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## Entrepreneurship education in tourism: An investigation among European Universities

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### ABSTRACT

It is widely recognized that entrepreneurs are key drivers of economic development, and as such, nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset in young people has become a key priority for innovation. Entrepreneurship education (EE) has emerged as a key instrument to enhance entrepreneurial orientation. A growing number of curricula and programs devoted to entrepreneurship are registered in all levels and fields of education. Likewise, the tourism education sector recently has started to offer entrepreneurship education through dedicated modules or courses. However, despite the growing attention and relevance of EE in tourism, to our best knowledge, this field of research remains under-investigated. This paper aims to contribute to closing this gap by analyzing, through a web-based content analysis, the situation of European university initiatives that have begun including modules and contents related to entrepreneurship in their tourism educational programs. In particular, the paper seeks to analyse how the main components related to EE are being structured in these tourism education programs and offer advice on what might constitute an effective tourism entrepreneurship education path.

### 1. Introduction

In today's competitive global environment, a number of factors, including globalization and the increasingly rapid spread of new technologies, are transforming industries in unprecedented ways; innovation and differentiation are now considered a necessity for every company (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2008). Entrepreneurial orientation is regarded as a critical factor for innovation that contributes to company survival and performance by combining existing resources in new ways to develop and commercialize new products, move into new markets, and/or serve new customers (Hitt, Ireland, Camp, & Sexton, 2001). In fact, the Entrepreneurship Theory of Innovation identifies entrepreneurs as key drivers of economic development through the introduction of innovation (Schumpeter, 1952). Entrepreneurs develop new innovations by introducing new products or production methods, opening up new markets or sources of new materials, and creating new organisational structures in the industry (Hjalager, 2010). Entrepreneurs recognize, discover, or create new opportunities (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri, & Venkataraman, 2003) and then exploit them into commercially viable products and services to create economic and social value (Allen, 2009; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ratinho, Harms, & Walsh, 2015).

Nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset in young people is now widely recognized as a key priority for innovation (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; Secundo & Moustaghfir, 2016). An entrepreneurial mindset includes creativity, innovation, and

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risk-taking (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013) as well as the ability to explore and adapt to new opportunities and to transform ideas, opportunities, and inventions into economic and social value (Allen, 2009). Universities and the education sector have a crucial role to play in developing innovative entrepreneurial mindsets (Secundo & Ndou, 2016). Entrepreneurship education (EE) has emerged as a key instrument to enhance entrepreneurial orientation. The relevance of EE has been broadly highlighted in several policy measures, strategic recommendations, and action plans of diverse supranational organizations, such as the EU, the World Bank, OECD, and the World Economic Forum (Secundo & Ndou, 2016). As a consequence, a growing number of universities throughout the world have begun to provide entrepreneurship education (Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). Significant growth in the curricula and programs devoted to entrepreneurship and new venture creation is recorded among all sectors, all levels of education and for students in all fields, including the humanities, arts, and creative studies (Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie, & van Den Brande, 2016; Ndou, Secundo, & Mele, 2016).

The large proliferation of EE in universities has also been associated with a proliferation of studies aiming to identify the most relevant aspects for effective EE. The main distinguishing components of EE identified in literature consist of objectives/goals, target group or audiences, content and educators, teaching methods or pedagogies, and stakeholders involvement (Alberti, Sciascia, & Poli, 2005; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Bischoff et al., 2017). The tourism education sector has followed suite, increasingly offering EE through dedicated modules or courses (Ahmad, Bakar, & Ahmad, 2018) with the aim of creating awareness about entrepreneurship (Kirby, 2004a, 2004b; Liñán, 2007) and providing students with abilities and competencies related to opportunity identification and exploitation for creating new ventures or new value for customers (EC, European Commission, 2008; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). Despite the growing attention and relevance of EE for innovation and competitiveness in the tourism sector, however, there is a lack of research related to EE in tourism, particularly in terms of how universities are currently structuring it. This paper thus aims to investigate the state of the art of EE among tourism education programs. By employing a web-based content analysis, the paper seeks to provide a snapshot of the European university initiatives involving modules and content related to entrepreneurship in tourism educational programs, and then to analyse how this programming is structured.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section provides a literature review on the issues related to the emergence and relevance of EE for dealing with today's complex tourism environment. The third section illustrates the methodology employed in the paper, while the fourth section reports the results obtained. Finally, some relevant conclusions are drawn for projecting an effective tourism EE path.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Entrepreneurship education

In recent years, the increased awareness of EE has been a remarkable. This movement is driven by a recognition that EE may be a key instrument in developing skills as well as personal qualities among students for new venture creation and technology transfer (Drivas, Panagopoulos, & Rozakis, 2016; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). Existing literature concludes that entrepreneurs can be made (Henry, Hill, & Leitch, 2005) and the required skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be successful in entrepreneurship can be learned. This leads to the creation of an entrepreneurial mindset and culture, which benefit individuals and society as a whole (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). The important role of EE in promoting more entrepreneurial mindset growth is therefore now widely recognized.

Fayolle, Gailly, & Lassas-Clerc, (2006, p. 702) define EE programs “as any pedagogical [program] or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.” Entrepreneurship development is defined as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action and includes creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve objectives (EC, European Commission, 2009). In 2006, the European Commission introduced the competence “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” as one of the eight key transversal competences to be developed at all levels of the education system (EC – European Commission, 2006).

Past research has largely emphasized the relevance of EE for influencing awareness, intention, aptitude, and behavior (Dickson & Solomon, 2008; Fayolle et al., 2006; Von Graevenitz, Harhoff, & Weber, 2010). Developing EE is considered a fundamental precondition for augmenting entrepreneurs' innovation skills in a rapidly changing environment (Menzies & Paradi, 2003). As a result, several universities and governments worldwide have started to support and promote EE by developing and investing in curricula and programs related to entrepreneurship and new venture creation (Kuratko, 2005; Volkman et al., 2009). The strong concern for EE has also been accompanied by growing interest of academic research aiming analyse the most appropriate approaches and distinctive elements for effective EE. The academic research in the field has extensively emphasized the role and the relevance of EE for new venture creation and for establishing entrepreneurial skills and mind-sets (e.g., Fayolle et al., 2006, Von Graevenitz et al., 2010; Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013; Bae, Qian, Miao, & Fiet, 2014).

Some investigations have focused their endeavours on sketching out the set of skills and capabilities that are essential for creating entrepreneurs. A recent European Union study established a reference framework for entrepreneurship “as a competence to help citizens to develop their ability to actively participate in society, to manage their own lives and careers and to start value-creating initiatives” (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 10). Within this reference framework, entrepreneurship is a transversal key competence applicable by individuals and groups, including existing organizations, across all spheres of life: to act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Referring to QAA (2014), the main goals and common elements of EE consist of:

- producing graduates who are capable of identifying opportunities for setting up a new venture, developing and growing an existing business or designing an entrepreneurial organization.

- focusing on development and application of an enterprising mind-set and skills in different contexts, including new or existing businesses, non-governmental organizations, the public sector and social enterprises.
- accomplishing entrepreneurial effectiveness; that is, a combination of enterprise awareness, an entrepreneurial mind-set and entrepreneurial capability.

Past research has also focused on understanding common approaches to EE. The literature reveals that there are at least three existing approaches to entrepreneurship education, termed “about,” “for,” and “through.” The “about” entrepreneurship approach tends to focus on awareness creation, opportunity identification, business development, self-employment, and venture creation and growth, and it tends toward more traditional learning strategies in its delivery (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Mahieu, 2006; QAA, 2012). The “for” entrepreneurship is an occupationally oriented approach while “through” entrepreneurship is a process and experiential based approach (Mwasalwiba, 2010). They both focus on fostering cognitive and non-cognitive skills, adopt action-oriented, active and experiential learning methods, and involve diverse stakeholders in the entrepreneurial development process (Moberg, 2014; Mwasalwiba, 2010). The type of entrepreneurship approach used profoundly affects the objectives, content design, teaching methods, and student assessment procedures (Mwasalwiba, 2010), as well as the overall effectiveness and outcomes of EE (Fayolle, 2013; Gibb, 2012).

Other empirical research studies have focused on reporting the positive effects of EE in various forms and fields. For example, the study of Galloway and Brown (2002) reports that there is a higher intention to begin a business or start-up among people who have taken university entrepreneurship courses than among those who have not taken them. Martin et al. (2013) examined EE outcomes through a meta-analysis of 42 instances. They demonstrated that, in fact, EE is positively associated with higher levels of human capital assets, higher levels of knowledge and skills, positive perceptions of entrepreneurship, and intentions to become an entrepreneur. Bramwell and Wolfe (2008) argue that universities provide different positive outcomes and critical mechanisms of knowledge transfer. Detailing the case study of the University of Waterloo, the authors argue that EE contributes to local and regional economic dynamism by increasing the stock of tacit knowledge, as well as the depth of the local labour market (Florida, 2002), and by providing formal and informal technical support, as well as specialized expertise and facilities for ongoing firm-based R&D (Mowery, Nelson, Sampat, & Ziedonis, 2004). Universities that support EE can thus be seen as good community players that support firm formation and growth (Bramwell & Wolfe, 2008).

## 2.2. Entrepreneurship education in tourism

The tourism sector has been subject to radical changes due to shifts in consumer preferences and the emergence of new technologies (Hall & Williams, 2008). In particular, new technologies have generated rapid innovation impacts across the tourism industry. Examples of innovations include new business models for tourism firms (online auctions); use of iPhones, GPS, and other resources for interpretation and guide services; use of ICT to improve understanding, attraction, and accessibility of museums and other heritage attractions for tourists (Go, Lee, & Rosso, 2003; McLoughlin, Kaminski, & Sodagar, 2007; Nielsen & Liburd, 2008); and the emergence of mobile technologies (Buhalis & Law, 2008a; Grün, Werthner, Pröll, Retschitzegger, & Schwinger, 2008; Tumas & Ricci, 2009), which include many tourism applications that have been complemented by RFID devices (Zeni, Kiyavitskaya, Barbera, Oztaysi, & Mich, 2009). Constant innovation in hardware, software, and network applications has driven a wide range of changes in information systems (Buhalis & Law, 2008a), affecting the organization of firms, and indeed the whole industry (Buhalis & Licata, 2002; Buhalis & Zoge, 2007; Hall & Williams, 2008; Longhi, 2009).

Even beyond the issue of technology, tourism in general is a highly competitive business landscape, and the creative processes of responding to change (Malerba, 2010) associated with an entrepreneurial orientation is crucial for innovating and leveraging on new technological and business trends, as well as dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity (Gibb, 2005; Hjalager, 2002). While the tourism sector has always been characterized by a high percentage of new businesses, new ventures, and new innovative products and services, entrepreneurs in tourism are often found to start with scarce business skills and are limited in their innovativeness (Lerner & Haber, 2000; Morrison, Rimmington, & Williams, 1999). Zehrer & Mössenlechner (2008, p. 73) argue that “there appears to be a considerable gap between what educational institutions offer as management level tourism education and the needs that are expressed by the tourism sector.” This gap becomes larger if we consider that today technology is not only an integral part of tourism but has created a structural reconfiguration of the industry by impacting on the way travel is planned (Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2014), business is conducted (Passiante & Ndou, 2006; Del Vecchio et al., 2017), and tourism services and experiences are created and consumed (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). Thus, creating value requires entrepreneurial actions that depend heavily on a combination of specialized resources, assets, knowledge of different actors, and the exploitation of opportunities that rely on technological applications and abilities along with scientific and technical knowledge (Bailetti, 2012). Therefore, different skills, attitudes, and understanding, are required to achieve success by discovering and exploiting various emerging opportunities (Daniel et al., 2017). In the work of scholars and researchers in the tourism field, the lack of qualified human capital and the need for investing in training to develop attitudes directed to innovation and entrepreneurship arise as mandatory for the competitiveness of tourism companies and destinations (Buhalis & Law, 2008b; Ndou et al., 2016; Neuhofer et al., 2014).

In response, universities and educational institutions have recently expanded their EE offerings, through executive programs and other initiatives focused on innovation and on entrepreneurial development, featuring dedicated modules or courses (Ahmad et al., 2018). Some such EE initiatives are located in tourism education programs, and researchers have begun to take note of this (Daniel et al., 2017; Ahmad et al., 2018). In a recent study, Daniel et al. (2017) explore the case of a specific program designed to increase students’ entrepreneurial skills through the application of a learning- by-doing approach. The study highlights the relevance of EE for

tourism students and concludes that students have a great interest in enrolling in entrepreneurship education courses as an alternative for future prospects. Ahmad et al. (2018) provide a critical review of entrepreneurship teaching methods, with a particular focus on the emerging challenges related to hospitality and tourism programs.

However, the field of EE research in tourism, to our best knowledge, remains underdeveloped, especially when it comes to analyzing how the different EE components are structured in such contexts.

### 2.3. Entrepreneurship education components

While the importance of EE is widely recognized, diverse challenges for education institutions remain; these are related to which approaches to use, what pedagogical strategies are most effective, what outcomes can be expected and, what contents should be delivered for effective EE (Kuratko, 2005; Streeter, Jaquette, & Hovis, 2002). Educational programs with an entrepreneurial orientation are different from traditional ones, as they more heavily emphasize skills, attributes, and behaviours oriented to creative and critical thinking (Gibb, 2005; Kirby, 2004a, 2004b), willingness to change, multi-disciplinary thinking, learning capacities, social intelligence, and intelligent competitive skills (Van Vught, 1999). A fundamental shift is thus needed, focusing on delivering educational programs and activities that accomplish these goals. Multidisciplinary approaches and mixed pedagogies are likely to be appropriate (Ndou et al., 2016; Secundo et al., 2016).

Empirical studies have identified the following main distinguishing components of EE: objectives/goals, target group or audience, content and educators, teaching methods or pedagogies, and stakeholder involvement (Alberti et al., 2005; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Bischoff et al., 2017). The goals to be achieved through the EE are varied and can include enhanced awareness about entrepreneurship; self-efficacy development (know-how, confidence, and intention) for starting and setting up a business; and development of entrepreneurial abilities needed to identify and exploit business opportunities, as well as to manage growth (EC, European Commission, 2008; Gibb, 2012). It has been widely argued that EE needs to influence knowledge, as well as skills, attitudes, and identity, and that it should create a transformative experience for the participants (Matlay, 2006a, 2006b; Mwasalwiba, 2010; Pittaway & Cope, 2007). With regard to *target group or audience*, entrepreneurship is an intra-disciplinary/trans-disciplinary activity, so it can be embedded into the curriculum in different disciplinary contexts, thus extending the target beyond business students to include students in other fields (e.g., humanities, arts, and creative studies; scientific and technical studies), as well as students at various levels (undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, PhD) (EC, European Commission, 2008). Crossing boundaries between disciplines and promoting multidisciplinary collaboration are essential elements in building enterprising abilities (European Commission, 2008). In terms of specific *entrepreneurship contents*, research has demonstrated that there is a wide variation, especially when considering programs devoted to non-business students (Fayolle, 2013; Gibb, Haskins, & Robertson, 2009). The contents can range from introductory and basic ones to more specialized and experiential contents consisting of growth and sustainability and venture projects that are real, intensive, interdisciplinary, iterative, and hands-on (Barr, Baker, Markham, & Kingon, 2009).

Concerning *teaching methods*, a shift from traditional lectures and business case strategies toward problem-based learning pedagogies and action-oriented learning is crucial for developing entrepreneurial skills and abilities (Fayolle, 2013). Action-based teaching methods are relevant for empowering students to create something that has potential value for others (Hagvall Svensson, Lundqvist, & Williams Middleton, 2017). Entrepreneurial teaching methods need to nurture creativity and provide opportunities to practice dealing with enterprises through real-world processes (Seikkula-Leino, Ruskovaara, Ikavalko, Mattila, & Rytokola, 2010). Moreover, the engagement of entrepreneurs, business practitioners, and other stakeholders in the teaching process is encouraged, to provide personal testimonials or to introduce problems of real companies to be solved by the multidisciplinary teams; this is essential for encouraging practical entrepreneurial behavior (Isenberg, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2013). Recent research has also highlighted the role of *stakeholder involvement* in creating a supportive environment for fostering and encouraging entrepreneurial attitudes (Bischoff, Volkman, & Audretsch, 2017; Isenberg, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2013).

The way these diverse components are structured influences the effectiveness of EE. Following these premises, this paper aims to analyse how these components are being structured in tourism EE and what insights could be gained for outlining an efficient tourism entrepreneurship education path.

### 3. Research methodology

This paper aims to answer the following questions: What is the current state of the art of EE development in tourism? How are tourism education programs structuring the main components related to entrepreneurship education? What insights emerge as relevant for an effective tourism EE path?

To investigate these research questions, we adopted a web-based content analysis method to collect empirical data from tourism EE programs and courses for sketching out a general overview of the current state of tourism EE. Web-based content analysis is useful in terms of time and cost efficiency (Navarro, 2008; Wu, 2007; Wu, Huang, Kuo, & Wz, 2010). The web-based scanning was performed using keyword searches on major Internet search engines, to find educational master courses that include entrepreneurship in their curricula. The keywords used for searches consisted of Masters in "Tourism and Hospitality," "Innovation and Tourism," "Entrepreneurship and Tourism," "Hospitality Management," and "Digital Tourism" in two main university databases: [www.best-masters.com](http://www.best-masters.com) and [www.masterstudies.com](http://www.masterstudies.com). The first database, Best Master Ranking, is a global leader in higher education information that provides students worldwide with the tools to find the best education opportunities. The second database is a platform for higher education marketing, recruitment, and student enrolment that contains the list of master studies in Hospitality Management.

The result of this web-based scanning was a first list of more than 40 masters programs related to the keywords defined. As our

**Table 1**  
Sample Description.

Nr	Master	School	Country	Duration	ETCs
1.	Master in Entrepreneurship & Tourism	Management Center Innsbruck	Austria	4 semesters Full-time form Part-time work possible	120 ECTS
2.	Master in Innovation & Management in Tourism	University of Applied Sciences – Salzburg		4 semesters part-time	120 ECTS
3.	Master Innovative Hospitality Management University	School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Sant Ignasi	Spain	1-year full time	60 ECTS
4.	Master in Hospitality Management	University College of Hotel Management and Culinary Arts STPOL		8 months classes. 3- 6 months industry internship.	60 ECTS
5.	MBA Cultural Entrepreneurship and Tourism	IESA - School of Arts and Culture	France	12 months, Fall or Spring 2 trimesters of coursework and six months dedicated to a full-time internship	120 ECTS
6.	MBA in Hospitality Management (IMHI)	ESSEC Business School		11 or 23 Months - Full time	Na
7.	Master in International Tourism, Hotel Industry and Leisure Services	SGH - Warsaw School of Economics	Poland	2 years	120 ECTS
8.	MSc International Hospitality & Tourism Management	Bournemouth University	UK	12- 16 months full-time or part time	90 ECTS
9.	MSc Tourism Management			2 years with optional 30-week placement	90 ECTS
10.	MSc Tourism Management & Marketing			2 years part-time	90 ECTS

aim was to consider “dedicated” entrepreneurship courses and programs, we considered in our study those master programs that provide at least one entrepreneurship course or module. Other criteria used for sample selection related to the location, language, and information availability. Specifically, we selected all English-language programs that are located in European countries and have their syllabuses available for download. Applying these exclusion criteria, the resulting final sample consisted of 10 master studies programs from 8 European universities (see Table 1).

The next step involved running a content analysis for detailed examination of the syllabus of each initiative to find out how the main components related to EE are being structured. Each case in the study was analysed following the web-based content analysis steps suggested by McMillan (2000):

Initially, the categories for coding were defined in relation to the need to obtain comparable cases. The categories studied consisted of the main components, as identified in the literature, considered crucial for entrepreneurship education. The items coded from each educational programme website were: 1) goals of the education course; 2) target audience and level (undergraduate, graduate, executives, or others); 3) teaching methods; 4) entrepreneurship contents; and 5) stakeholder involvement. Then, the investigation involved running a deeper content analysis on the websites of EE initiatives by downloading the syllabuses of the courses and coding them according to the categories defined. The data extracted for each learning initiative were recorded in Excel files, analysed, and cross-compared, with the aim of identifying key patterns.

#### 4. Research findings

As described above, our study sample is composed of 10 educational master programs housed at 8 different universities, distributed as follows (see Table 1): France, with 2 programs at 2 universities; UK with 3 different programs at the same university; Spain with 2 programs at 2 universities; Austria with 2 programs at 2 universities; and Poland with 1 program at 1 university. As easily evinced by the table in two cases, the word “entrepreneurship” is present in the title of the master's degree. In other cases, the keywords are “innovation” or “management.” This could be interpreted as an initial awareness among higher tourism education programs regarding the relevance of entrepreneurship education. However, there is not yet a direct orientation toward “entrepreneurship education.”

The duration of masters programs considered ranges from 11 months (in case of MBA in Hospitality Management (IMHI), ESSEC) to 2 years depending also if the students participate part time or full time.

Regarding the structuring of EE components in tourism, the study reveals interesting aspects, as presented in Table 2.

First of all, the *objectives/goals* that the analysed programs seek to achieve included awareness creation about entrepreneurship, recognition and use of market and technology opportunities, and equipping students with appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to efficiently and innovatively manage innovation and growth of the sector. Having a proper definition of the program objectives is paramount for distinguishing between the “wide” and “narrow” focus of EE.

Regarding the *target or audience*, the programs were open to students with different backgrounds. All students with a bachelor degree in any field such as art, design, science, business, etc. can apply to participate in the program. In some cases, an interview is used for understanding the students' attitudes and prior knowledge. Only in two cases (ESSEC and Innsbruck), is a university degree in business or equivalent required as prerequisite for admission. It is also relevant to note that, in the majority of cases, admission is open to international students. The variety of students admitted to the programs is relevant for making entrepreneurship education accessible to interdisciplinary students.

Concerning *teaching methods* adopted by the universities, we found out that a wide range of learning approaches exist, ranging from traditional to more innovative ones consisting of “active learning,” “experiential learning,” “learning by doing,” and “real word



**Table 2**  
Research findings.

Program	Objective / Goals	Target Groups/ Audience	Teaching Methods	Main Entrepreneurship Contents	Stakeholder Involvement
1. Master in Entrepreneurship & Tourism Innsbruck - Austria	Develop and focus on applying skills and theories for recognizing and using market opportunities in- and outside organizations.	Bachelor degree (or equivalent) in business. Open to International students	Highly practice- oriented. Seminars and lectures.	Entrepreneurship; International tourism; Destination Management; Entrepreneurship Forum; Tourism Marketing & Digitalization Finance & Controlling; Business Plan & Startup; Entrepreneurship Case Studies; Strategic Pricing & Yield Management. Entrepreneurship, divided in: Human Resource Management & Leadership Business Planning Change Management Business Ethics Innovation and Creativity Techniques; Entrepreneurship in SME; Business Planning; Corporate Planning and Simulation.	Strong cooperation with the local and international firms.
2. Master in Innovation & Management in Tourism University of applied sciences Salzburg, Austria	Offer a top-level tourism education that is attractive and accessible to participants worldwide.	Bachelor's degree (all); Open to International students	Different approaches and methods: lectures and seminars; best practice cases; hands-on experiences;	Entrepreneurship, divided in: Innovation and Entrepreneurship, divided in: Innovation Management in hospitality Redefining the Hospitality Experience Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship Educational Study Trip	Industry Partnership
3. Master Innovative Hospitality Management University Ignasi - Spain	Aims to train professionals with the skills and abilities necessary to efficiently and innovatively manage companies in the tourism and hotel sector. Three pillars: Innovation, Hospitality and Management.	Bachelor's degree (all). Open to International students	Academic readings; teamwork; coaching, practical cases, networking, multicultural experiences, study trips, research projects, online learning, visits to companies and training experiences.	Entrepreneurship, divided in: Innovation and Entrepreneurship, divided in: Innovation Management in hospitality Redefining the Hospitality Experience Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship Educational Study Trip	Collaboration with Hotel Management School Maastricht, Oxford School of Hospitality Management. Worldwide Hospitality firms
4. Master in Hospitality Management University College of Hotel Management and Culinary Arts SPOL - Spain	Prepare to develop students professional career in a large range of companies.	Bachelor's degree (all) Open to International students	Learning by doing Practical methodology Problem-solving Classes, guest lectures, personal study, tasks, examinations, and tutorials.	Entrepreneurship, divided in: Fundraising and financing; Finding an idea; Finding a team; Business plan; Managing and building up the company. Strategic Hospitality; Hospitality economics and finance; Talent development.	International hotel managers; Hotel & restaurant chains
5. MBA Cultural Entrepreneurship and Tourism IESA - School of Arts and Culture - Paris France	Train students to manage, develop, and promote the tourism industry in particular regions and cultural sites.	Bachelor's degree (all) Open to International students	Workshops, lectures, visits to tourism sites and study trips. Hands-on experience and networking possibilities. Group coaching sessions.	Entrepreneurship, divided in: Cultural Entrepreneurship; Business Development Strategies; E-communication and e- marketing; Marketing Tourism/Heritage Products; Implementing seasonal touristic programs; Sustainable Development and Coaching sessions.	Collaboration with specialists from many sectors of the industry.
6. MBA in Hospitality Management (IMHI) ESSEC Business School - France	Prepare future managers for high-level operational responsibilities in all tourism and hospitality sectors.	University degree in business or equivalent; Professional work experience (different for the two track).	Lectures, seminars combined with group exercises. Consultancy project Real world business cases; Simulation.	Entrepreneurship, divided in: Introduction Business Plan Preparation "Vivre en Direct l'Entrepreneuriat" (Live Entrepreneurship).	Wide-ranging partnerships with a large number of international hospitality companies.

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Program	Objective / Goals	Target Groups/ Audience	Teaching Methods	Main Entrepreneurship Contents	Stakeholder Involvement
7. Master in International Tourism, Hotel Industry and Leisure Services SGH - Warsaw School of Economics - Poland	Equip students with appropriate knowledge and skills for business activities in the area of tourism and leisure services	Open to International students  Bachelor's degree or higher. Open to International students	Lectures; Seminars; Case studies; Practical learning.	Strategic Marketing; Business Simulation Experience); Competitive Strategic Intelligence. Entrepreneurship in Tourism and Hotel Industry in International and Domestic Markets; Tourism Enterprise Management; International Leadership; Management of Tourism Development at Local Level; Firm Strategies in International Business.	Collaboration with institutions and renowned local scholars and guests from abroad.
8. MSc International Hospitality & Tourism Management	Provide an advanced understanding of the industry and a managerial perspective of how to run such organizations.	Bachelors degree Open to International students	Mixture of seminars, lectures, tutorials, case studies and learning, student / resource based study. Workshop and seminar situations; Work-based learning.	Entrepreneurship (optional): The process of creating a new entrepreneurial venture; Fund sources for new and upcoming entrepreneurs; Identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities. Business Strategies and Finance; Creative Industries in Tourism & Event.	Collaboration between academic learning and the working world.
9. MSc Tourism Management	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the trans-disciplinary nature of tourism and its	Bachelors degree Open to International students	Mixture of seminars, lectures, tutorials, case studies and learning, student / resource based study. Workshop and seminar situations; Work-based learning.	Entrepreneurship (optional): The process of creating a new entrepreneurial venture; Fund sources for new and upcoming entrepreneurs; Identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities. Business Strategies and Finance; Creative Industries in Tourism & Event.	Collaboration between academic learning and the working world.
10. MSc Tourism Management & Marketing Bournemouth University - UK	Develop a critical understanding and the ability to question current patterns and trends.	Bachelors degree Open to International students	Mixture of seminars, lectures, tutorials, case studies and learning, student / resource based study. Workshop and seminar situations; Work-based learning.	Entrepreneurship (optional): The process of creating a new entrepreneurial venture; Fund sources for new and upcoming entrepreneurs; Identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities. Business Strategies and Finance; Creative Industries in Tourism & Event.	Collaboration between academic learning and the working world.

pedagogies” (Fayolle, 2013). Traditional teaching methods such as lectures and teamwork, as well as case studies, remain the most used; however, they are highly integrated and enhanced by a set of action- and problem-based activities that are considered very useful and relevant in creating an entrepreneurial mindset. In particular, experience-based teaching methods, such as research projects, problem solving projects, educational study trips, action-based learning, and innovation workshops, are practised to engage students in concrete and creative entrepreneurial activity.

With regard to the Entrepreneurship |*content*, an assessment of the programs shows that modules in some cases are limited to business plan preparation or a general understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation as a phenomenon (Table 2). This means that entrepreneurship courses are limited to providing students with a general understanding of the relevance of entrepreneurship for innovation, the entrepreneur's role in society and the economy, the phases of the entrepreneurial process, and the key tasks, challenges, and competencies of the entrepreneur. This type of content is defined in the literature as “awareness education” or *educating about entrepreneurship* (Kirby, 2004a, 2004b; Liñán, 2007). In other cases (e.g., Spain, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Bournemouth), entrepreneurship is considered a discipline in itself, and the curricula go further in providing students with concrete knowledge and skills for new venture creation by directly involving them in design and ideation of new ventures. They provide students with entrepreneurial learning through a simulated process of forming a new venture, launching and positioning it, and managing and leading it in an innovative way. These practical contents are described in the literature as action-oriented. Liñán (2007) refers to them as “start-up education” or “educating for entrepreneurship” (Kirby, 2004a, 2004b).

A further intriguing finding is related to *stakeholder involvement*. The analysis revealed that several of the programs in our sample were developed in collaboration with other universities and were highly dependent on the large network of collaborators developed over time, with whom they have always collaborated either for lectures, project works, or internships. This finding confirms the importance of network links for innovation and collaboration. The initiatives considered in this study also seek to involve experienced people, successful entrepreneurs, and senior industry executives as guest lecturers in classes, collaborators in field projects, and mentors and coaches to assist students in turning their ideas into real projects and venture firms. In many cases (as is the case of the MBA in hospitality and management at ESSEC), we found that the programs give students the possibility to be involved in a real business context, to solve specific problems, thus attaining practical experience. This practice enables students to combine knowledge acquired during the program with a real-world, challenging business situation and to apply their enterprising and entrepreneurial capability in different contexts.

## 5. Conclusions and Implications

The focus of this paper is to contribute to the research on EE for tourism by providing a snapshot of university initiatives that include modules related to entrepreneurship in their tourism educational curricula. In particular, following the results of previous existing research studies in the EE field, the paper tried to capture how the different components, considered important for projecting an efficient EE path, are being structured and handled in the case of tourism education. The initiatives mapped in this study reveal that tourism education programs are becoming aware of the relevance of EE and the role they can play in boosting entrepreneurial mindsets by helping students to develop capacity, competence, and the right attitude to transform new ideas, technologies, and inventions into commercially viable products and services to create economic and social value.

The findings of this paper related to entrepreneurship target, content, teaching approaches and pedagogy, and dynamics of collaboration with stakeholders shed light on the structuring of EE components in tourism education programs and provide some interesting insights for further development (Table 3). A significant insight arises from the analysis of target groups and audiences of tourism EE. Given the multifaceted nature of the tourism sector, and its configuration as an integrated system of products and services, the EE curriculum could be delivered to a wide and varied target group of participants, with different backgrounds and knowledge. While, on one hand, this condition offers the possibility of creating multidisciplinary teams that could combine interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, on the other hand it poses challenges regarding how to address the diversified set of needs and

**Table 3**  
Synthesis of findings.

Entrepreneurship education components	Summary of findings
Objective / Goals	Create Awareness about entrepreneurship and technology opportunities; Equip students with knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to manage innovation and growth.
Target groups/ Audience	Wide and varied group of participants, with different backgrounds and knowledge. Open to international students.
Teaching Methods	Traditional teaching methods such as seminars, lectures, business plans combined with new practice based and action-based methods.
Main Entrepreneurship Contents	Content “about” and “for” entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General understanding of Entrepreneurship;</li> <li>● Innovation in Tourism;</li> <li>● Business Plan</li> <li>● Startup fundamentals;</li> <li>● Action-based project.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder's involvement	Large base of stakeholders involved consisting in educational institutions, tourism Industry Partners, Governmental and non-governmental organizations, students.



competencies of such a wide target audience.

In response to the diversified set of skills and competencies of the target involved, the contents and teaching methods also need to be appropriately structured to respond to specific profiles and needs. As we found in this study, EE in tourism in most cases is in its initial phase, and as such, is mainly limited to providing participants with content that focuses on learning “about” and “for” entrepreneurship, to infuse in them awareness and inspiration “about” enterprising, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial activities. However, as [Moberg and Stenberg \(2012\)](#) argue, “Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others.”

As has been extensively argued in literature, a third block for entrepreneurship education is needed, consisting of “educating through entrepreneurship” or “growth education” ([European Commission, 2008](#); [Kirby, 2004a, 2004b](#)) as relevant for providing the necessary skills for business survival and growth of new ventures. The real development of an entrepreneurial mindset and capabilities requires the creation of different entrepreneurial qualities to recognize, explore, design, act upon, and launch new ventures. These activities aim to make students more creative, opportunity-oriented, proactive, and innovative. To accomplish this, the education activities and initiatives need to provide participants with more specialized knowledge to recognize real opportunities; identify and solve problems creatively; manage complex businesses, projects, and situations; turn ideas into new ventures; think strategically; and create innovative networks. Therefore, rich and multidisciplinary content in these areas should be provided, and with attention to the diverse audiences toward which EE is directed.

Learning patterns and teaching strategies also change in response to enriching EE content. While, traditional teaching methods, such as seminars, lectures, business plans, etc., still have a role to play in developing understanding, awareness, and know-how, the design of an effective tourism EE path is highly linked to the practice of entrepreneurship and the development of action-based capabilities. This, in turn, demands the adoption of teaching techniques such as interactive, action-based, and solution-oriented methods that enable and encourage participants to act. Therefore, the learning activities traditionally confined to the classroom or laboratory need to be opened up also to the external community to reap the benefits of the whole industry ecosystem ([Secundo et al., 2016](#)). In addition, since tourism is a multi-faceted phenomenon that involves many stakeholders (educational institutions, business units, governmental and non-governmental organizations, students), another challenge for EE is related to the fact that different stakeholders have specific tourism education needs. Direct communication and collaboration is necessary to explore these nuances, an idea consistent with previous research, which argues that, while education can provide cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills for entrepreneurship, the “art” of entrepreneurial practice is learned experientially in business, rather than in the educational environment. Keeping close to the real-life world, observing stakeholders, meeting with them, and discussing their concerns ([Fayolle, 2013](#)) ensures that the curriculum is linked with industry in an effective way.

As with all studies, this paper has its limitations, which also suggest future lines of enquiry. The main limitation derives from the web-based content analysis method, which provides information on what is being performed within the education programs but does not provide information on how these programs actually function. Therefore, further empirical research, using interviews and surveys, will be required to obtain perspectives of students and staff on programme performance. Future research could focus on analyzing and capturing the practical learning outcomes of the programs, exploring the extent of use of action-based learning methods in practice in comparison to traditional learning methods, detailing the type of stakeholders involved, exploring the extent of their involvement in the EE path, and examining the impacts produced so far in entrepreneurial terms (new ventures, start-ups created, co-creation of new services and products with students, etc).

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