**Promoting Values through Sustainable Entrepreneurial Education – An Axiological perspective**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** In this paper we argue that definitions around value creation and value capture in entrepreneurial education have, in a way, detached values from entrepreneurship definitions to be thought of as an add on. We use an axiological lens to highlight the need to bring together the different views underpinning value creation and value capture under one teaching model

**Prior work:** Emerging literature discusses the role of pedagogical practice and sustainable development in the field, but without adequate linking to creditable theoretical underpinnings to investigate purpose, application, delivery and content of entrepreneurial programmes.

**Approach:** We place the entrepreneur as a social learner who actively engages with his/her context to develop real insights of what it means to be a practicing entrepreneur.

**Results:** An axiological lens is applied to highlight a consequentialist perspective to sustainable entrepreneurial education, whereby entrepreneurs learn to consider the consequences of their enterprises in an authentic way.

**Implications:** The paper highlights the opportunity for HEI business schools to engage students in meaningful practices whereby they become responsible for the relevance and consequences of their actions.

**Value:** The paper contributes to literature by highlighting authentic learning as an appropriate pedagogical practice for sustainable entrepreneurial education, and stresses the role of this practice in developing entrepreneurs who are true to themselves as well as their societies and economies.

**Keywords:** Sustainable entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial learning, authentic learning, axiology, consequentialism, values

**Introduction**

There is a recognition that entrepreneurial education can help provide a platform to foster and promote sustainable business practice (Hall *et al*., 2010; Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010), drawing focus towards the more social and moral obligations of entrepreneurial intentions (Cohen and Winn, 2007; Dean and McMullen, 2007; Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Pacheco *et al*., 2010; York and Venkataraman, 2010). The EU 2020 strategy highlights the need to embed awareness of sustainability in entrepreneurial practice specifically in the areas of education, development and training. There is a need to stimulate the entrepreneurial mind-sets and to create a more favourable societal climate for entrepreneurial development and growth. Education, training and development have an important role to play in improving the sustainable entrepreneurial key competence. In this regard, we view sustainable entrepreneurial learning as engagement which is focused towards the need to embed awareness of sustainability in entrepreneurial practice specifically in the areas of education, development and training. We support the need to develop sustainable entrepreneurial learning by the need to stimulate entrepreneurial mind-sets that create a more favourable societal climate for developing ethical attitudes/values in entrepreneurial intentions. In the European reference framework, ‘Entrepreneurship and a sense of initiative’ is one of eight key competences for lifelong learning which citizens require for their personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in a knowledge-based society. Government agencies in the UK and EU alike have also sought to play a key role in promoting entrepreneurship recognising that education is important in raising entrepreneurial capacity. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) acknowledges the strong relationship between education and economic development; for example, the Lambert Review of Business University Collaboration (DTI, 2003) stresses the support required for university departments to undertake work that adds value to entrepreneurial practice.

Yet, questions must be directed towards how value is viewed in entrepreneurial practice, and the extent to which entrepreneurial education practices contribute to developing ethical attitudes/values in entrepreneurial intentions. In other words, how does entrepreneurial education play a role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions towards aspects of sustainability? While there is an emerging literature stream related to the role of pedagogical practice and sustainable development in the field, there is still a lack of studies which specifically focus on the perceptions and values given to aspects of sustainable education in current entrepreneurship focused programmes (Lourenco et al., 2012). In a recent special issue editorial, Fayolle et al. (2016) raises arguments describing how and why entrepreneurship research is important, and call for theoretical and methodological developments in the field. They raise questions regarding ethical challenges facing the field, and agree with Frank and Landström (2016) regarding the need for theory that draws links between research and practical relevance. As such, Fayolle et al. (2016) call for entrepreneurial education with ‘*meaningful engagement with theory and consideration of the implications for practice*’ (p. 13-14). Thus, it becomes necessary to investigate how curricula and pedagogical input relate to sustainable development to influence the attitudes and actions of entrepreneurs. In this regard, Hindle (2007) raises concerns regarding the legitimacy of entrepreneurial education as a source of true value. Fayolle (2013) and Kyro (2015) agree to this, and stress the need to embed axiological discussions in EE research in ways that view connections between the questions of ‘why’ and the questions of ‘what’ and ‘how’ in order to highlight the value of EE. As such, this calls for a broader scope in terms of how and to whom entrepreneurship is taught, and the values which are sought.

The central purpose of this paper is to explore the links between entrepreneurial learning and sustainability related content, and how that can influence our view of pedagogical practice. The developing body of literature on sustainable entrepreneurial practice contributes greatly to what we refer to as the general promise of entrepreneurial practice. In this context, entrepreneurship is no longer simply associated with the mechanics of business functionality and a measure of profit margins. To be a sustainable entrepreneur is to be clearly associated with traditional values of moral behaviours for both society and practice. Therefore, the paper adopts an axiological lens that brings forward the values embedded in EE. This axiological lens highlights authentic learning as an appropriate pedagogical practice for sustainable EE. Here, we introduce a debate that recognises the role of the authenticity in student centred learning by placing learning in EE as a practice to which learners attach an authentic meaning. By authentic, we refer to learners who are capable of articulating questions that are meaningful, and constructing knowledge that is relevant, to their personal information needs and interests, while also connecting with real-world contexts in such ways that make an impact on people and societies, and, consequently, influence the nurturing of sustainability in entrepreneurial practice.

**Situating Sustainability in entrepreneurial education**

The study of entrepreneurial education still tends to have a rather narrow view regarding what it means to live and practice as an entrepreneur in today’s business environment. Entrepreneurship scholars in the field have tended to continuously close themselves off from seeing a purposeful, yet, different set of multiplicity of views on what it means to practice as an entrepreneur, and have tended to not fully consider the theoretical development of current assumptions. This has, to a degree, hindered our ability to educate or to observe the phenomena and develop educational practices which have the capacity to offer insight and value.

In light of this, the study of entrepreneurial education has seen the development of numerous ad-hoc ideas without creditable theoretical underpinning. Entrepreneurial education needs to have a purpose and aim, but questions regarding what it is for, to whom it applies and who decides its contents raise contentious debates. The problematic nature of how we view and approach entrepreneurial education is matched by the lack of agreement on the most appropriate conceptual and theoretical foundations of the field. According to Phan (2004) entrepreneurship and scholarly activity in the field need to break away from the more traditional ideas of economies, psychology or positivist perspectives, and, instead, move towards more sociological perspectives and theories which could provide better appreciative and explanatory powers/means. A number of conceptions challenge the methods of entrepreneurial education within the wider context of learning, with some authors suggesting that theoretical insights have led to greater confusion (Winch and Gingell, 2004). If research in general is to achieve contribution or have impact, scholars need to change the questions they are asking and develop better understanding of the definitions applied and the methods and theories of dissemination in order to progress and move one’s understanding and appreciation of the area (Phan 2004; Sarasvatly, 2004). For example, moving away from the explanatory question set of what, how and why, to the critical question set which seeks to explore when, where and who, thus, attempting to reveal the dynamics of learning practices across all levels of analysis. Establishing a connection between these question sets facilitates an orientation towards that of a practice centred approach to research in entrepreneurship, which reveals both the dynamic and relational flow of action and knowledge.

This position is not unique to the entrepreneurial field of study; for some time, theoretical and methodological heterogeneity, pedagogical fragmentation and segregation have been a matter of continuous debate for scholars working in the field of entrepreneurship and organisational studies as a whole. One can observe that entrepreneurial education has too often been viewed as similar to research in the physical sciences, which is characterised by a belief on the existence of universal laws. Such insights can be regarded as new to some but to others obvious, however, our comments are consistent with the need to develop a more critical reflexive approach to entrepreneurial education and related studies (Berglund, Johannisson, & Schwartz, 2012; Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015; Hjorth, Jones, & Gartner, 2008; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2010; Rehn, Br€annback, Carsrud, & Lindahl, 2013; Sørensen, 2008; Steyaert & Hjorth, 2003, 2006; Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers, & Gartner, 2012; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson, & Essers, 2014). We hold the view that learning arises through the problems entrepreneur’s encounter as opposed to the issues, questions and problems of a discipline, but in a context of application. Progress in entrepreneurial education methods may be achieved better through a robust focus on the context of application based issues as opposed to attempts to develop an all-encompassing theory within a single positivist paradigm. Therefore, in this paper, we view the learning process as a practice in the context-of-application to the entrepreneur.

In the field of this entrepreneurial practice, a new education agenda is gaining traction in regards to sustainable development. Education for sustainable development motivates and challenges learners to promote sustainable development across different disciplines and society levels (UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2008, 2010), and is defined as ‘education that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, in Lourenco and Jayawarna, 2012). There is a growing recognition that how we educate developing entrepreneurs can have a positive impact in terms of drawing awareness to, and promoting what can be viewed as, sustainable business practice (Hall et al., 2010). Such a perspective reaches out towards the moral and ethical values of entrepreneurial practice, promoting both social and environmental aspects of practice as a future entrepreneurial innovation (Hockerts and Wustenhagen, 2010; Pacheco et al., 2010; York and Venkataraman, 2010).

This move towards sustainable development represents for the HEI business school an opportunity to engage in the growth and development of entrepreneurial education agendas, involving entrepreneurs who are mindful of the business potential of practicing in a sustainable environment, in a manner which is both positive and driven by a moral sense of self-interest. However, the dominant economic business school model of “profit maximisation” has posed a barrier to the ability of universities to embrace and deliver sustainable related entrepreneurial education programmes. Here, it can be argued that many business schools throughout the UK and Europe seek to promote the perspective of a profit-driven worldview driven by economic models of efficiency and student numbers, favouring materialism over ethical and moral values, which in turn indirectly weaken the perceptions and values of students and compromise their ethical values in terms of social responsibilities (Ghoshal, 2005; Mitroff, 2004). For example, Giacalone and Thompson (2006) suggest that students are being encouraged to view many aspects of business with monetary value and to treat everything as secondary to ultimate profit. Slater and Dixon-Fowler (2010) refer to this perspective as the “profit-first” attitude, disregarding any form of moral or social consideration towards practice. It is both apparent and inevitable that such a functionalist position will have a direct implication on the teaching of entrepreneurial practice; affecting the structure, content and delivery of entrepreneurship programmes through perceived implications of “profit first”, and promoting graduates who focus on capturing value, without equal emphasis on creating value.

Still, over the last number of years, societies have witnessed an emerging trend in business practice to recognise and acknowledge the importance of building a sustainable future, and entrepreneurs hold an important role in further supporting this agenda, through developing innovate approaches to help society change and grow (Wennekers et al., 2002). According to the 2005 United Nations World Summit, economic, social and environmental development and protection are the key pillars for a sustainable future, which can be achieved through careful consideration towards how we as a society consume, manage and innovate our natural resources (United Nations, 2005: 11–12). Similarly, the EU strategy for sustainable business practices has sought to emphasise the importance of social and ethical responsibility of firms (European Commission, 2011), pressing for the utilisation of natural resources as means for developing “greener” business practice and new innovative business models. Such movement has supported the need for curriculum to infuse aspects of what it means to be sustainable in entrepreneurial practice.

Therefore, a growing emphasis is placed on HEI Business Schools to educate the entrepreneurship student body with values that attribute to sustainable business practice (UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2008, 2010). The UK HEFCE (2005, 2008, and 2009) has set out a clear mandate for HEI to integrate education for sustainable business development as key priority in their curriculum development. Entrepreneurial pedagogical practices, which seek to promote ethical and moral values, are important for the field as they offer the potential to new venture creation, while contributing to the long term social and environmental sustainability. In fact, despite Starik et al.’s (2010) criticism that social and environmental obligations can increase the costs on enterprises at the expense of their economic and operational efficiency, Peloza (2009) highlights the positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial performance of organisations, while others like Ambec and Lanoie (2008) and Lourenco et al. (2012) argue that social and environmental considerations have a positive impact on the financial performance of businesses, and counter earlier criticisms that such concerns impose burdens. Thus, understanding the pedagogical links which can sustain and underpin sustainability related programme content and student education will help to influence and promote education programmes that seek to develop sustainable entrepreneurial practitioners.

It is here that HEI Business Schools can have a critical impact upon the promotion of ethical and social values in entrepreneurial education practice (Cotton et al., 2009; Junyent and Ciurana, 2008). While such awareness is present in main stream organisational studies literature, where the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles is recognised and indeed embedded in main stream organisational practice and reporting (Doh and Guay, 2006; Moon, 2011), in the context of the entrepreneur’s practice this is lacking and has not been integrated to full potential in entrepreneurship focused programmes. To date, the uptake of embedding sustainability in HEI entrepreneurship programmes is limited, and it is noted that there has been a lack of interest in and support for programmes that seek to embed and foster sustainability related subjects (Audebrand, 2010; Wu et al., 2010; Coopey, 2003; Cordano et al., 2003; Matten and Moon, 2004; Rohweder, 2004; Springett and Kearins, 2001; Thomas, 2005; Walck, 2009; Wheeler et al., 1999). According to Lourenco et al. (2012), a recent empirical study of 575 Business Schools accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), only 6% of these schools had some form of sustainable related subjects in their curriculum.

In light of this growing importance of sustainable entrepreneurial education, and its limited uptake in entrepreneurship programmes, it becomes necessary to look in more depth to understand the axiology of this education. This is important in order to develop a stronger theoretical grounding that highlights its value for learners and its contribution to sustainable development, particularly considering the breadth of the definition of entrepreneurship education, where the latter ‘makes establishing the legitimacy of a field or construct difficult’ ([Short et al., 2009: 162)](http://www.sciencedirect.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/science/article/pii/S0883902613000487?_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_origin=gateway&_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aeaa92ffb#bb0350) in addition to its consequences on empirical research and the definition of important variables to measure or investigate. In the following section, we shed more light on the discordant axiology of entrepreneurial education, and propose authentic learning as an appropriate pedagogy for a more explicit axiology of sustainable entrepreneurial education.

**Encouraging authentic practices in sustainable entrepreneurial education**

The developing and substantial academic interest in entrepreneurial growth and learning is not simply a passing fad, but more importantly reflects an emerging source of economic wealth and huge importance to economic growth (Fiet, 2000). However, how we educate and understand the processes of entrepreneurial learning is still to a degree in its infancy, as evidenced in current writings in the field which continue to be engaged in both methodological and conceptual debates (Busentiz, West, Shepherd, Nelson, Chandler and Zacharakis, 2003; Phan 2004; Torres, 2004).

The current pedagogical approaches to entrepreneurship highlight the immense need for further development in terms of how current educational methods and practices stimulate and enhance entrepreneurial development. This represents challenges to business schools in the form of questioning deeply rooted beliefs and epistemological issues. Such issues relate to the nature of entrepreneurship and the conceptual contradictions regarding the understanding of what entrepreneurship is, particularly in relation to the pragmatic aspects of andragogical or pedagogical approaches. The starting point for addressing this issue and building a firm foundation is the conceptual linking of entrepreneurship with an educational pedagogy which protects and enhances entrepreneurial practice.

In this context, it can be argued that the growing emphasis on sustainable development in entrepreneurial education can contribute to minimizing the confusion surrounding the definition of entrepreneurship by adding more clarity to its discordant axiology. In the first instant, it is quite evident that the ‘profit-first’ orientation in entrepreneurial education does not encourage students to think about the favourable/unfavourable consequences of their enterprises as much as it does on the characteristics they should have and the tools they should apply in order to achieve wealth. This supports a deontological axiology which focuses on ‘the ensemble of rules that are shaping a particular type of private or professional behaviour’ (Verdinas, 1998:67). Nozick (1974) criticises this axiology for preventing some actions that lead to increasing the overall welfare of a society, particularly that the focus here becomes on a duty or obligation to capture value and generate profits as essential determinants of success. Such focus is rather clear in entrepreneurship definitions as, for example, Gartner’s (1988, p.26) definition of entrepreneurship as ‘the creation of new organizations’, and Bolton and Thompson’s (2000, p.5) definition of an entrepreneur as ‘a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities’. In his internet review of entrepreneurship definitions, Perren (2003) also criticises the dominance of the view that entrepreneurs are ‘economic machines’ who aim to generate profits and create jobs to drive the economy wheel and re-invest in growth. Furthermore, by looking at literature on the entrepreneurial process and new venture creation, one can note the emphasis placed on opportunity spotting and/or creation to create the best sellable products and services that fill a market gap or address a particular customer need (e.g. Rae, 2007, 2014), or on identifying the best steps to undertake through an effectual approach by evaluating available resources to achieve goals (Sarasvathy, 2001), without equal emphasis on considering the value and consequences of the enterprise.

With this lack of a clear set of values in which the entrepreneurs’ wellbeing and existence are central reflective elements, it becomes essential to develop pedagogical methods which understand and value the need for supporting philosophical frameworks. Such frameworks will enable a better understanding of why entrepreneurs do what they do and in what ways, where a focus on practice as a means of learning becomes critical. Having this specific philosophical outlook provides the means by which entrepreneurs not only receive/gather information, but also interpret, make judgements and organise actions (Hiemstra, 1988).

With the move towards sustainable entrepreneurial development, one can argue the emphasis placed on a consequentialist axiology whereby actions are judged by the value of their consequences. This is expected to promote learners who consider the favourable/unfavourable consequences and values of their enterprises, thus, supporting morally responsible entrepreneurs. This is evident in definition of sustainable entrepreneurial education, which moves away from traditional focus on value capturing to focuses on value creation through ‘the discovery, creation, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities to create future goods and services that is consistent with sustainable development goals’ (Pacheco et al., 2010:471). Sustainable entrepreneurship reinforces economic, social and environmental outcomes, focusing on the notion that business enterprises are able to produce social value in addition to profit (Chell, 2007; Korsgaard and Anderson, 2011), thus, highlighting its difference from social entrepreneurship where the primary focus is on social needs and exploitation of opportunities for social change in order to develop social well-being (Chell, 2007).

Therefore, whilst not undermining the important role of entrepreneurship in creating wealth and driving the economy wheel, the consequentialist perspective in sustainable entrepreneurial education offers a more encompassing approach to promote sustainable development, particularly that such development in essence gives similar weighting to economic, social and environmental aspects to benefit all stakeholders (Elkington, 1999; Haugh and Talwar, 2010).

The underlying philosophy in an educational context directly determines the learning theory which in turn dictates the pedagogical practice to enhance and stimulate learning (Mayfield and Weaver, 1997). While in the social sciences there are many philosophical perspectives and schools of thought (Brubacher, 1969; Apps, 1973; Hiemstra, 1988), the main difference between these perspectives is how they view the construction of knowledge. For example, the manner in which the entrepreneur behaves and acts is driven by the way they practice and think, which in turn is informed by deeply held assumptions and beliefs. Yet, while it would be appropriate to say that values and beliefs are not static, current educational practices tend to assume that entrepreneurship can be taught, rather than having to be practiced.

In the consequentialist axiology discussed in this paper, the focus is on learner-centred pedagogical practices, where “the agent concerned with a value is in a parallel position to that of an agent concerned with some personal good” (Pettit, 1991:238), where the personal good in our case is the enterprise. Sosa (1993) also stresses the importance of the contribution of the intrinsic values of the individual to the overall outcomes. Therefore, in order to promote this axiology in sustainable entrepreneurial education, the role of learners in entrepreneurial practice need to be emphasised. This role is unlikely to be adequately addressed through common entrepreneurial education frameworks of ‘about’, ‘for’ and ‘through’ enterprise (Gibb, 1999). Rather, learning pedagogies that emphasise ‘withness’ (Klapper and Neergaard, 2012) of learners, regarding them as central players in the learning process (Blenker *et al*., 2006) become more appropriate. Here, authentic learning is proposed as an appropriate pedagogical practice for sustainable EE**.**

Authentic learning is used in reference to learning that is integrated within meaningful real-life experiences by engaging the learner with what is real, genuine and true through interactive enquiries involving asking questions, seeking answers, analysing findings and concluding (Jonassen et al., 2008). It ‘*involves exploring the world around us, asking questions identifying information resources, discovering connections, examining multiple perspectives, discussing ideas, and making informed decisions that have a real impact*’ (Callison and Lamb, 2004, p.77). Such a pedagogy is supported by core reflective techniques to encourage learners to connect with their own needs and potential (Refai and Higgins, 2017), thus, stressing the role of authenticity for the personal growth of learners who are capable of integrating thoughts, feelings, desires and ideals into practices (Greene et al., 2013). Callison and Lamb (2004) argue that authentic learners do not merely read about things in textbooks, but rather become immersed in meaningful research processes that beyond the school or even national context limits. This supports calls in EE research to engage students in inquiry processes and develop better understanding of ‘why’ entrepreneurs learn (Jones et al., 2014; Kyro; 2015). As shown in the Figure 1, employing authentic learning in entrepreneurial education for the purpose of sustainable development encourages the entrepreneur to connect with their own needs, interests, values and personal qualities, while interacting with real-world contexts in such ways that are meaningful and take into account the economic, social and environmental consequences of their future entrepreneurial practices. These learners engage in contexts and contents that are deemed accepted and relevant to them, whilst also being viewed by educators as representative of real-life experiences. Establishing these associations is the challenge that faces educators in authentic learning.

**Figure 1: Utilising authentic learning as an appropriate pedagogical practice to sustainable entrepreneurial education**



The framework in Figure 1 highlights that educating and being an entrepreneur require more insight, purpose, meaning and emotion. In other words there is more to being an entrepreneur than merely starting a business; issues related to what one is doing, why and how, as opposed to simply academic informed practice, are important. While the process of becoming an entrepreneur at times requires early stage development of business skills, being an entrepreneur requires awareness in regards to actions and practice. The current epistemological and pedagogical perspectives in the field hold a number of embedded views, where a huge impacting factor is that many scholars tend to stick with the traditional ways, or what they already know and are comfortable with, where questioning those practices can be both complex and cause painful reflections.

**Conclusion**

There is a need to stimulate the entrepreneurial mind-sets to create a more favourable societal climate for entrepreneurial development and growth ([Henry and Treanor, 2010](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/ET-03-2015-0019)). In the context of the UK higher education system, the QAA have sought the develop guidelines specifically to address sustainability in entrepreneurial education, which were designed to act as a reference point for any university in the sector for the provision and development of Entrepreneurial focused curriculum ([QAA, 2012](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/ET-03-2015-0019); HEFCE 2005). The field of entrepreneurial education has struggled with fundamental questions in regards to the development of sustainability within entrepreneurial programmes of study ([Jones and Jones, 2011](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/ET-03-2015-0019)). Given that one of the largest benefits of entrepreneurial education seems to be not the acquisition of knowledge, but rather entrepreneurial inspiration, we consider it essential to include more cases of successful sustainable entrepreneurship practices. Moreover, providing a platform for entrepreneurs committed to pursuing sustainable business models to enhance the level of entrepreneurial intention amongst their audiences. Despite this undercurrent of optimism, the inclusion of sustainability into entrepreneurial activity remains a niche topic within the entrepreneurship field, remaining a supplementary, rather than integrative aspect of entrepreneurship ([Baumann-Pauly *et al*., 2013](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/ET-03-2015-0019)).

This paper seeks to better understand how sustainability can be embedded through entrepreneurial education in line with the recognition that entrepreneurial education can help provide a platform to foster and promote sustainable business practice (Hall *et al*., 2010; Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010) by drawing focus towards the more social and moral obligations of entrepreneurial intentions (Cohen and Winn, 2007; Dean and McMullen, 2007; Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Pacheco et al., 2010; York and Venkataraman, 2010). Our discussion seeks to present to the reader an understanding of the context in which entrepreneurial education is both conceived and implemented, emphasising the importance of philosophical underpinnings and chosen theoretical and conceptual ideas, which can best influence and develop the integration of entrepreneurship and educational theory. This argument has critically raised the importance of reflective/reflexive learning environments in order to gain deeper understanding of entrepreneurial education as a process of learning through practice, where learners are the central players. To nurture sustainability in entrepreneurial practice, we focus on the need for educators to pay special attention to the importance of authentic pedagogic practices that link entrepreneurship components more closely with sustainability related content. This follows from a consequentialist axiology to learning, where knowledge is constructed in an authentic way, thus, highlighting the values embedded in sustainable EE in ways that are positive and serving the self-interest of various stakeholders.

The points of discussion asked in this paper in terms of philosophical and theoretical positions have significant meaning for entrepreneurial education. By recognising the diversity and complexity of the field, there exists a need to enhance and develop conceptual and pedagogical approaches to entrepreneurial education. The establishment of a strong philosophy provides a valuable base to help one conceptualise more clearly how we understand the entrepreneur and their behaviour in terms of learning as a practice. As a result, a challenging and diverse set of influences shape how one can view and understand the entrepreneur. Thus, the axiological position presented in this paper offers a clearer philosophical, theoretical and conceptual foundation for how we understand and educate entrepreneurs. This is not to suggest a singular prescribed method, but more to illustrate and suggest the need for foundations and ideas which shape our interpretation of what entrepreneurs do and why they do it. Numerous contextual factors will influence and shape the content appropriateness of these approaches.

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