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Promoting a Contemporary Image of Entrepreneurial Careers

A Course Concept to Address Gender Role Stereotypes Through Entrepreneurship Education

Sundermeier & Steenblock (2024), Journal of Management Education

Please name one famous entrepreneur!

Common answers in our entrepreneurship classes:

Perceived as being...

- assertive
- aggressive
- ambitious

Why is this problematic?

Masculine ideals of successful entrepreneurs reinforce gender role stereotypes

(Gupta et al., 2009; Ahl, 2006; Meyer et al., 2017) **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** \neq FEMINITITY

This has implications for:

 Who identifies with entrepreneurial careers

(Liñán et al., 2021; Rocha & van Praag, 2020; Thébaud, 2010)

 Who receives resources needed to start new ventures

(Balachandra et al., 2019; Brush et al., 2019; Kanze et al., 2018)

How can entrepreneurship educators challenge gender role stereotypes and inspire diverse participants for an entrepreneurial career?

Study context: The "WoMenventures" Course

- Interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship Summer School at Freie Universität Berlin: 122 participants from Berlin universities (2017–today)
- Learning outcomes were evaluated qualitatively during, immediately after, and one year post-course

WoMenventures course

Pedagogical Nudges in the

Visualizations of entrepreneurial ideals

Informal discussions and field trips with women

entrepreneurs

Androgynous representation of entrepreneurial personality

One-on-one coaching sessions with instructors as safe spaces

Reflection on hiring practices and personal responsibility as (future)

Introduction of university's



Reflection on gender role stereotypes through diary writing

entrepreneurs



Off-campus summer school location for equal starting conditions



We use Transformational Learning Theory and the Power of Nudging

Pedagogical Nudges

 simple, cost-effective interventions guide cognitive processes

(Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; Weijers et al., 2021)

trigger irritation of automatic thought and behavior

Transformed perspective

 about who and what is involved in entrepreneurship

(Neergaard et al., 2021)

Lessons Learned

- 1) Pedagogical nudges can transform how students think, feel, and act regarding entrepreneurship.
- 2) Instead of "fixing" women, pedagogical nudges prompt reflection on whether the image of entrepreneurship and its context require change that is, fixing the system.
- 3) Small content and instructional changes inspire participants of all genders.
- 4) The positive effects on entrepreneurial career aspirations may wane over time as pedagogical nudges face "competing realities" postgraduation.

Join The Conversation!

Try applying pedagogical nudges in your own teaching and share your experiences with us!

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