

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Innovation has been something of a buzz word for well over a decade and there is little sense that the term is in decline. Over use of the word has perhaps drained some of its meaning and relevance leading to scepticism and confusion over its definition and impact. Yet all the evidence points to the importance of innovation as an ongoing source for social and economic development. There is, therefore, a need for guides such as *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* to help explain and understand innovation and demonstrate how it can be successfully mobilised to achieve impact.

The book is aimed at undergraduate students on business management programmes but would also be accessible to other disciplines that have management and enterprise elements such as engineering and science. At the same time it is a useful resource for educators involved in entrepreneurship, innovation management and venture creation programmes. As the authors point out the focus of the book is on a process model which helps organise and structure the material and will enable readers and users to understand how an innovation might be developed, managed and applied. To this extent the book works as a guide to new venture creation with a focus on innovation. However, it is also very concerned with theory and research and adopts a discursive mode with the material, often questioning and/or identifying gaps in existing knowledge.

The book is now in its third edition and, as with previous editions, is organised into five parts reflecting the venture creation process. Part 1, *Entrepreneurial Goals and Context*, is an exploration of innovation: the why and where which covers the impact of innovation and the range of applications and contexts for innovation, including social innovation and innovation in emerging and developing economies. Part 1 also includes a section new to the third edition on sustainability-led innovation. This new addition reflects shifting economic and environmental agendas and the need for more innovative approaches to resource management and business model development.

Part 2, *Recognising the Opportunity*, includes a topic that has been reviewed and enhanced for the third edition: entrepreneurial creativity. This chapter covers key questions including: what is creativity? How to enable creativity? The creative process and the importance of creativity. The chapter demonstrates the key role that creativity plays in the various stages of the innovation process and the different contexts within which creativity is expressed and applied.

Part 3, *Finding the Resources*, includes a new section on leadership and teams stressing the importance of human capital in the innovation process. Part 4, *Developing the Venture*, is the most enhanced and updated section and includes a new topic on corporate venturing and a whole section dedicated to growing the enterprise. Finally, Part 5, *Creating Value*, sees the introduction of a new topic in the section: business models and capturing value. This new topic perhaps reflects the increasing role that business model paradigms and toolkits are playing in venture creation programmes.



A key aspect of this and previous editions, is the quite substantial learning resources that are available both within the book and on a dedicated website. Each chapter includes a chapter summary, a key terms list, discussion questions and further reading and resources. In addition, there are signposts to more extensive online resources coded under different headings including case studies, media, tools, activities and deeper dives. The resources and cases studies are up to date, relevant and easy to navigate. All in all these are excellent resources for students and teachers and offer engaging routes to further exploration of the topic.

The book is structured around the innovation/venture creation process and therefore to some extent refers to familiar tools and processes – the business plan for instance is explored in Chapter 8, Building the Case. However, the book avoids the more practical details of the venture creation process (there are no sections on budgeting and break-even analysis for instance) and frequently presents innovation as a complex process requiring balance, judgement and critical insight: for example, in the context of innovative organisations who are characterised by openness and informality, the authors recognise that this is not a simple recipe for creativity but can “sometimes act against the interests of successful innovation” (2015, p. 24).

One area that is also explored, but perhaps less methodically, is entrepreneurship. The authors acknowledge that innovation is driven by entrepreneurs and there is extensive reference to the characteristics of the entrepreneurial mind set. Furthermore, there is a great deal of testimony from entrepreneurs in the context of case studies to be found in the book and on the website. However, the process of acquiring and developing the skills of an entrepreneur are less evident here and struggle to be accommodated within the structure of the book, which after all is looking at processes. On this note, the process model, while illustrating the various stages of development, perhaps is at the risk of over estimating the neatness and linearity of innovation and venture creation.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship is an excellent starting point for students which will introduce them to the processes and complexities of innovation while also providing a platform for critical debate and reflection on the topic. It is both a practical guide and an intelligent review of current thinking on the subject of innovation and entrepreneurship. It is an excellent resource which will support students and lecturers who are learning and teaching both for and about innovation and entrepreneurship.

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Challenging Entrepreneurship Research

Edited by Hans Landström, Annaleena Parhankangas, Alain Fayolle and Philippe Riot

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Challenging Entrepreneurship Research seeks to challenge the status quo and underlying assumptions in mainstream entrepreneurship research. In their introduction, the editors argue that this is important not only for developing a “dynamic and viable field of research” (p. 1) but also one that is interesting. Their book is divided into two sections:

consensus challenges and dissensus challenges. The first set of chapters are characterised by the editors as seeking to challenge assumptions from within mainstream approaches to entrepreneurship while the second set mount this challenge through different perspectives that seek to disrupt the mainstream approach. This consensus/dissensus distinction is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 (by Fletcher and Seldon) which explains them as being, respectively, critical for or of entrepreneurship. Of course, the chapters cannot always be easily categorised in this way but the book's structure provides an interesting counterpoint in terms of the perspectives and the sense of a vigorous interrogation of the topic.

This is a valuable exercise in any field and it is particularly interesting that, to achieve it, the editors claim to present the work of an invited set of "young scholars who all show the potential for a brilliant academic career" (p. 8). While problematically framed in terms of age, a focus on early career researchers is very welcome, although this aspect of the book should not be overstated since the co-authors of several chapters include established, influential academics and, for example, an associate editor of this journal. The degree to which the book is authored by those outside of any institutionalisation of the field is therefore limited. Nonetheless, the inclusion of early career researchers amid others asking questions of what entrepreneurship research has done and where it is going is valuable.

The consensus set of chapters begins with a chapter by Fink and colleagues (Chapter 2) that effectively expands on the rationale for the book by seeking to explore the importance of passion to producing interesting research. To do so they assess two of their recent publications from *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* in terms of the passion they felt for the research and the interest of the research outputs against a range of aesthetic criteria. They conclude that the study with greater passion behind it produced a more interesting paper. This appears to, potentially, be an accident of study design rather than the nature of the outputs in any way that could be clearly linked to the passion of the authors. Nonetheless, Fink and colleagues argue that passion is a vital component in the production of interesting research and this is certainly a worthwhile aspiration for all researchers. Chapter 3 (Berglund and Wennberg) further expands the characterisation of the research questions, units of analysis and research design within the entrepreneurship field as institutionalised and therefore restricted in terms of scope and originality with too many core areas of practice left unquestioned. They suggest an alternative, more practice-oriented approach derived from the philosophical tradition of pragmatism.

The remainder of the first section continues to question and probe assumptions in the literature. Korsgaard (Chapter 4) engages in depth with the legacy of Austrian economics and in particular Israel Kirzner for studies of entrepreneurship, calling for a broader conception of value to include the non-economic, further exploration of uncertainty and a shift in focus from opportunity to resources. This latter point is in some ways engaged with by Alsos (Chapter 5) who develops a less individualistic approach to entrepreneurship, including a valuable focus on the household in relation to the identification and exploitation of opportunities. Nightingale and Coad (Chapter 6) conclude the first section by questioning assumptions in policy and research about the role of entrepreneurial firms in job creation, productivity, innovation and well-being. They identify a positive bias towards these firms, for example in how a great deal of research and policy relating to them has been framed. This potentially obscures important factors such as the lower quality and security of many of the jobs created by small firms.

Where the first section of the book is framed as challenging from within, the second part presents five chapters that seek to question the underlying assumptions of entrepreneurship research from alternative perspectives. This section is well-represented by Pittaway and Tunstall (Chapter 9) who utilise Burrell and Morgan's work on

sociological paradigms to analyse common underlying meta-theories in entrepreneurship research. Their analysis suggests that these underlying meta-theories have led to three common traps: a desire to create scientific rather than social scientific research; an under-estimation of contextual and social factors; and a belief in the specialness of the entrepreneur. However, they only look at publications from 1960s to 1990s. This allows them to identify a paradigm shift with a move from psychology to social psychology in the 1980s, but lessens the value of their analysis for debates on the contemporary nature and future of the field. In response to their analysis they call for a greater meta-theoretical diversity in entrepreneurship scholarship, and this again suggests the need to question underlying assumptions whilst providing support for the dissensus approach collected in this half of the book.

Other chapters in this dissensus section of the book include a useful review of critical work on entrepreneurship (Chapter 7, by Fletcher and Seldon) that concludes with a call for further critical work rooted in a social ontology. This is followed by a series of arguments that continue to question underlying assumptions. Barinaga (Chapter 8) argues for the importance of engaged scholarship and greater awareness of the simplifying nature of research methods, for example by engaging more closely with the communities studied. Tedmanson and Essers (Chapter 10) challenge the assumptions behind the dominant conception of a white, male entrepreneur, focussing on intersectionality and hybridity in the identity work of entrepreneurs who do not fit this conception. The final chapter (Chapter 11, by Verzat and colleagues) takes a different approach by exploring the effectuation approach to entrepreneurship education, highlighting it as one means to overcome, for example, individualistic assumptions in the teaching, research and practice of entrepreneurship.

Challenging Entrepreneurship Research presents a broad range of ideas and it benefits from the contrasting of perspectives in terms of the challenges they present in their critiques of the existing literature (principally in questioning specific underlying assumptions) and the challenging alternatives they propose. The degree of challenge this collection presents to dominant studies of entrepreneurship could perhaps have gone further and there is little here that is radically new, for example several of the authors build upon their own earlier work. Nonetheless, several of the chapters are still interesting and impactful in their own right. Overall, the diverse collection of chapters therefore provides a useful starting point and provocations for further reflection. Many of these ideas continue to reside on the margins of entrepreneurship scholarship and emphasise the importance of continually seeking to challenge assumptions and to developing challenging entrepreneurship research.

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