

Fernando Almeida, 2018

Volume 2 Issue 3, pp.101-119

Date of Publication: 23rd November 2018

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2018.23.10119>

This paper can be cited as: Almeida, F. (2018). Integration of Erasmus+ Students in Entrepreneurship Classes. PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning, 2(3), 101-119.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

INTEGRATION OF ERASMUS+ STUDENTS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES

Fernando Almeida

University of Porto, INESC TEC & ISPGaya. Portugal

almd@fe.up.pt

Abstract

Exchange students programs in higher education under the Erasmus+ initiative play a fundamental role in providing an international experience for students while they are studying. In the framework of Erasmus+ students show interest in having a new experience, different from what can be offered in their institution of origin, namely by acquiring new technical, social and behavioral skills. Due to its scope and structure, the entrepreneurship course offers the conditions of attractiveness and integration of these students, enabling them to formulate a new business in multicultural and multi-disciplinary teams. This study, through the use of a qualitative methodology based on a focus group and in-depth interviews, reports the experience faced by Erasmus+ students in the frequency of an entrepreneurship course. Four research questions were explored, namely the main challenges felt by these international students, perceived benefits, the impact of their formation and the collaboration given by these students in the working groups. The results obtained allowed us to identify a set of difficulties of integration, but it was also possible to recognize that the skills that were acquired and the heterogeneity of their formation contributed positively for success of the entrepreneurship projects.

Keywords

Erasmus, Entrepreneurship, Formation, Higher Education, Student Mobility, Study Abroad

1. Introduction

The experience of studying abroad is a unique personal opportunity, which can become appealing for different reasons and not just the professional side. Personal enrichment, learning new languages, contact with people from different cultures, confrontation with the unknown, and other factors are essential tools for the growth of individuals throughout the academic and professional journey.

In addition, studying abroad is also an excellent opportunity to gain knowledge and build a curriculum that stands out from the rest. According to Brown & Nash (2016), we are experienced a change in the dynamics of the workplace, where the value of flexibility has been progressively increased. In the same direction, Wright (2017) states that companies are essentially looking for candidates who can be bilingual and have the necessary soft skills that can help them in the global marketplace. An international study experience helps them in the process of developing soft skills. It is also important to refer the study conducted by Farrugia & Sanger (2017) in which it is concluded that studying long periods of time abroad has a high impact on career development.

At the academic level, studying abroad enables students to attend some of the best and most prestigious educational establishments and benefit from different teaching methods and perspectives. It also turns possible to explore new studying topics that are often unaddressed in the students' home institutions. There is also the possibility of carrying out group projects, with dynamics different from those that are often used in their country. However, the experience of studying abroad is not only limited to the academic component, but also extends the students' horizons in a wide range of areas. It allows students to learn a new culture, learn a new language and make new friends. Finally, it allows them to gain greater independence and responsibility.

The Erasmus+ program is the most-known European exchange initiative that enables higher education students to study in another EU country. There are already several studies that address the advantages, difficulties and challenges of Erasmus+ students. However, within the scope of this study we have a distinct goal, since we intend to deepen and analyze the challenges and benefits of integration of Erasmus+ students in Entrepreneurship classes composed by students with different backgrounds. This curricular unit was chosen, since numerous studies emphasize the importance of the development of multidisciplinary skills and soft skills in the practice of entrepreneurship to face the future challenges of the 21st century (Wang & Chugh,

2014; Celli & Young, 2017). Therefore, entrepreneurship classes offer ideal conditions to welcome Erasmus+ students. The manuscript has the following structure: we initially describe how the Erasmus+ works and we present the main studies in this field. Subsequently, we explore how the entrepreneurship is taught in the higher education. After that, we present the adopted methodology and discuss the main results. Finally, the conclusions of this work are drawn.

2. Erasmus+ Initiative

Erasmus program was established in 1987 with the goal to promote the creation of a European Higher Education Field and to strengthen the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education to the innovation process at European level. In addition, it aims to contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning and the possibilities it has conferred; for the enhancement of personal fulfillment, social cohesion, active citizenship and European citizenship; promote creativity, competitiveness and employability; increasing participation in lifelong learning; promote learning and diversity of languages; innovative results, products and processes (EC, 2018).

However, the year 2013 marked the end of the traditional Erasmus program, giving rise to the Erasmus+ program. This is the new European Commission's program for education, training, youth and sport with a focus on three broad areas of activity: support for mobility for transnational learning, support for inter-institutional cooperation and modernization of education and support for the implementation of education policies effective. With a budget of 15 billion €, for the 2014-2020 cycle, the European Commission expects to benefit more than 4 million citizens, instead of the 3 million reached under the previous Erasmus program. Erasmus mobility has grown significantly in recent years. Mobility of studies has gained increasing importance in the European paradigm. From 2010 to 2012 there was an average growth rate of 7% per annum (OECD, 2014). With the appearance of the new Erasmus+ program, these numbers are expected to be exceeded and support the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, employment, social justice and inclusion.

Souto-Otero (2013) looked at the barriers to international student mobility having concluded that there are both financial and personal reasons. On the same direction, Beerkens et al. (2016) sought to identify barriers and drivers for the participation of Erasmus students in seven EU countries. It was verified that two barriers stand out: home ties and lack of interest. However, this study failed to identify the main drivers of student participation in the Erasmus

program, since there was a wide dispersion of the types of motivation among the different countries considered. However, the study done by Tamas (2014) used a mixed-method approach consisting of 213 questionnaires and 19 in-depth interviews to establish a correlation between adherence to international exchange programs, a perception that students have towards their professional future, and the existence of former international students in their group of friends and family. Lesjak (2015) contributed in identifying the motivations to participate in the Erasmus exchange program and to find the criteria that are on the basis of choice of university's destinations. This study concluded that there are professional and personal growth reasons and three criteria in the choice of universities stand out: (i) infrastructure and image; (ii) lifestyle; and (iii) commercialization.

The Erasmus program has been on the focus of the scientific community. There are studies that intend to measure through the use of surveys the degree of satisfaction of students with their Erasmus experience. Fombona et al. (2013) analyzed the motivation factors of Erasmus students. Among these factors, the study emphasizes a set of academic and cultural factors, such as travel abroad, get a European experience and job prospects. Bryla (2014) used large-scale online survey to find the main benefits offered by this exchange program, respectively: knowledge of a foreign language, making new friends, increased intercultural skills, greater desire for mobility, independence and self- confidence.

The adoption of case studies as a research strategy has also been adopted. It is noteworthy the study by Nilsson (2016) used the Umeå University in Sweden to analyze the expectations and experiences of Erasmus+ students. The study concluded that students and tourists follow similar criteria in choosing the study destination. Additionally, students with more skills in terms of outgoing and self-confidence prefer to carry out their exchange programs in non-English speaking countries.

It is also worth mentioning studies that aim to measure the impact of Erasmus mobility on the professional career. Bracht et al. (2006) advocated that international experience of employees is a relevant factor for their business success. To that end, they consider that employees who have attended an academic mobility offer greater adaptability, initiative, assertiveness and planning capacity. Teichler & Janson (2007) emphasize that the participation in the Erasmus is a positive experience with impact in the professional career of students, particularly those coming from Central and Eastern European countries. Di Pietro (2013) used data from recent Italian graduates to conduct a quantitative study that allows estimating that

studying abroad has a statistically significant impact on the employability of recent graduates after 3 years of completion of their course. Finally, it is important to highlight the study developed by Nilsson & Ripmeester (2016) that used a large volume of data from 150000 recent graduates to determine that have an international experience is more relevant for non-European students.

Although previous studies highlight the importance of Erasmus+ mobility in student employability, Engel (2010) states that the overall impact of a study abroad period has been declining over time. This study concluded that the impact of Erasmus career mobility has declined as the number of students involved in these programs has been progressively increased. The interpretation of these conclusions of this study is important, since through them we can identify an evolution of the paradigm of the competences requested in the labor market, since the international experience becomes an indispensable requirement in detriment of being an attribute that automatically conduces to a successful professional career.

3. Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

The teaching of entrepreneurship is an emerging area in all levels of education. There are several ways of approaching entrepreneurship in higher education, and it is not strictly necessary for its program content to be integrated into the university curriculum. Even if this approach is common in several European university institutions, there are other ways to foster entrepreneurship in higher education, such as the use of entrepreneurial clubs, hatcheries or consulting services (Pittaway et al., 2015, Fernández et al., 2015).

Moustaghfir & Sirce (2010) emphasize the importance of higher education in fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by its students, advocating that this process should be multidisciplinary. This study suggests entrepreneurship classes should be attended by students with different competences in the social sciences, economics and engineering. In the same direction, Neck & Greene (2011) refer to different approaches to the teaching of entrepreneurship in a classroom, advocating the creation of new approaches that foster their teaching as a method to be explored in the context of several curricular units. Arasti et al. (2012) adopted a qualitative methodology through semi-structured interviews to identify the teaching methods most indicated in the teaching of entrepreneurship, having identified: (i) group project, (ii) case study, (iii) individual project, (iv) development of a new venture creation project, and (v) problem-solving.

The benefits of entrepreneurship teaching in higher education are also addressed in a number of studies. Aljohani (2015) emphasizes five benefits: (i) self-awareness and self-responsibility; (ii) teamwork; (iii) interpersonal communications; (iv) problem solving; and (v) creativity. Undiyaundeye & Out (2015) emphasize that the benefits of entrepreneurship education are superior in poorly developed social and economic communities. They highlight the importance of entrepreneurship in reducing the high rate of poverty, in reducing rural-urban migration and in the process of creating a smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy. Huják & Sik-Lányi (2017) consider that several competences are reinforced by Erasmus students, namely: (i) foreign language competences; (ii) international urbanity; (iii) in-depth knowledge of the respective host country; (iv) personality and social behavior; and (v) working independently. Finally, Gedeon (2017) aggregates the various benefits offered in three levels: (i) knowledge; (ii) skills; and (iii) attitudinal. These three dimensions influence the learning outcomes.

There are divergent studies in the literature on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic performance. The results obtained by Nasrullah et al. (2016) do not allow verifying the existence of a statistical correlation between these two variables, but it was possible to realize that the students who attended courses of entrepreneurship presented a more dynamic and critical attitude, and greater capacity to work in group. Onyebu (2015) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and academic performance among students in Nigerian universities. Contrary to the previous study, Onyebu (2015) found a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and academic achievement of students, arguing that the student's gender did not significantly influence the academic performance. Yaqub et al. (2015) adopted a quantitative study to demonstrate that there is a strong and positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and attitude towards entrepreneurship.

The motivation of students to attend entrepreneurship courses has also been discussed in literature. Küttima et al. (2014) used a cross-sectional approach consisting of students from 17 European countries to determine what are the expectations and motivations of students to attend an entrepreneurship curricular unit. The results indicated that most of the formations adopt lectures and seminars, while students expect to have more networking and coaching activities. Brancu et al. (2012) used data from students enrolled in Entrepreneurship classes in Romania to determine that socio-demographic profile and level of education influence the student's motivation for entrepreneurship. Duval-Couetil et al. (2014) deepen explored the conclusions of

the previous study. For this purpose, Duval-Couetil et al. (2014) used data from more than 2500 students enrolled in a multidisciplinary course offered in a major university in the United States to conclude that three variables must be taken into consideration when offered to entrepreneurship course: (i) demographic characteristics; (ii) career intentions; and (iii) entrepreneurial maturity.

Finally, there are also studies that intend to assess the impact of entrepreneurship teaching on society and on the professional career of graduates. Fayolle & Gailly (2015) suggest that the impact of entrepreneurship education is more relevant when previous entrepreneurial exposure has been weak or inexistent. However, the effect is contradictory and inverse to students who have been exposed to entrepreneurship. Duval-Couetil & Long (2015) developed a quantitative study based on 97 graduate students from an American university to conclude that the number of students that pursue entrepreneurship immediately after graduation is very low. They prefer, therefore, before embarking on the adventure of launching their own business, to develop their leadership skills in existing organizations, and establish a more stable financial condition.

4. Methodology

The teaching of entrepreneurship is an emerging area in all levels of education. There are several ways of approaching entrepreneurship in higher education, and it is not strictly necessary for its program content to be integrated into the university curriculum. Even if this approach is common in several European university institutions, there are other ways to foster entrepreneurship in higher education, such as the use of entrepreneurial clubs, hatcheries or consulting services (Pittaway et al., 2015, Fernández et al., 2015).

Moustaghfir & Sirce (2010) emphasize the importance of higher education in fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by its students, advocating that this process should be multidisciplinary. This study suggests entrepreneurship classes should be attended by students with different competences in the social sciences, economics and engineering. In the same direction, Neck & Greene (2011) refer to different approaches to the teaching of entrepreneurship in a classroom, advocating the creation of new approaches that foster their teaching as a method to be explored in the context of several curricular units. Arasti et al. (2012) adopted a qualitative methodology through semi-structured interviews to identify the teaching methods most indicated in the teaching of entrepreneurship, having identified: (i) group project,

(ii) case study, (iii) individual project, (iv) development of a new venture creation project, and (v) problem-solving.

The benefits of entrepreneurship teaching in higher education are also addressed in a number of studies. Aljhani (2015) emphasizes five benefits: (i) self-awareness and self-responsibility; (ii) teamwork; (iii) interpersonal communications; (iv) problem solving; and (v) creativity. Undiyaundeye & Out (2015) emphasize that the benefits of entrepreneurship education are superior in poorly developed social and economic communities. They highlight the importance of entrepreneurship in reducing the high rate of poverty, in reducing rural-urban migration and in the process of creating a smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy. Huják & Sik-Lányi (2017) consider that several competences are reinforced by Erasmus students, namely: (i) foreign language competences; (ii) international urbanity; (iii) in-depth knowledge of the respective host country; (iv) personality and social behavior; and (v) working independently. Finally, Gedeon (2017) aggregates the various benefits offered in three levels: (i) knowledge; (ii) skills; and (iii) attitudinal. These three dimensions influence the learning outcomes.

There are divergent studies in the literature on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic performance. The results obtained by Nasrullah et al. (2016) do not allow verifying the existence of a statistical correlation between these two variables, but it was possible to realize that the students who attended courses of entrepreneurship presented a more dynamic and critical attitude, and greater capacity to work in group. Onyebu (2015) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and academic performance among students in Nigerian universities. Contrary to the previous study, Onyebu (2015) found a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and academic achievement of students, arguing that the student's gender did not significantly influence the academic performance. Yaqub et al. (2015) adopted a quantitative study to demonstrate that there is a strong and positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and attitude towards entrepreneurship.

The motivation of students to attend entrepreneurship courses has also been discussed in literature. Küttima et al. (2014) used a cross-sectional approach consisting of students from 17 European countries to determine what are the expectations and motivations of students to attend an entrepreneurship curricular unit. The results indicated that most of the formations adopt lectures and seminars, while students expect to have more networking and coaching activities. Brancu et al. (2012) used data from students enrolled in Entrepreneurship classes in Romania to

determine that socio-demographic profile and level of education influence the student's motivation for entrepreneurship. Duval-Couetil et al. (2014) deepen explored the conclusions of the previous study. For this purpose, Duval-Couetil et al. (2014) used data from more than 2500 students enrolled in a multidisciplinary course offered in a major university in the United States to conclude that three variables must be taken into consideration when offered to entrepreneurship course: (i) demographic characteristics; (ii) career intentions; and (iii) entrepreneurial maturity.

Finally, there are also studies that intend to assess the impact of entrepreneurship teaching on society and on the professional career of graduates. Fayolle & Gailly (2015) suggest that the impact of entrepreneurship education is more relevant when previous entrepreneurial exposure has been weak or inexistent. However, the effect is contradictory and inverse to students who have been exposed to entrepreneurship. Duval-Couetil & Long (2015) developed a quantitative study based on 97 graduate students from an American university to conclude that the number of students that pursue entrepreneurship immediately after graduation is very low. They prefer, therefore, before embarking on the adventure of launching their own business, to develop their leadership skills in existing organizations, and establish a more stable financial condition.

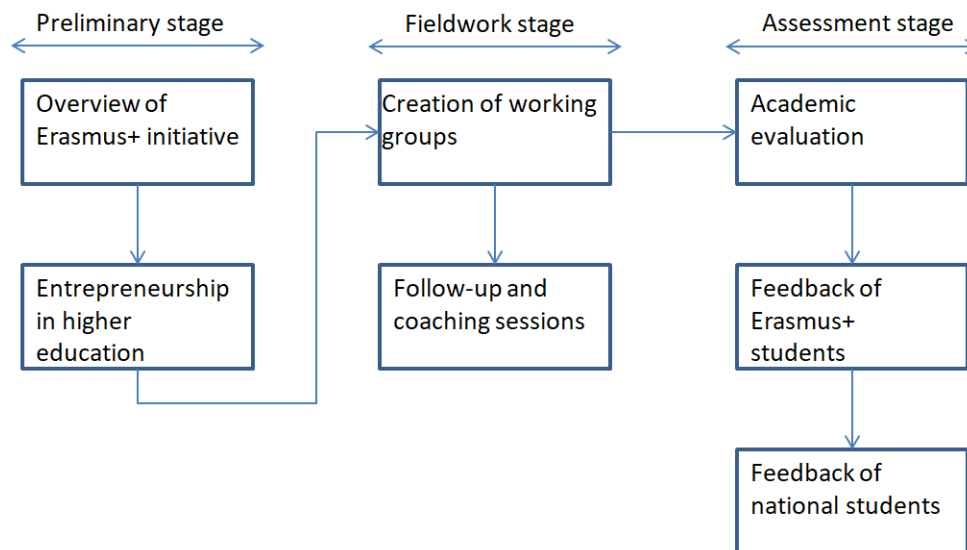


Figure 1: Research methodology

The study follows exclusively a qualitative approach, because this is a subject not yet explored in the literature and, in addition, the number of Erasmus+ students who have participated in the last two years in this course is also low. In-depth interviews were adopted

because it allows us to explore and understand in greater depth valuable contextual information to explain the results obtained. In addition, in-depth interviews are considered extremely versatile and flexible being applied in many areas of the social and economic sciences (Alsaawi, 2014; Queirós et al., 2017).

It is also important to characterize the profile of Erasmus+ participants in the Entrepreneurship course. Thus, we have: 3 students from the University of Lodz in Poland, 2 students from Šiauliai University in Lithuania, 1 student from Dundalk Institute of Technology in Ireland, and 1 student from Artesis College University Antwerp in Belgium. Only two of these seven students had previous experience of international mobility.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 RQ1 – What are the main challenges experienced by Erasmus+ students in joining a multidisciplinary and multicultural working group?

Firstly, the final classification obtained by the Erasmus+ students in the entrepreneurship course was analyzed (Table 1). There was a very asymmetric performance of the students, although the average was above 14 values on a scale of [0-20]. A high standard deviation (2,507) reflects this situation.

Table 1: *Statistical analysis of the evaluation of Erasmus+ students*

Dimension	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. dev.	Asymmetry
Final evaluation	14,43	15	15	2,507	Negative

As it would be expected, the individual analysis of student performance is quite inconclusive. In-depth studies have allowed us to explore various challenges in integrating these students, and it has been possible to identify:

- Language barriers - the heterogeneous level of national students in speaking English has caused increased difficulties in integrating these students into the work teams. To circumvent this limitation, in groups where this situation was most critical, a student with more knowledge in the English language was identified and acted as facilitator of communication between the various members of the group. Other alternatives could have been used like the adoption of storytelling as proposed by Nassim (2018) that could simultaneously improve their reading, writing and creative skills;

- Existence of post-work students - approximately half of the students enrolled in this course has a full-time professional activity, which turns more difficult their participation in all classes. The interaction among each group was compromised in these situations. In a way to mitigate this issue, students used social networks as a synchronous communication tool. Additionally, the adoption of an e-learning tool allowed the students to follow the evolution of the work and access to the support material provided by the teacher;
- Taking initiative - every month students completed a sheet in Excel describing the performed activities, the time spent on them and the main difficulties encountered and decisions made. This Excel sheet worked as an activity log. In addition, each of the students performed their self-assessment and also evaluated their group colleagues according to six criteria: (i) attendance; (ii) work team; (iii) initiative; (iv) work performed quantity; (v) work performed quality; and (vi) time management. It was possible to identify that the Erasmus+ students had worse performance in the initiative component, while the post-work students faced more difficulties in the attendance and time management components;
- Choosing a business idea - all groups had difficulty finding an innovative business idea in which all students were enthusiastic about it. However, the presence of Erasmus+ students was recognized by students as a facilitator in this process, as their distinct experience and experience enabled each group to think outside the box and explore new fields of knowledge. It is relevant to highlight two projects, in the field of tourism, in which this situation was evident: one of them intended to build a web tool that helps in the integration of exchange students, namely in the choice of accommodation, catering and other useful services (e.g., laundry, transports, etc.); another that projected a device that allows travelers to have discounts at souvenir shops. The device uses near-field communication (NFC) to enable payment within each business establishment;
- Division of labor - many groups to fill the difficulty felt by many students in attending school sessions, attempted to implement a rigid division of labor based on the business plan template. However, this approach proved to be ineffective and inefficient, because it became necessary to revise each document significantly before it was submitted for

evaluation, for example, elements addressed in the marketing plan did not have sufficient continuity or are contradictory in the operational plan or financial plan;

- Recognize the contribution of each student - some Erasmus+ students had a very different background from the national students. This situation has caused difficulties in integrating them in the dynamics of the team.

5.2 RQ2 – What are the main benefits perceived by Erasmus+ students in the attendance of the Entrepreneurship course?

Two types of benefits, quite distinct from each other, were identified by students. Firstly, the benefits of studying abroad in a foreign country through the Erasmus+ program are highlighted. Another group of advantages was also perceived by the students and they deal with the technical component of the construction of the business plan, but also in the acquisition and training of soft-skills.

Erasmus+ experience was considered very positive, and all of students expressed interest in getting new mobility experiences in the future. There was even one of the Lithuanian students that expressed interest in extending their exchange program for another six months. The benefits identified by the students are in-line with those identified in the literature, such as: acquiring new skills and competence; capacity to adapt to new situations; enrich the curriculum; possibility of working abroad in the future; network (Mitchell, 2012; Rose, 2015; Jacobone & Moro, 2015).

Most technical and behavioral competences perceived by the students who attended the entrepreneurship course are also in-line with the benefits identified in literature (Aljhani, 2015; Huják & Sik-Lányi; Gedeon, 2017). However, three types of skills deserve to be highlighted: (i) teamwork, since they were involved in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams; (ii) creativity, since brainstorming and risk management techniques were applied in the process of identifying and selecting business ideas with greater potential; and (iii) solution-oriented thinking, since the construction of a business plan requires a lot of field work in the collection and validation of several elements that allow to sustain and validate the business idea. Furthermore, working groups with Erasmus+ students showed a greater propensity for the international dimension of the business, especially when a company started its activities. The groups composed exclusively of national students assumed that the start of their activities would take place in their own country and, along the years, projected the growth of their business to other countries with some degree of affinity (e.g., the same language, geographical proximity). On the contrary, groups with Erasmus+ students were more receptive to register the business in the countries of origin of

the Erasmus+ students in their group. Additionally, they also showed a greater willingness to accept the expansion to markets with greater attractiveness and growth potential.

5.3 RQ3 – Have the previous knowledge possessed by the students been a facilitator or inhibitor of their integration?

When the working groups were set up, there was an initial difficulty encountered by national students in welcoming Erasmus+ students. In addition to the language barrier, there were also some difficulties for the national students in understanding the areas in which Erasmus+ students could contribute for the project. Two difficulties were identified: (i) heterogeneity of course structure in the field of management; (ii) heterogeneity of students' course of origin. Although five of the pupils came from of the management course, many different competences were identified in these students, for example, several students had difficulties in understanding the concept of segmentation, strategic positioning and marketing mix. On the other side, three students came from very distinct courses: one in the area of logistics; another in the area of management of urbanism and another that is attending the BSc. in social service. These two situations were particularly difficult in the initial phase of the project, but were mitigation by the inclusion of coaching sessions with these students to fill their difficulties in these areas.

However, despite these initial difficulties, it is important to recognize that this heterogeneity of competence was beneficial to the quality and diversity of the projects. It was possible to create projects in different areas that were not initially considered by national students when they enrolled in this course.

5.4 RQ4 – What is the emphasis of the collaboration given by each Erasmus+ student in the projects?

The entrepreneurship project consisted in the development of a business plan and a prototype. However, Erasmus+ students only collaborated in the process of developing the business plan, because they all came from the management course and did not have enough technical IT skills. In any case, all the students had to collect a large amount of data and interact between them, which are aspects that Bermejo et al. (2017) consider essential for the resolution of a problem.

All Erasmus+ students collaborated in the process of developing the business plan in all areas. Most of the groups identified that the Erasmus+ students gave an important contribution to the process of generating the business idea, in the market research and in the definition of an

internationalization plan. There was also a greater willingness of these students to collaborate in the writing of the marketing plan after the coaching sessions. However, there were some difficulties evidenced by Erasmus+ students in unequivocally identifying the contribution made to each of the projects. This situation has not always led to a negative perception of its performance, since oftentimes the dynamics of working groups make it difficult to identify individually the contribution of each member. In these situations, greater relevance should be given to the overall results achieved by the working group as a team. The discrepancy of the classifications was mainly due to the commitment of these students and their presence in the classes.

6. Conclusions

It is becoming increasingly important to offer students' exchange experience at European level in higher education. The Erasmus+ initiative plays a key role in this process, but it is equally important that Erasmus students attend courses at the destination university that is important for their qualification as students and citizens. The entrepreneurship course, due to its wide scope, enables students to develop an entrepreneurship project in multi-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary teams.

In this empirical study, we reported the experience of several students attending the Erasmus+ program in the entrepreneurship course. Four research questions were formulated and it was possible to conclude that:

- RQ1 – the main challenges and difficulties experienced by Erasmus+ students were the language barriers, working with post-work students who were not always available in the classroom, difficulties in choosing the business idea, having initiative in working on the project, using often a rigid division of work and difficulties in merging into a final version of the business plan, and recognition of the contribution given by each student;
- RQ2 – the perceived benefits of the students that participated in this focus group are aligned with the potential benefits of attending a mobility program and an entrepreneurship course identified in the literature. Despite this, three benefits were highlighted by the students as being fundamental: teamwork, creativity and need to be a solution-oriented problem solver;
- RQ3 – it was realized that the significant differences in students' profile were an initial difficulty in establishing a work plan for the teams, but the results achieved, in terms of

the diversity and quality of the projects, showed that this situation was very positive and could not be achieved only with national students coming from the courses of management and IT;

- RQ4 – it was identified that all students collaborated in all elements of the business plan. It was also verified that coaching sessions were fundamental to reduce the asymmetry of knowledge among the students and to motivate them to participate in writing the business plan, mainly the marketing plan.

The main limitation of this study is the reduced number of international participants in this entrepreneurship course, since it is still a pilot project. Therefore, this initiative aims to attract more international students through the creation and strengthening of new academic international partnerships. The results obtained by the participation of the Erasmus+ students in this initiative are very encouraging both in the perspective of the national and international students and, consequently, there is potential to involve more Erasmus+ students in this initiative. Additionally, we also want that students become more immersed, allowing the formation of more homogenous working groups, and also bringing new technologies like serious game to the classroom. In this sense, it is important to highlight the parallel work developed by Almeida (2017) and Fox et al. (2018) that propose the use of serious games in the development of entrepreneurial skills involving students with multidisciplinary competences from different courses.

References

- Aljohani, M. (2015). Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Education. Ohio State Model. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(3), 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.20472/TE.2015.3.3.001>
- Almeida, F. (2017). Experience with entrepreneurship learning using serious games. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 12(2), 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v12i2.1939>
- Alsaawi, A. (2014). A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(4), 149-156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2819536>
- Arasti, Z., Falavarjani, M., & Imanipour, N. (2012). A Study of Teaching Methods in Entrepreneurship Education for Graduate Students. *Higher Education Studies*, 2(1), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v2n1p2>

- Beerkens, M., Souto-Otero, M., Wit, H., & Huisman, J. (2016). Similar Students and Different Countries? An Analysis of the Barriers and Drivers for Erasmus Participation in Seven Countries. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(2), 184-204.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315315595703>
- Bermejo, S, Cabero, M., Pérez, A., Sampaio-Gomes, R., Santos, C., & Prieto, C. (2017). Operating Method at Engineering Classes: A Twist is Necessary. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, 1(1), 13-25.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2017.11.1427>
- Bracht, O., Engle, C., Janson, K., Over, A., Schomburg, H., & Teichler, U. (2006). The professional value of ERASMUS mobility. International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel). University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany.
- Branču, L., Munteanu, V., & Gligor, D. (2012). Study on Student's Motivations for Entrepreneurship in Romania. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 62, 223-231.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.036>
- Brown, N., & Nash, E. (2016). *Intercultural Horizons – Identities, Relationships and Languages in Migration, Volume IV*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Bryla, P. (2014). Self-Reported Effects of and Satisfaction with International Student Mobility: A Large-Scale Survey among Polish Former Erasmus Students. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 2074-2082. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.248>
- Celli, L. & Young, N. (2017). Contemporary Pedagogy for the Adult Learning. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, 1(1), 86-96.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2017.11.8696>
- Di Pietro, G. (2013). Do study abroad programs enhance the employability of graduates? IZA Discussion Paper, No. 7675. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2345592>
- Duval-Couetil, N., Gotch, C., & Yi, S. (2014). The Characteristics and Motivations of Contemporary Entrepreneurship Students. *Journal of Education for Business*, 89(8), 441-449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2014.933156>
- Duval-Couetil, N., & Long, Z. (2015). Career Impacts of Entrepreneurship Education: How and When Students Intend to Utilize Entrepreneurship in their Professional Lives. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 26(1), 1-18.

EC (2018). Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Retrieved from

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/files/resources/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

Engel, C. (2010). The impact of Erasmus mobility on the professional career: Empirical results of international studies on temporary student and teaching staff mobility. *Belgeo – Revue belge de géographie*, 4, 1-16.

Farrugia, C., & Sanger, J. (2017). *Gaining an Employment Edge: The Impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects in the United States*. Washington, DC: IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact.

Fayolle, A., & Gailly, B. (2015). The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Intention: Hysteresis and Persistence. *Small Business Management*, 53(1), 75-93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12065>

Fernández, M., Jiménez, F., & Roura, J. (2015). Business incubation: innovative services in an entrepreneurship ecosystem. *The Service Industries Journal*, 35(14), 783-800. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2015.1080243>

Fombona, J., Rodriguez, C., & Sevillano, M. (2013). The Motivational Factor of Erasmus Students at the University. *International Education Studies*, 6(4), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n4p1>

Fox, J., Pittaway, L., & Uzuegbunam, I. (2018). Simulations in Entrepreneurship Education: Serious Games and Learning Through Play. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 1(1), 61-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2515127417737285>

Gedeon, S. (2017). Measuring Student Transformation in Entrepreneurship Education Programs. *Education Research International*, vol. 2017, Article ID 8475460, 12 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/8475460>

Huják, J., & Sik-Lányi, C. (2017). Modern journeyman or contemporary ERASMUS students - serving Europe's knowledge-based economy. *International Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital*, 14(2), 177-191. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJLIC.2017.084072>

Jacobone, V., & Moro, G. (2015). Evaluating the impact of the Erasmus programme: skills and European identity. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 40(2), 309-328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2014.909005>

- Küttim, M., Kallaste, M., Venesaar, U., & Kiis, A. (2014). Entrepreneurship education at university level and students' entrepreneurial intentions. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 110, 658-668. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.910>
- Lesjak, M., Juvan, E., Ineson, E., Yap, M., & Axelsson, E. (2015). Erasmus student motivation: Why and where to go? *Higher Education*, 70(5), 845-865. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9871-0>
- Mitchell, K. (2012). Student mobility and European Identity: Erasmus Study as a civic experience? *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 8(4), 490- 518.
- Moustaghfir, K., & Sirca, N. (2010). Entrepreneurial learning in higher education: introduction to the thematic issue. *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies*, 3(1), 1-24.
- Nasrullah, S., Khan, M., & Khan, I. (2016). The Entrepreneurship Education and Academic Performance. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(1), 1-4.
- Nassim, S. (2018). Digital Storytelling: An Active Learning Tool for Improving Students' Language Skills. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, 2(1),14-27. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2018.21.1427>
- Neck, H., & Greene, P. (2011). Entrepreneurship education: known worlds and new frontiers. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 49(1), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2010.00314.x>
- Nilsson, P. (2013). Expectations and experiences of temporarily studying abroad. *História – Revista da FLUP*, 4(3), 183-198.
- Nilsson, P., & Ripmeester, N. (2016). International Student Expectations: Career Opportunities and Employability. *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), 614-631.
- Onyebu, C. (2015). The role of entrepreneurial skills in academic performance: a case study of selected universities in Abia State, Nigeria. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 121-130.
- Pittaway, L., Gazzard, J., Shore, A., & Williamson, T. (2015). Student clubs: experiences in entrepreneurial learning. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 27(3-4), 127-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2015.1014865>
- Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and Limitation of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 369-387. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.887089>

- Rose, L. (2015). Impact of Erasmus mobility for study on the development of Tuning Europe generic competences, as assessed by outgoing and incoming students in a large university: a revealing analysis. *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*, 3(1), 57-98.
[http://dx.doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-3\(1\)-2015pp57-98](http://dx.doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-3(1)-2015pp57-98)
- Souto-Otero, M., Huisman, J., Beerkens, M., de Wit, H., & Vujic, S. (2013). Barriers to International Student Mobility. *Educational Researcher*, 42(2), 70-77.
<https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X12466696>
- Tamas, A. (2014). Advantages of study abroad from the students' perspective. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 2(4), 67-88.
- Teichler, U., and Janson, K. (2007). The Professional Value of Temporary Study in Another European Country: Employment and Work of Former ERASMUS Students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3/4), 486-495.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1028315307303230>
- Undiyaundeye, F., & Out, E. (2015). Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition and the Benefits amongst the Undergraduate Students in Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research*, 5(1), 9-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26417/ejser.v4i1.p9-14>
- Wang, C., & Chugh, H. (2014). Entrepreneurial Learning: Past Research and Future Challenges. *British Academy of Management*, 16(1), 24-61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12007>
- Wright, A. (2017, Oct 5). Students Who Study Abroad Make More Well-Rounded Employees. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/global-hr/pages/students-who-study-abroad-make-more-well-rounded-employees.aspx>
- Yaqub, M., Mufti, N., Ali, S., & Khaleeq, M. (2015). Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Attitudes of Students Towards Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 11, 590-595.