Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

HERBAL PRODUCT INNOVATION AS AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: THE HPI-ELF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hadhifah Fadhlina Ismail[1*]
Suraya Husin[2]
Wan Nor Hazimah Wan Azib [3]
Hamnah Che Hamzah [4]
Rosfatihah Che Mat [5]
Nur Haslina Ramli [6]
Nur Azureen Abd Hadi[7]

[1,2,3,4,5,6,7] Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan, Kampus Machang, 18500 Machang, Kelantan, Malaysia
E-mails: 1: fadhlina240@uitm.edu.my; 2: surayahusin@uitm.edu.my; 3: wanno358@uitm.edu.my; 4: hamnah@uitm.edu.my; 5: rosfa407@uitm.edu.my; 6: haslina581@uitm.edu.my; 7: azureen@uitm.edu.my
*Corresponding author: fadhlina240@uitm.edu.my

Article history
Received date : 7-9-2026
Revised date : 8-9-2026
Accepted date : 20-10-2026
Published date : 28-10-2026

To cite this document:
Ismail, H. F., Husin, S., Wan Azib, W. N. H., Che Hamzah, H., Che Mat, R., Ramli, N. H., & Abd Hadi, N. A. (2026). Herbal product innovation as an experiential learning approach in entrepreneurship education: The HPI-ELF conceptual framework. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB),* 11 (69), 402-410.

Abstract: *Entrepreneurship education requires more than the transmission of conceptual knowledge. Students need opportunities to engage with real-world contexts, identify opportunities, develop ideas, make decisions and reflect on the outcomes of their actions. This conceptual paper proposes the Herbal Product Innovation Experiential Learning Framework (HPI-ELF), which uses locally available herbal resources as a context for entrepreneurial learning and value creation. Grounded in experiential learning theory and informed by entrepreneurship education literature, HPI-ELF comprises six interrelated stages: contextual resource exploration; opportunity and customer-need recognition; herbal product ideation; collaborative product concept development; entrepreneurial pitching and feedback; and reflection and learning transfer. The framework is iterative, allowing students to revisit and refine earlier decisions through feedback, reflection and new information. Through this process, HPI-ELF is proposed to facilitate five interrelated competencies: creativity, teamwork, entrepreneurial thinking, communication and entrepreneurial confidence. The framework contributes to entrepreneurship education by integrating contextual resources, product innovation activities and experiential learning within a structured learning process. Although developed for herbal product innovation, the framework may be adapted to other resource-based entrepreneurship contexts. Future empirical research should examine its applicability and evaluate its influence on students' entrepreneurial learning and competency development.*

Keywords: *experiential learning; entrepreneurship education; herbal product innovation; entrepreneurial competencies; entrepreneurial pitching; contextualised learning*

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

Introduction

Knowing how ventures are created is not the same as learning to think and act entrepreneurially. This distinction has encouraged entrepreneurship education to move beyond the transmission of venture-creation knowledge and towards activities in which students apply ideas, make decisions and reflect on what happens. Practice-based perspectives place action at the centre of learning, and recent reviews confirm the growing use of experiential approaches to develop entrepreneurial skills and competencies (Neck & Greene, 2011; Motta & Galina, 2023). Broader reviews likewise show a shift towards experience-based pedagogy while cautioning that educational outcomes depend on programme design and assessment (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020; Nabi et al., 2017).

Experiential learning offers a useful explanation of how such activities become learning rather than simply classroom tasks. Kolb (1984) describes learning as the transformation of experience through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Applied to entrepreneurship education, this cycle allows students to act on an idea, examine the outcome, connect that experience with relevant concepts and then try a better-informed course of action (Bell & Bell, 2020).

Product innovation creates a particularly useful setting for this process because it requires students to make several entrepreneurial judgements at once. Turning a resource into a plausible market offering involves questions about the customer, product function, differentiation, feasibility and value. Yet an inventive product is not necessarily an entrepreneurial opportunity. Students must first determine whether the idea addresses a meaningful need and for whom that need matters (White & Hertz, 2022; Tynan, 2023).

Herbal resources make these decisions tangible. They let students to start with materials and knowledge that may already be familiar in their local setting, then reconsider them through the lenses of customer need and value creation. The purpose is educational, not therapeutic: the activity does not establish product efficacy or produce a commercially validated formulation. Herbal resources instead provide a concrete stimulus for inquiry, creative recombination and entrepreneurial judgement.

Against this background, the paper proposes the Herbal Product Innovation Experiential Learning Framework (HPI-ELF). It integrates resource exploration, opportunity recognition, ideation, collaborative concept development, pitching, feedback and reflection into one learning process. The paper addresses the following question: How can herbal-based product innovation and entrepreneurial pitching be integrated as an experiential approach that supports the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies?

Literature Review

Experiential Learning in Entrepreneurship Education

Experiential approaches are commonly presented as an alternative or complement to didactic teaching, but the literature offers more than a general call for learning by doing. Neck and Greene (2011) frame entrepreneurship as a method that students must practise, whereas Bell and Bell (2020) show why those practices need to be anchored in educational theory. Lackéus (2020) demonstrates that experiential approaches can produce different learning effects depending on how students engage with value creation, while Motta and Galina's (2023) systematic review further demonstrates that experiential learning has become an important

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

route through which students encounter entrepreneurship in action. Taken together, these studies suggest that activity alone is insufficient; its educational value depends on how experience is structured and interpreted.

For this reason, HPI-ELF does not treat experiential learning as a single classroom technique. It serves as the mechanism that links activity to learning. Students encounter an entrepreneurial situation, consider the outcome, revise their understanding and use that revised understanding in a subsequent decision (Kolb, 1984).

Product Innovation and Opportunity Recognition

Innovation can connect entrepreneurship concepts with entrepreneurial action, but only when students relate an idea to a customer need and a plausible form of value. This is where many student projects become vulnerable: an interesting product may be developed before the underlying opportunity has been examined. White and Hertz (2022) identify opportunity recognition as both fundamental and difficult to teach, while Tynan (2023) shows how creative pedagogy can help students see problems and possibilities differently. Creativity and opportunity recognition are therefore related, but they are not interchangeable.

HPI-ELF responds to this distinction by placing customer-need and opportunity recognition before final product concept development. The guiding question changes from 'What can we make?' to the more demanding questions, 'Whose problem are we addressing, and what value could we create?'

Herbal-Based Product Innovation as a Contextualised Learning Platform

Locally meaningful resources can give entrepreneurial learning a concrete point of departure. In HPI-ELF, herbal materials and the knowledge associated with them provide that point of departure, but they are not treated as opportunities in themselves. An entrepreneurial opportunity begins to take shape only when students connect the resource with a customer problem, a creative response and a credible source of value.

This distinction gives the framework a clear context without confining it to herbal products. The same learning logic could be applied to agricultural commodities, food innovation, natural resources, cultural products or other materials that carry local relevance.

Collaborative Product Development and Teamwork

Developing an entrepreneurial concept with others requires more than dividing a task. Students must negotiate priorities, coordinate contributions, manage disagreement and make decisions under uncertainty. Warhuus et al. (2021) show that team processes and team formation influence how entrepreneurship students respond to uncertainty and stakeholder feedback. Evidence from experiential new-venture courses similarly links teamwork competencies with both learning and performance (Pazos et al., 2022).

Collaborative concept development therefore has a dual role in HPI-ELF. It moves the product idea forward while also creating the conditions in which students learn to combine perspectives, distribute responsibility, resolve differences and defend a shared value proposition.

Entrepreneurial Pitching as a Learning Experience

A pitch requires students to make the logic of an idea visible. They must identify the problem, explain the proposed solution, define the intended customer and communicate why the concept

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

may create value. This is not merely a presentation exercise. The ability to articulate value and engage stakeholders is increasingly recognised as an entrepreneurial capability in higher education (Kuchel & Rowland, 2026).

Accordingly, HPI-ELF places pitching within the learning process rather than at its end. Questions from an audience can uncover weak assumptions or missing evidence. Feedback then becomes a new experience that students interpret and use to revise either the concept or the way it is communicated. Pitching is thus part of a develop-communicate-feedback-reflect-refine loop.

Entrepreneurial Competencies

The framework focuses on five connected outcomes: creativity, teamwork, entrepreneurial thinking, communication and entrepreneurial confidence. Previous entrepreneurship education interventions have been associated with creativity, opportunity identification and entrepreneurial mindset (Lindberg et al., 2017). Experiential approaches have also been examined in relation to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and opportunity recognition (Abd Rahim et al., 2022; Otache et al., 2024). A competency-based perspective also supports treating entrepreneurship education as the development of related capabilities rather than the acquisition of isolated knowledge (Morris et al., 2013). These outcomes are considered together in HPI-ELF because students rarely draw on only one competency while developing and defending an idea.

The term 'entrepreneurial confidence' is used here as an accessible pedagogical outcome. It is conceptually related to entrepreneurial self-efficacy, but the two should not be treated as equivalent. Determining how this outcome should be defined and measured is therefore an important task for future empirical research.

Proposed Herbal Product Innovation Experiential Learning Framework (HPI-ELF)

Overview of the Framework

HPI-ELF is organised around six connected stages that turn contextual resources into entrepreneurial learning experiences. The sequence provides structure, but it is not a fixed pipeline. Feedback, reflection and new information may prompt students to revisit an earlier assumption, redefine the opportunity or reshape the product concept.

Contextual Resource Exploration

Students investigate herbal resources, their existing uses, relevant local knowledge and available market offerings. The aim is to move beyond familiarity and examine the resource through an entrepreneurial opportunity lens.

Opportunity and Customer-Need Recognition

Before deciding what to develop, students identify a customer problem, an unmet need or a possible opportunity. Introducing this market-oriented reasoning early reduces the risk of building a concept around the resource alone.

Herbal Product Ideation

Students generate several possible responses by combining what they know about the resource with observations about customers and markets. Divergent thinking opens up alternatives; convergent thinking helps them select an idea worth developing further.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

Collaborative Product Concept Development

Teams turn the selected idea into a more coherent concept. Their decisions address the intended customer, value proposition, differentiation, feasibility, positioning and likely market relevance.

Entrepreneurial Pitching and Feedback

Students present the concept's proposed value and respond to questions from peers, lecturers, judges or other stakeholders. The feedback is treated as evidence for further learning, not simply as a judgement attached to a final presentation.

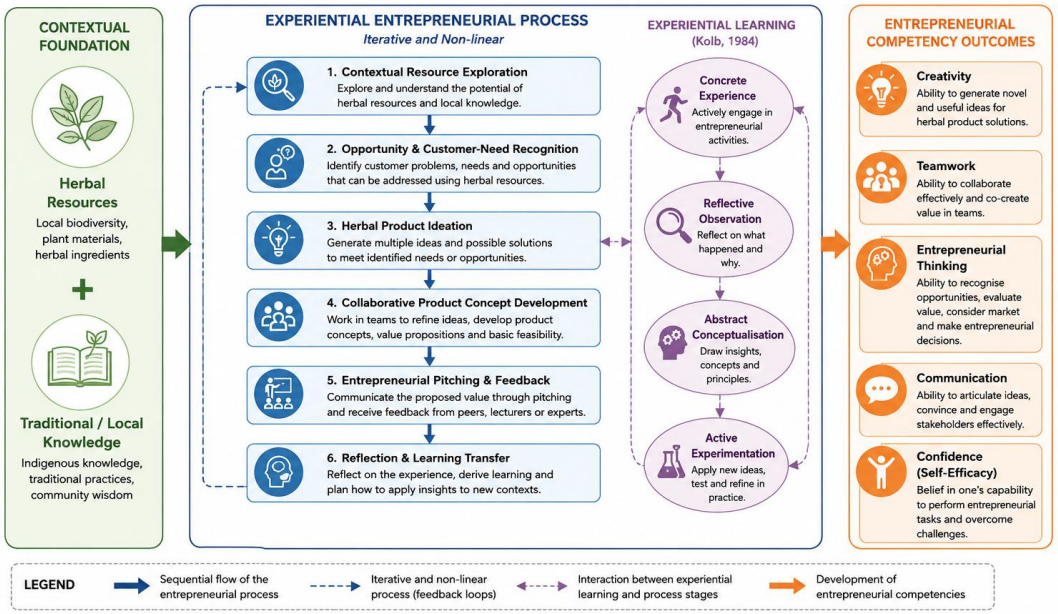
Reflection and Learning Transfer

Students examine the choices they made, the assumptions they held, the feedback they received and the difficulties they encountered. Reflection is used to carry insights from the immediate herbal-product task into later entrepreneurial situations.

Experiential Learning Mechanism Underlying HPI-ELF

Kolb's (1984) cycle runs through HPI-ELF rather than corresponding neatly to one stage at a time. Exploration, ideation, teamwork and pitching generate concrete experiences. Students engage in reflective observation when they reconsider feedback and outcomes, and in abstract conceptualisation when they connect those experiences with ideas such as customer value, feasibility and differentiation. Active experimentation follows when they revise a product idea, value proposition or pitching strategy. Because revision can occur more than once, the cycle may repeat throughout the project.

Figure 1. The Herbal Product Innovation Experiential Learning Framework (HPI-ELF)



Note. HPI-ELF integrates contextual resources, structured entrepreneurial activities and experiential learning mechanisms to facilitate entrepreneurial competency development.

Source: Conceptualised by the authors based on Kolb (1984) and entrepreneurship education literature.

Figure 1: Herbal Product Innovation Experiential Learning Framework (HPI-ELF)
Source: Authors' conceptual framework.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

Proposed Entrepreneurial Competency Outcomes

The learning journey is expected to create opportunities for creativity, teamwork, entrepreneurial thinking, communication and entrepreneurial confidence to develop together. These outcomes overlap in practice. For example, a convincing pitch depends on entrepreneurial thinking to identify value, communication to explain that value and sufficient confidence to respond to questions. Likewise, collaborative innovation requires students to combine creative thinking with negotiation and collective decision-making.

Conceptual Propositions

P1. Participation in contextualised herbal-product opportunity exploration and ideation provides experiential learning opportunities that support the development of students' creativity.
P2. Collaborative development of herbal-product concepts provides experiential learning opportunities that support the development of students' teamwork competency.
P3. Engaging students in customer-need recognition, opportunity evaluation, value-proposition development and market-oriented decision-making provides experiential learning opportunities that support the development of entrepreneurial thinking.
P4. Entrepreneurial pitching and the articulation and defence of product value propositions provide experiential learning opportunities that support the development of communication competency.
P5. Progressive engagement in product innovation, entrepreneurial decision-making, pitching and feedback provides mastery-oriented learning experiences that may strengthen entrepreneurial confidence.

Discussion

Reframing Product Innovation as an Entrepreneurial Learning Process

The main contribution of HPI-ELF is a change in emphasis: student product innovation is treated as a learning process rather than primarily as an output. What matters educationally is not only the product concept that emerges, but also the choices, conversations and reflections through which students move from a familiar resource to a possible source of customer value. This emphasis is consistent with practice-based and experiential perspectives that place doing, applying and reflecting alongside conceptual knowledge (Neck & Greene, 2011; Motta & Galina, 2023).

Connecting Contextual Resources with Opportunity Recognition

A familiar or abundant resource does not automatically constitute an entrepreneurial opportunity. HPI-ELF makes that boundary explicit. Herbal materials become educationally valuable when students investigate who may need a solution, what problem is involved and how the resource might contribute to a meaningful value proposition. By separating the resource from the opportunity, the framework gives greater attention to a capability that remains difficult but central in entrepreneurship education (White & Hertz, 2022).

Integrating Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Experiential Learning

Three elements perform different but complementary roles in the framework. Product innovation supplies the activity, entrepreneurship supplies the value-creation logic, and experiential learning explains how students learn through the activity. Their integration creates a structured route from resource exploration to opportunity recognition, ideation, collaborative

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

development, pitching and reflection, without removing the iteration that is central to experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Bell & Bell, 2020).

Entrepreneurial Pitching as a Learning Mechanism

Treating the pitch only as a graded endpoint would overlook much of its educational value. To pitch an idea, students must bring customer, product and market reasoning into a coherent account. Questions from an audience can then reveal unsupported assumptions and prompt further thought. In this way, communication is practised within entrepreneurial action rather than separated from it as a generic presentation skill (Kuchel & Rowland, 2026).

Integrated Entrepreneurial Competency Development

The five proposed outcomes are not assigned to isolated exercises. They are expected to emerge through repeated participation across the learning journey. Research on team-based entrepreneurship education shows that teamwork, uncertainty and feedback influence one another (Warhuus et al., 2021), while other studies associate active entrepreneurship education with creativity, opportunity identification and self-efficacy-related outcomes (Lindberg et al., 2017; Otache et al., 2024). HPI-ELF places these competencies within the same contextualised process while leaving their precise relationships open to empirical examination.

Theoretical Contribution

HPI-ELF develops the broad idea of learning by doing into a more explicit explanatory sequence. It identifies the work students undertake, the way experience is converted into further action and the competencies that may be supported. The theoretical argument is that contextual resources, when combined with structured entrepreneurial activities and purposeful reflection, can create conditions for entrepreneurial competency development. This closer connection between educational theory and pedagogical design responds to a continuing concern in experiential entrepreneurship education (Bell & Bell, 2020).

Practical Implications for Entrepreneurship Educators

For educators, the framework offers several practical design principles. A project can begin with a resource that students recognise, but students should still investigate the customer problem before finalising a product. They also need permission to revise an idea after receiving feedback. Pitching can serve simultaneously as assessment and learning, provided that reflection is deliberately built into the process. These principles make it possible to design an accessible product-innovation project without assuming that every classroom concept must become market-ready.

Transferability Beyond Herbal-Product Education

Herbal products provide the initial setting for HPI-ELF, not its limit. The same architecture could guide projects involving agricultural produce, food innovation, natural resources, cultural products or sustainability challenges. Transferability lies in the sequence of entrepreneurial inquiry and reflection; the specific resource gives that sequence local meaning.

Future Empirical Validation

Because HPI-ELF is conceptual, its propositions should be treated as claims to be examined rather than findings. Quantitative studies could test associations between participation and the five proposed competencies, while qualitative research could explain how and when learning occurs. Mixed-method designs may be especially useful for relating measured change to students' experiences. Future work should also consider conditions that may alter the process,

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

including prior entrepreneurial experience, team composition, facilitation, project duration and contact with external stakeholders.

Conclusion

This paper proposed HPI-ELF as a contextualised way of bringing herbal-product innovation, entrepreneurial reasoning, collaboration, pitching and reflection into entrepreneurship education. Its six stages provide a clear learning structure while allowing students to return to earlier decisions as their understanding develops. The framework argues that creativity, teamwork, entrepreneurial thinking, communication and entrepreneurial confidence may be supported not by a single activity, but through their interaction across the project. Its conceptual contribution is therefore the connection it makes between a locally meaningful resource, a structured entrepreneurial process and an explicit experiential learning mechanism. The herbal setting gives the framework specificity, while the underlying learning architecture offers scope for adaptation to other resource-based contexts. These claims now require empirical testing and refinement. Ultimately, the educational value of product innovation lies not only in what students create, but also in how they learn to turn resources, problems and ideas into potential entrepreneurial value.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the institutional and collegial support provided by Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan in the development of this conceptual paper.

References

Abd Rahim, N., Mohamed, Z., Tasir, Z., & Shariff, S. A. (2022). Impact of experiential learning and case study immersion on the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and opportunity recognition among engineering students. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 22(11), 130-145. https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v22i11.5424

Bell, R., & Bell, H. (2020). Applying educational theory to develop a framework to support the delivery of experiential entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 27(6), 987-1004. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-01-2020-0012

Hägg, G., & Gabrielsson, J. (2020). A systematic literature review of the evolution of pedagogy in entrepreneurial education research. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 26(5), 829–861. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-04-2018-0272

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.

Kuchel, L., & Rowland, S. (2026). Communication as an entrepreneurial capability in STEM higher education: Theory and pedagogical practice. *Research in Science Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-026-10340-x

Lackéus, M. (2020). Comparing the impact of three different experiential approaches to entrepreneurship in education. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 26(5), 937–971. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-04-2018-0236

Lindberg, E., Bohman, H., & Hultén, P. (2017). Methods to enhance students' entrepreneurial mindset: A Swedish example. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 41(5), 450-466. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-10-2016-0078

Morris, M. H., Webb, J. W., Fu, J., & Singhal, S. (2013). A competency-based perspective on entrepreneurship education: Conceptual and empirical insights. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51(3), 352–369. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12023

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 69 Special Issue [October, 2026] pp. 402-410
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.116931

Motta, V. F., & Galina, S. V. R. (2023). Experiential learning in entrepreneurship education: A systematic literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 121, 103919. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103919

Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N., & Walmsley, A. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2), 277–299. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0026

Neck, H. M., & Greene, P. G. (2011). Entrepreneurship education: Known worlds and new frontiers. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 49(1), 55-70. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2010.00314.x

Otache, I., Edopkolor, J. E., Sani, I. A., & Umar, K. (2024). Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions: Do entrepreneurial self-efficacy, alertness and opportunity recognition matter? *The International Journal of Management Education*, 22(1), 100917. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2023.100917

Pazos, P., Pérez-López, M. C., & González-López, M. J. (2022). Examining teamwork competencies and team performance in experiential entrepreneurship education: Emergent intragroup conflict as a learning triggering event. *Education + Training*, 64(4), 461–475. https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-06-2021-0208

Tynan, M. (2023). The creative catalyst: Developing student competency in opportunity recognition. *Industry and Higher Education*, 37(4), 496–511. https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222221138744

Warhuus, J. P., Günzel-Jensen, F., Robinson, S., & Neergaard, H. (2021). Teaming up in entrepreneurship education: Does the team formation mode matter? *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 27(8), 1913-1935. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-10-2020-0701

White, R. J., & Hertz, G. T. (2022). Teaching opportunity recognition: Meeting the challenges of message, method and measurement. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 31(2_suppl), S52–S78. https://doi.org/10.1177/09713557221107436

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0