Ruth Omonigbo Mrabure focuses on Indigenous entrepreneurs. There are many different types of cultures represented by Indigenous entrepreneurs that make them an interesting community group to study. The third article titled “Long and winding road? Perceptions of EWDS about the barriers and supporting factors in starting and running their businesses” by Sara Csillag, Zsuzsanna Gyori and Carmen Svastics examines another diverse entrepreneurship group. The fourth article titled “Encouraging the subsistence artisan entrepreneurship in handicraft and creative contexts” by Jéssica Ferreira, Bruno Miguel Sousa and Francisco Gonçalves focuses on the diversity evident in artist groups. The fifth article titled “Mapping of scientific coverage on education for entrepreneurship in higher education” by Amador Durán-Sánchez, María de la Cruz Del Río-Rama, José Álvarez-García and Diego Fernando García-Vélez discusses diversity within an education setting. The sixth article titled “Artistic orientation, financial literacy and entrepreneurial performance” by Boyke Rudy Purnomo examines the way artistic orientation affects entrepreneurship. The seventh article titled “The potential of South Africa’s boers: Dutch immigrant farmer to modern day Afrikaner entrepreneur” by Warren Lloyd focuses on understanding new market contexts and the role of diversity. The eighth article titled “Impact assessment of funding on technology acquisition by small businesses: a case study of hair salons in a South African municipality” by Nnamdi O. Madichie, Nosiphiwe Mpiti and Patient Rambe examines small businesses through a diversity perspective. The ninth article titled “Recommendations for under-represented entrepreneurship” by Saurav Pathak suggests a number of research avenues for diversity and minority entrepreneurship. The tenth article titled “Older entrepreneurship: a literature review and research agenda” by Vanessa Ratten focuses on a neglected demographic area of entrepreneurship studies. The eleventh article titled “Educational immigrants: evidence from Chinese young entrepreneurs in the UK” by Wei Chen, Kayhan Tajeddini, Vanessa Ratten and Saloomeh Tabari examines young entrepreneurs and their impact on diversity entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

This special issue is important in further strengthening the field of diversity within entrepreneurship research. The author thanks the Editors Professor Robert Anderson and Professor Leo-Paul Dana for giving the opportunity to guest edit this special journal issue. Communities take many different shapes and forms but what is common to them is a sense of mutual understanding. Diversity is an ambiguous concept that needs to be contextualized based on the environment. This special journal issue with its emphasis on diversity in entrepreneurship will pave the way for more studies on this topic.

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