ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

THE NATURE, EMERGENCE, AND IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY IN AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CONTEXT

By Amr El-Kebbi, MScM MBA

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Lay Abstract

In my thesis, I present three studies that explore the nature of entrepreneurial identity and its impact on career identities. After the first introductory chapter, I examine in the second chapter a Graduate Program of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (GPEI) and discuss the accidental professionalization of entrepreneurship as an outcome. In the third chapter, I examine the nature and emergence of an entrepreneurial identity driving the professionalization of entrepreneurship among students of entrepreneurship. In the fourth chapter, I examine the impact of entrepreneurial identity on various future career paths of entrepreneurship graduates. In the fifth chapter, I conclude by discussing the impact of this research on my academic and personal identities.

Abstract

Entrepreneurial identity shapes thoughts and actions of entrepreneurs during the process of opportunity recognition and new-venture creation. Entrepreneurship education as a context is expected to facilitate the emergence of entrepreneurial identity among students. In my thesis, I present three studies that explore the nature of entrepreneurial identity and its impact on career identities. After the first introductory chapter, I examine in the second chapter a Graduate Program of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (GPEI) at the school of engineering and an entrepreneurship stream at MBA program (EnMBA) in two prestigious Canadian universities. I discovered a new unintended career specialization that I identify as an "entrepreneurship profession." This study contributes to the theory of legitimation by identifying elements that impact and were impacted by the newly emerging entrepreneurship education program. My findings provide insight into the institutionalization of new fields, as well as the evolutionary properties of management education. In the third chapter, I examine the nature and emergence of an entrepreneurial identity among students of an entrepreneurship Bachelor of Commerce program in Toronto, Canada. I found entrepreneurial identity to be a self-perceived meta-identity that enables individuals to reject aspects of their current role identities and create new ones. In the fourth chapter, I examine how individuals who graduated from entrepreneurship programs use their entrepreneurial identities in shaping their careers. I found that entrepreneurial identity acquired during entrepreneurship education shapes the profiles of graduates, and five career paths were identified: dream-building, entrepreneurship pop culture, institutional entrepreneurship, investment entrepreneurship, and new venture path. I argue that entrepreneurship education might not prepare its graduates to become founders, but it empowers them with an entrepreneurial identity awareness and entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. In

the fifth chapter, I conclude by discussing the impact of this research on my academic and personal identities. I elaborate on future research opportunities and my research program. I also reflected on my own entrepreneurial identity and its impact of my academic career.

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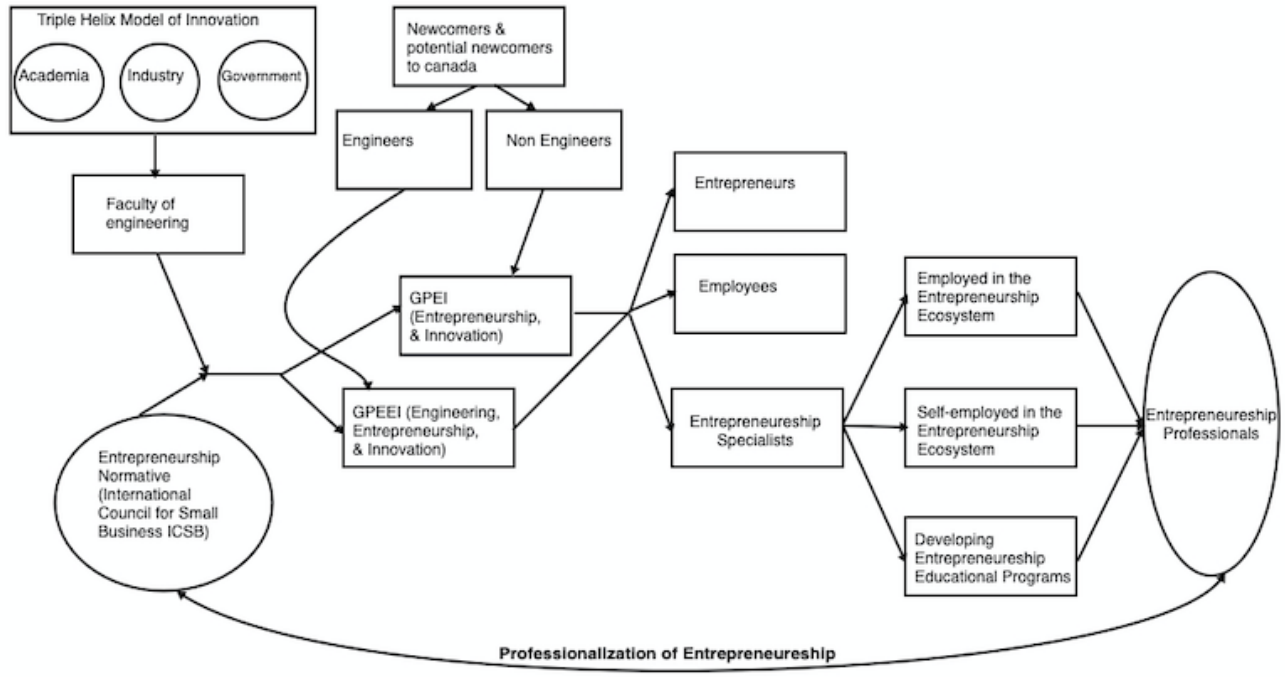

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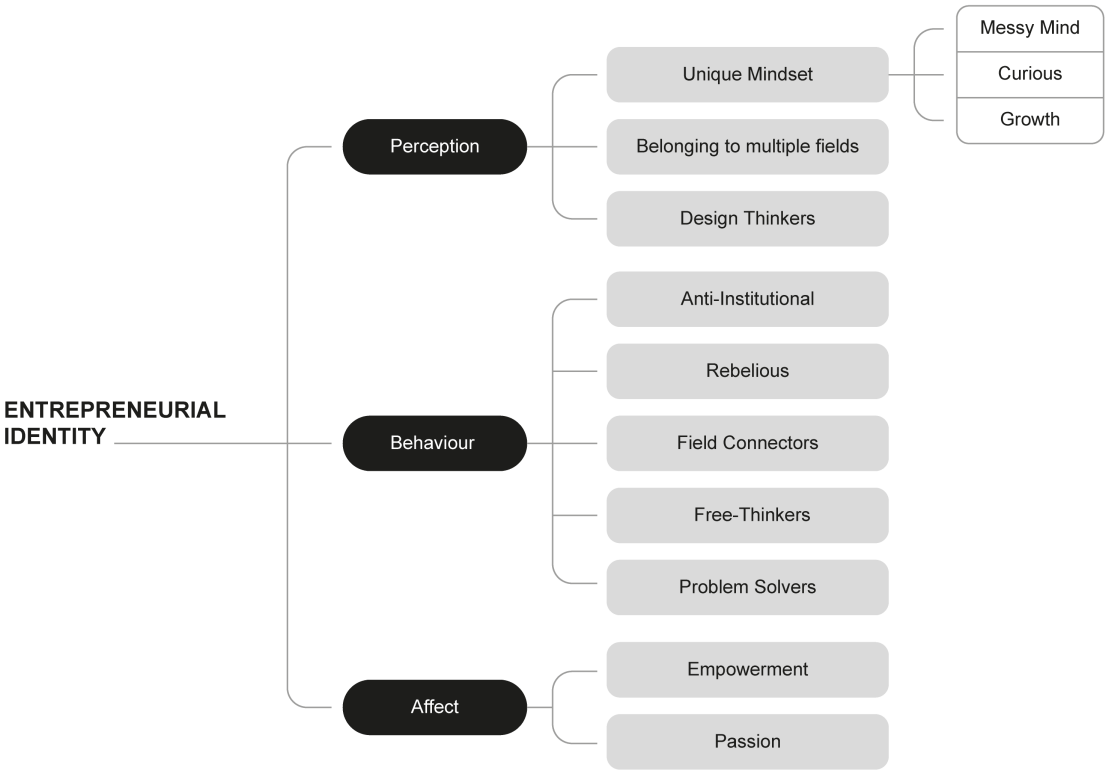

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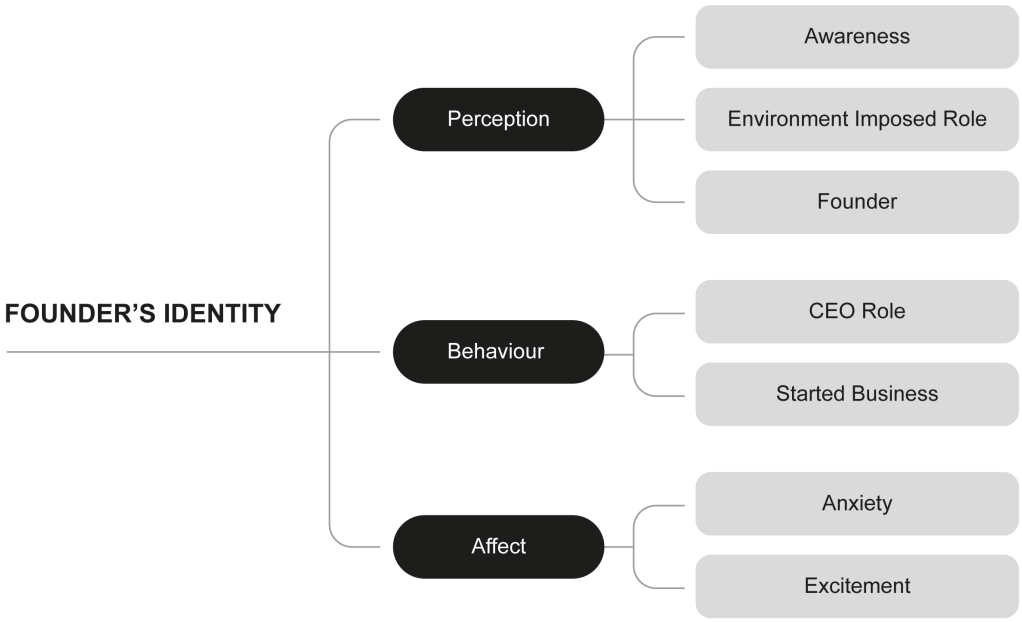

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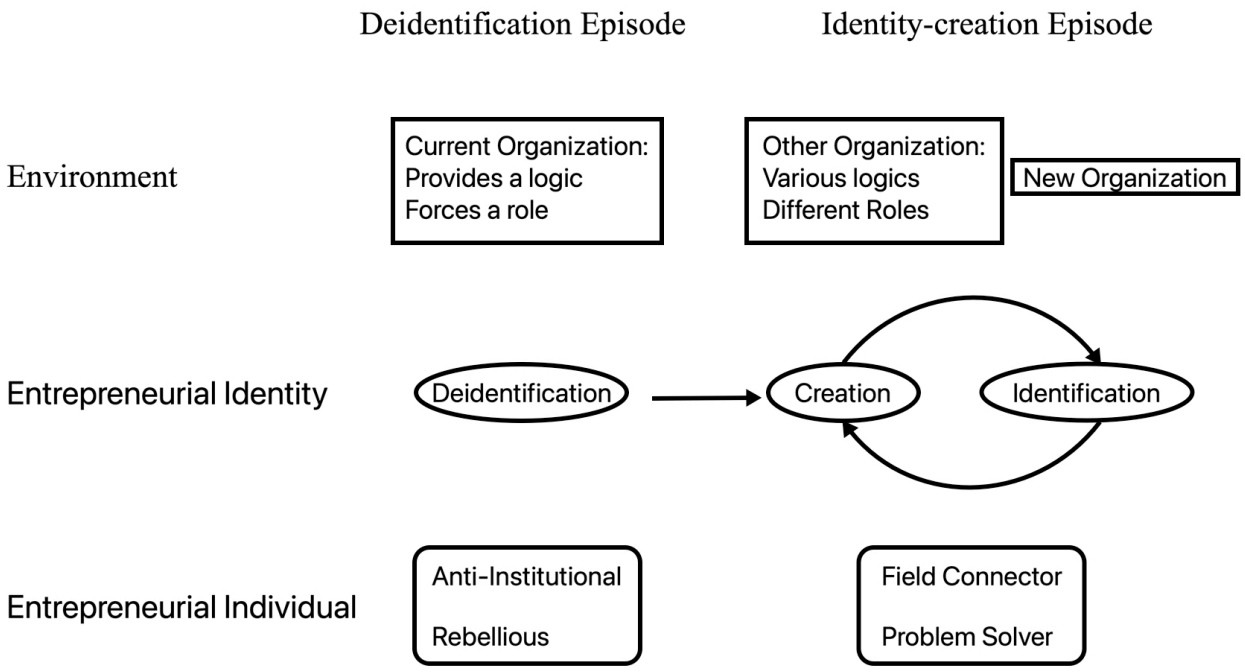

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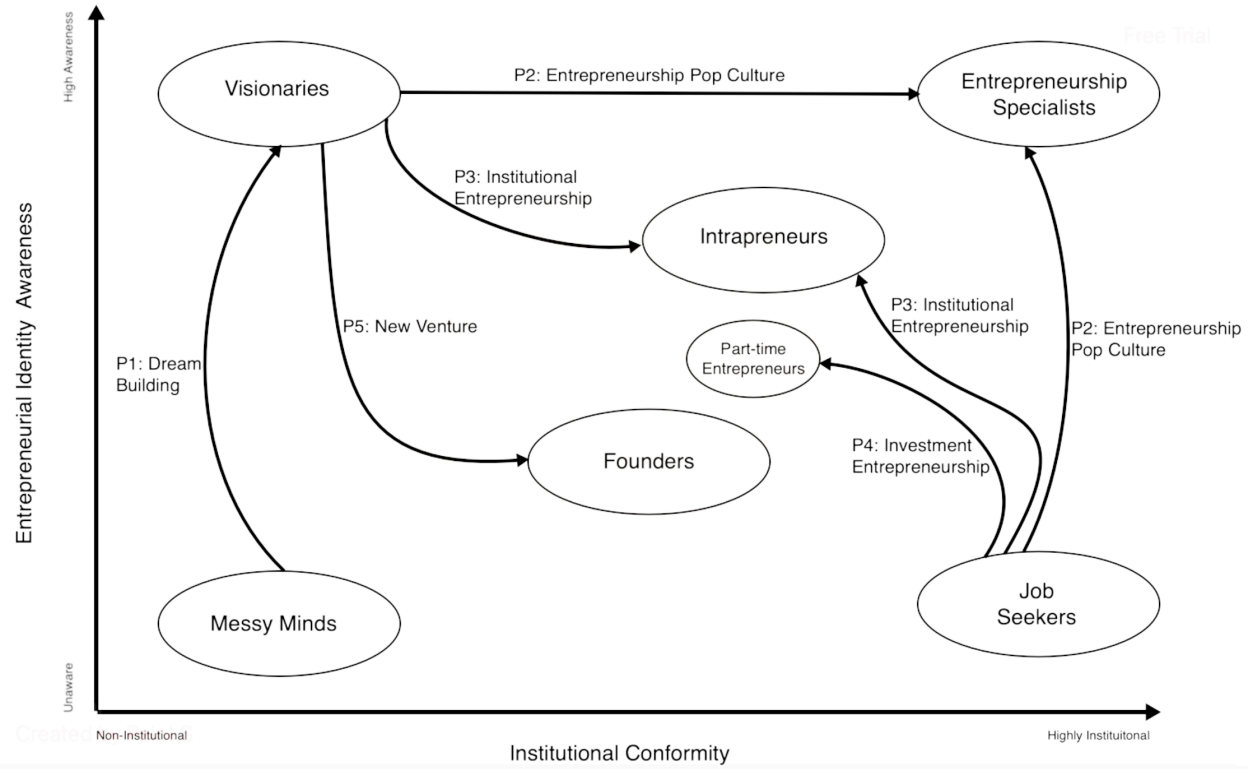

Table 1: Data Sampling (Chapter 2)

	Units of Analysis		
	School of Engineering	**Entrepreneurship Programs**	**Career Path of Graduates**
Data Sources	Online Documents	Online Documents	32 LinkedIn Profiles
	6Graduates Interview	4 Courses	39 Interviews
		2 Faculty Interviews	

Table 2: Profiles of Informants (Chapter 4)

Profile Detected	Number of Informants
Messy Minds	12
Job Seekers	74
Visionaries	19
Entrepreneurship Specialists	27
Intrapreneurs	46
Part-time Entrepreneurs	7
Founders	14

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Initial Profile	Entrepreneurship Education	Other Constructs	Driving Energy	Final Profile
Messy Minds	Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness		Destructive	Visionaries
Job Seekers	Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness	Entrepreneurship Ecosystem	Knowledge	Entrepreneurship Specialists
Job Seekers	Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness	Institutional Role	Executive	Intrapreneurs
Job Seekers	Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness	Institutional Field	Executive	Part-time Entrepreneurs
Visionaries	Institutional Knowledge	Entrepreneurship Ecosystem	Potential	Entrepreneurship Specialists
Visionaries	Institutional Knowledge	Institutional Role	Potential	Intrapreneurs
Visionaries	Institutional Knowledge	Institutional Field	Balancing	Founders

LIST OF ALL ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ADHD Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

AI Artificial Intelligence

AMLE Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal

AoM Academy of Management

BAM British Academy of Management

BCom Bachelor of Commerce

EnMBA Entrepreneurship Master of Business Administration

ETP Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice Journal

CBC Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CEO Chief Executive Offices

CTV Canadian Television Network

EI Entrepreneurial Identity

FI Founder Identity

GMAT Graduate Management Admission Test

GPEEI Graduate Program of Engineering Entrepreneurship and Innovation

GPEI Graduate Program of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Meng Master of Engineering

MBA Master of Business Administration

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In the first study (chapter 2) of this sandwich thesis, I participated in the final stages of interviews that were started by Dr. Benson Honig and his research assistants. However, I analyzed the interviews and wrote the paper under the supervision of Dr. Honig.

In the other two studies (chapters 3 & 4) of this sandwich thesis, I designed the study, collected the data, and analyzed them. Then, I wrote the versions submitted under the supervision of Dr. Honig.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Identity of entrepreneurs has been a recent topic of research because it is expected to provide an understanding of entrepreneurship above and beyond research on entrepreneurial competencies (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Murnieks & Mosakowski, (2007) used role identity theory to discuss the existence of entrepreneurial identity relative to other common identities of entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial identity helps entrepreneurs develop a meaning that conceptualizes their entrepreneurial role. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) approached entrepreneurs' identity from a social identity perspective to identify three archetypical social identities of entrepreneurs: Darwinians, Missionaries, and Communitarians. Role identity and social identity theories have a history of competition (Hogg et al., 1995). However, recent work on identification found both theories to be complementary. When studying role transition, either theory could apply and explain different aspects of the identification process (B. Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Entrepreneurial identity has been shown to be active during identity transition (Duening & Metzger, 2017). To study the process of identity transition, I used the two well recognized identity theories to study the emergence of entrepreneurial identity: macro-psychological social identity theory (J. C. Turner & Tajfel, 1986) and micro-sociological identity role theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000). In this thesis, I explore and explain the role of identity in entrepreneurial emergence and the process of individual development. I present three studies exploring the impact of entrepreneurship education, the emergence entrepreneurial identity in an entrepreneurship education context, and its role in shaping career identities.

There are Three chapters designed as three publishable papers after this introductory chapter and before the concluding chapter.

In the second chapter, I examine a Graduate Program of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (GPEI) at the school of engineering and an entrepreneurship stream at MBA program (EnMBA) in two prestigious Canadian universities. While these programs were initially designed to graduate nascent entrepreneurs with new ventures, they had the unintentional outcome of creating the profession of entrepreneurship as an instructional and motivational career. I examine the emergent process and credentialing of entrepreneurship promotion as a new professional field. An early version of this paper was presented at AoM conference 2020. A new version is prepared for submission to AMLE.

In the third chapter, I examine the nature and emergence of an entrepreneurial identity among students of an entrepreneurship Bachelor of Commerce program in Toronto, Canada. Entrepreneurial identity shapes thoughts and actions of entrepreneurs during the process of opportunity recognition and new-venture creation. Entrepreneurship education is expected to facilitate the emergence of entrepreneurial identity among students. After interviewing more than 49 students and alumni, I used both identity and social identity theories to find that entrepreneurial identity is a self-perceived identity that individuals acquire after they reject aspects of their current roles in order to create new ones. Entrepreneurship education helps students discover their entrepreneurial identity to various degrees. Once they discover their entrepreneurial identity, students are empowered, specifically rebellious ones that are considered "unfitting" with respect to other institutional roles such as restricted employment positions. An early version of this paper was presented at the AoM conference in 2022. A new version is prepared to be submitted to ETP.

In the fourth chapter, I examine how individuals who graduated from entrepreneurship programs use their entrepreneurial identities in shaping their careers. Entrepreneurial identity is a

self-perceived social identity that allows individuals to challenge their current institutional roles, to recreate new roles, to improve their position in a field, and to redefine their surrounding environments. Entrepreneurial identity shapes the identity of entrepreneurs and other career identities. I interviewed 83 informants who studied entrepreneurship either in their graduate of undergraduate education, in addition to eight entrepreneurs who took some entrepreneurship courses and became founders of new ventures. I positioned profiles of informants on a two-dimensional matrix: how institutional they are versus how aware they are of their entrepreneurial identity. Institutional individuals are actors with reflective capacity and sense of self (Voronov & Weber, 2020). The more self-aware the actors, the less institutional they are. First, I found that entrepreneurial identity is used by individuals to redefine their roles or reposition themselves to access more resources. Second, I discovered entrepreneurs to be the least aware of their entrepreneurial identity although they use it frequently to resolve paradoxes they face. Third, I identified that informants who are aware of their entrepreneurial identity and how they use it instrumentally during their careers. An early version of this paper was presented at BAM2022. A new version is being prepared for submission to ETP

Chapter	Paper Title	Author(s) by order	Targeted Journal/chapter
1	The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education Programs on their Ecosystems: The Emergence of an Entrepreneurship Profession	Amr El-Kebbi, Benson Honig	Academy of Management Learning & Education
2	The Emergence of Entrepreneurial Identity among Entrepreneurship Students	Amr El-Kebbi, Benson Honig	Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice
3	Entrepreneurial but not Entrepreneur: How Entrepreneurial Identity Shapes Identity of Entrepreneurs and Other Career Identities	Amr El-Kebbi, Benson Honig	Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice

CHAPTER 2: THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON THEIR ECOSYSTEMS: THE EMERGENCE OF AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROFESSION

ABSTRACT

I study the interesting and emergent new field of "accidental" professionalization: the university certified, qualified, and increasingly recognized professional entrepreneur and entrepreneurship instructor. Entrepreneurship continues to be a popular and growing field in universities spanning numerous faculties ranging from business to the Arts. Numerous engineering schools have created dedicated graduate programs to teach entrepreneurship as a distinct discipline. To better understand why these programs exist, how they acquire legitimacy, and what type of career their graduates pursue, I studied programs at a prestigious Canadian university. I analyzed the content and structure of the program and conducted more than 35 interviews including faculty and alumni that graduated two and ten years previously. Employing theories of emergence and holding environments, I analyzed the data and discovered a new unintended profession that I identify as an "entrepreneurship profession." I observed programs initially designed to graduate individuals who begin new start-up enterprises resulted in the unintentional outcome of creating the professionalization of entrepreneurship as an instructional and motivational career. I thus examine the emergent process and credentialing of entrepreneurship promotion as a new professional field. This study contributes to the theory of legitimation by identifying elements that impact and were impacted by the newly emerging entrepreneurship education program. My objective is to better understand the emergent entrepreneurship professionals in the field,

providing insight into the institutionalization of new fields, as well as the evolutionary properties of management education.

INTRODUCTION

In 1881, Joseph Wharton, an American Industrialists, founded the first business school in north America and defined its goal: "to provide for young men special means of training and of correct instruction in the knowledge and in the arts of modern Finance and Economy." Business Schools, like Wharton, designed programs to satisfy the needs of their developing economies beginning with the 19th century industrial revolution through the 21st century gig economy. While business majors have thrived to become the largest higher education major, their overall impact on business and society may be debatable (Ben Arbaugh et al., 2019; Hogan et al., 2021). Understanding the impact of management education in an ecosystem entails the understanding of when and how new fields in management education emerge, and what allows them to sustain themselves. My goal is this paper is to critically examine one contemporary expansion of a sub-field (entrepreneurship), providing insight into the institutionalization of management sub-disciplines, as well as the emergence of new fields of study. This insight is particularly important during times of rapid change in our economies and cultures, as both universities and business school are required to evolve accordingly.

One of the most recent additions to the business curricula is the study of entrepreneurship, which has expanded rapidly along with the reputation of the Silicon Valley (Bhatia & Levina, 2020; von Graevenitz et al., 2010) and new technological innovations yielding high growth 'unicorn' businesses. Entrepreneurship programs have become a growing field within the university context, where public pressure to provide a return on educational investment has led to increased attention on commercialization, business plan competitions, and university incubation activities (Etzkowitz, 2002; Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996). Increasing pressure on the part of adherents of the triple helix model (Dolfsma & Soete, 2006) , which argues that universities

should be actively engaged in commercialization of their intellectual property, has resulted in the proliferation not only of intellectual property offices, but also of dedicated programs to teach entrepreneurship as a distinct discipline (Collins et al., 2006; Falkäng & Alberti, 2000). In this study, I examine the distance between public pressures for performance in the marketplace, institutional persistence on the part of universities, and the emergence of a new profession existing between these two social bookends that are catalysts for the development of a cadre of entrepreneurship professionals. Studying this emergence provides important perspectives on the past and future evolution of business education world-wide.

Previous research has examined the professionalization of various fields, which require associated university programs and degrees, including diverse arenas such as finance (Lounsbury, 2002), organizational development (Church, 2001), public administration (Pugh & Hickson, 1989), sport psychology (Silva, 1989), and adult education (Wilson, 1993), as just a few examples. What is noteworthy about the professionalization of entrepreneurship, however, is that the activity itself is extremely broad, emergent, unspecified, contingent, and applicable to virtually any context. It is for this reason that the field has largely avoided agreeing upon one particular definition (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008) nor on a body of codified 'foundational' knowledge.

This research brought the attention to an interesting and emergent new field of "accidental" professionalization: the university certified, qualified, and increasingly recognized professional entrepreneur and entrepreneurship instructor. I analyzed career paths of graduates from one such program in an engineering department, comparing them with departmental graduates that have not taken entrepreneurship training, through interviews two to ten years after graduation. My contribution was to present a better understand the emergent institutionalization of

entrepreneurship professionals in the field, provide insight into the institutionalization of new fields, as well as the evolutionary properties of management education.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Attempts to institutionalize new fields frequently start as soon as a phenomenon emerges. While the process of institutionalization might not be clear, the institutional final form is well recognized, defined by its coercive, mimic, and/or normative forces (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). While entrepreneurship as a phenomenon or a field is not new; its current role in society and the economy, and certainly its promotion and recognition, has become increasingly more central (Audretsch & Keilbach, 2010). Public media world-wide bursts with 'Dragon's Den and Shark Tank' investment reality shows as well as entrepreneurship competitions and biographies. Simultaneously, AI and the digital era, recently exacerbated with the Covid pandemic, have been causing significant disruption, pushing more and more workers out of traditional employment by redundancy or by preference (Fana et al., 2020; Kalleberg, 2009). Even so, the opportunities for new graduates to find a clear durable remunerating career path are becoming even more scarce, highlighted by 'the great resignation' (Sull et al., 2022). Many occupations are declining, unionization and long-term job opportunities are becoming less available, and the growth of the 'gig' economy is newly transcendent, but less secure (Kuhn, 2016).

From a cultural perspective, entrepreneurship is perceived as a manifestation of the American dream of freedom, wealth, power, and creativity. This perception has been widely accepted as a result of the romanticized entrepreneurship success stories presented in the media, motivational books, and Hollywood movies (Alger, 2014; Wiklund et al., 2011). From an economic perspective, governments, pressured to create more job opportunities and increase economic growth, maintain that entrepreneurship and innovation can be the economic model of

the future. From a social perspective, there is a common belief that entrepreneurship helps resolve current social and environmental problems, even providing new routes of opportunity and occupational mobility (Valdez & Richardson, 2013). However, some critics of the neoliberal model argue these may be myths designed to reduce social contestation and fail to address important issues regarding inequality and sustainability (Chawla & Honig, 2020; Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Levidow, 2002).

As a global exemplar, the Silicon Valley has become an ideal environment for entrepreneurship and innovation (Armour & Cumming, 2006; Kenny & Sandefur, 2013; Saxenian, 1996). Consequently, various locations world-wide make consistent attempts to analyze and replicate the 'valley's' model, with many 'silicon' spin-off's such as Silicon Glen (Scotland), Silicon Wadi (Israel), Silicon Delta (China), Silicon Alley (New York), and Silicon Saxony (Germany) to name a few. Arguably, finding the recipe to create an entrepreneurship friendly ecosystem is akin to the contemporary search for the philosopher's stone. In addition to a vast array of financial and training programs offered to support entrepreneurs in creating their new ventures, various types of incubators present themselves as exceptional environments to create, develop, and grow new ventures (Aernoudt, 2004; D. Patton & Marlow, 2011). Along with this growing cadre of enthusiasts, educational institutions began offering graduate degrees in entrepreneurship and innovation. These programs enter a competitive landscape where it is important to gain legitimacy within the entrepreneurial ecosystem and establish their central role in the field by leveraging the reputation of their educational institutions. For example, entrepreneurship has become a rating for business schools in the major US News and world report university comparison (*The Best Entrepreneurship Programs, Ranked*, 2018). Although entrepreneurship education programs have diffused world-wide with the intention of training

more entrepreneurs that can create sustainable new ventures, little scholarly evidence shows they have significant impact and demonstrably train successful entrepreneurs compared to a control group (Duval-Couetil, 2013; Martin et al., 2013).

I examined a Graduate Program of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (GPEI) at the school of engineering at a prestigious Canadian university. I analyzed the content and structure of the program and conducted more than 47 interviews with the faculty and alumni that graduated at least two years and as long as 10 years prior to this study. This unique approach – interviewing alumni regarding their retrospective opinion of their education – represents an important addition to the assessment of scholarship and management education, in general. I compared the findings with data collected from interviews with faculty and alumni of a traditional degree in engineering at the same university and school. The research objective was to better understand how these programs are sustainable by investigating their impact on the entrepreneurship ecosystem through exploring career activities their graduates engage in. Insight from examining this emergent sub-field provides important generalizable insight regarding other existing and emerging academic and professional fields.

I designed this study based on theories of emergence and holding environments (Bruton et al., 2010). While conducting this study, I came to realize that the disruption caused by the inception of the Graduate Program in Entrepreneurial Innovation (GPEI) created a new social order - I termed this as an "entrepreneurship profession" – instead of the stated objective of graduating entrepreneurs capable of creating sustainable new ventures. I analyzed the data and contributed to understanding the process of emergence of a new entrepreneurship education program identifying elements that were impacted by the newly evolving program. The emerging

social outcome of GPEI, "entrepreneurship profession," appears to be gradually acquiring more legitimacy in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Emergence

In order to study the GPEI program, I relied on the theories of emergence (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Ruef, 2000; Suchman, 1995) to examine emerging social orders created by the GPEI as a disruptor in the entrepreneurship ecosystem and its holding environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Ruef, 2000; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Prior to this research I was unaware of the emerging social order caused by the GPEI program.

The GPEI as an educational program that can be viewed as "an integrated theoretical framework that provides a distinct viewpoint on organizations and that is associated with an active stream of empirical research" (Mckinley et al., 1999, p. 635). This definition signals two concepts: novelty and continuity. Emerging social orders that are based on an educational program are expected to be novel and bring new insights to their field, but at the same time, this novelty is typically perceived as an evolution of their field. Successful emerging social orders should find a critical balance between novelty and continuity (Misztal, 2013). Moreover, while functional validity is not a necessary requirement for a social order to emerge, when members of a new order provide additional attention to their field, they tend to legitimize and establish a social order to its emergence (Tracey et al., 2018). Consequently, more interaction starts to occur in the form of social networking with various actors from the field of the new social order establishing its central position.

When examining the emergence of an organization, its environment (Bourdieu, 1983) becomes an essential part of its legitimation process (Ruef, 2000). Thus, engineering faculties

exist within universities, engineering societies, and licensing boards. Existing organizations compete for acquiring a central position within their field, and emerging organizations redefine their fields in order to acquire a central position (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). Within an established field, central organizations access more resources, and their organizational forms become the most acknowledged forms, while other organizations within their fields try to mimic and relate to them regardless of their functionality. However, because some organizations belong to different fields, and they have overlapping forms (e.g. entrepreneurship incubators exist in universities, municipalities, and private firms) these quasi forms sometimes evolve to become unique forms in new emerging fields (Ruef, 2000).

In this study, I examine emergence based on observations of the forces existing in the field and the identity spaces they create. The Graduate Program in Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEI not only belonged to different fields, but also emerged due to various forces within these fields. Some of these forces can be the school of engineering, government, industry, investors, employers, and alumni. After its emergence, I observed its impact (Aguinis et al., 2014; Eesley & Lee, n.d.; Haley et al., n.d.; Karlsson & Moberg, 2013; Nabi et al., 2017) on the entrepreneurship ecosystem, influencing the emergence of a new social order in the field of entrepreneurship. In this study, I examine organizations belonging to multiple identity spaces at the same time, focusing on examining the forces leading to emergence.

Navis and Glynn (2010) described how new organizations in emerging markets behave dividing emergence into three stages: Market Category Emergence, Market Category Legitimation, and Market Category Early Growth. When new market categories achieve legitimacy, members of this category emphasize their distinct organizational identities within the category, employing linguistics, distinguishing affiliations, and organizational identities of the

individual members of the category. Because the graduate program of innovation and entrepreneurship (GPEI) is relatively new, I expect the graduates of this program to have a common identity claim, linguistic framing, affiliations, and field.

From an evolutionary perspective, Padgett and Powell (2012) take a macro perspective on emergence. They state that while in the short run, actors create relations, in the long run, relations create actors. The process where systems reproduce themselves is called autocatalysis, and organizational genesis is the phenomenon where new unique organizations or systems appear for the first time. In this case they emerge significantly different from existing organizations. The GPEI could be classified as autocatalysis because its outcomes support its existence through feedback loops. However, some of its derivatives might be considered genesis because of their novelty in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. In this study, I track observations related to the emergence of both autocatalysis and genesis phenomena impacted by the introduction of an entrepreneurship education program.

Holding Environments and Sensemaking for entrepreneurs

The unique factor constraining the emergence of entrepreneurs is that they have little guidance from their surroundings when creating new environments (Petriglieri et al., 2018). The very precarious nature of entrepreneurs' work and identity promotes personalization where work becomes a form of self-expression. Work itself, rather than belonging, becomes the main driver for entrepreneurs to define themselves, and productivity becomes the foundation on which their identity rests (Petriglieri et al., 2018). Pushing themselves to be productive, entrepreneurs are exposed to various types of conflicting emotional tensions (Monsen & Boss, 2009). Entrepreneurs and independent workers develop connections to routines, places, people, and

purpose. These connections help them manage those tensions and sustain their productivity. These connections are the personal holding environment that help entrepreneurs stay motivated in their work. Holding environments make precariousness tolerable (Petriglieri et al., 2018).

I directed my attention to holding environments. Theory suggests that entrepreneurs develop a holding environment to reduce emotional tensions caused by precariousness in their environments. I focused on studying what types of holding environments emerged; what the emerging process of these holding environments looked like; and how the informants were engaged in the sensemaking process (K. E. Weick et al., 2005). In order to capture the nuances of an emerging holding environment, I focused on the possibility of emerging networks triggered by the GPEI or its alumni (Padgett & Powell, 2012). I thus analyzed networks formed by graduates of the GPEI and networks formed by the GPEI program looking at both cases for their creation, evolution, and dissolution.

I studied the important role of holding environments in setting up the conditions for each network and its status. In this case, the GPEI is a holding environment and creator of other holding environments. The alumni of the GPEI come from different countries and backgrounds, and each background comprises a different set of networks and cultural sensemaking. After being exposed to the same graduate program, I was interested in exploring how the various sensemaking processes of the program evolved after graduation, and what elements caused them to diverge and/or converge.

Institutional Forces and Legitimacy

A holding environment is a type of a social order, and its emergence is connected to its legitimation, the legitimacy process. A social order is legitimate "only if action is approximately

or on the average oriented to certain determinate 'maxims' or rules" (Weber, 1978, p. 31). While individuals within a social order might not share the same norms, values, and beliefs, they behave in accordance with rules or beliefs that they presume are accepted by members of their social order. Thus, such a compliance with a social order is an indicator of members seeking legitimacy through either abiding by (a) a set of social obligations, or as (b) a desirable model of action (Walker et al., 2004).

An individual or an organization seeking legitimacy in a social order has to maintain their acquired legitimacy, otherwise they lose it (Douglas, 1986). The GPEI shapes, and is shaped by, the entrepreneurship ecosystem, but this mechanism is not clear. I examine the novelty and continuity of the graduate program in entrepreneurship and innovation GPEI and the social orders defining new holding environments that emerge as a result of the newly introduced GPEI. I examine the relevance of its functional validity to the emergence of the GPEI and its derivatives. I also study the interaction with actors within the entrepreneurship environment as holding environments. The GPEI is expected to have a legitimation strategy directed towards the entrepreneurship ecosystem and the faculty of engineering; as well as I expect the program to have a strategy directed towards their students and alumni.

The theory of legitimation (Berger et al., 1998; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986) explains the process of emerging innovation in a social order. The process of emergence of new innovations, in the form of a task group, has three milestones. The first, milestone depicts the process of which emerging innovation gains general validity, which is an objective multiple groups would like to address. In the case of a new entrepreneurship graduate program, it is commercialization of research coming out from the faculty of engineering. The validity of GPEI comes from the master’s degree it offers, which is issued by the faculty of engineering at a reputable Canadian

university. The second milestone discusses the dynamics of maintaining the status quo. The GPEI maintains its validity to the faculty of engineering as long as it brings value. While the initial intention of creating GPEI is empowering students to commercialize their innovations and create new ventures, GPEI has not delivered on this expectation. Thus, it is expected to find some other value to offer the faculty of engineering. The third milestone explains the consequences of reproducing the status quo. It is not clear how the investigated entrepreneurship program maintained its status quo, particularly given that it is not serving the objective of creating new ventures. Thus, I asked "what are the consequences of the current status quo?"

METHODS

I used a concurrent triangulation strategy, which implies multiple methods, data sources, and units of analysis (Creswell, 2013). The data collection methods included interviews and document analysis. The data sources included graduates, faculty, recruitment material, and course outlines. The unit of analysis varied between the school of engineering, the entrepreneurship programs, and career path of graduates.

This strategy allowed me to evaluate several relationships with respect to each unit of analysis: the school of engineering, the entrepreneurship programs, and career path of graduates (Greene et al., 1989; Morgan, 1998; Steckler et al., 1992). For the faculty of engineering, I examined its relationship with industry and government. For the entrepreneurship programs, I examined their relationship with the school of engineering, entrepreneurship community, and recruits. For the career path of graduates, I examined the impact of their entrepreneurship education on their current jobs.

Sample and Data Collection

I used a purposeful sampling approach (Yitshaki et al., 2021) to include elements interacting with the GPEI program. I examined the relationships among the GPEI program, the school of engineering, the entrepreneurship ecosystem, the GPEI faculty, and its graduates. To understand the role of the school of engineering, I downloaded documents from their website related to their graduate programs structure, student recruitment, and courses offered. I followed the same procedure with the GPEI program. From its website, I downloaded general information about the program, their enrollment requirement, and their entrepreneurship courses outlines. I examined public requirements for accepting new students, the content of their courses, program structure, faculty profiles, and programmatic claims made to recruit students. I investigated how the GPEI program positioned itself in the school of engineering and to the public. I wanted to know who the GPEI program was targeting to recruit as students, and what it was promising them after graduation.

I then identified graduates who finished the program at least two years prior to This study. I created a LinkedIn page for the alumni of the GPEI and invited graduates to join. I used key term searches, such as the name of the program, to find the profiles of these graduates, and I asked those who joined the LinkedIn page to invite their friends as well. I was able to recruit 39 GPEI graduates, and I interviewed them using skype video calls.

A one-hour semi-structured interviews focused on their background, current careers, and the GPEI program. I asked questions about the GPEI program such as: "*How was the entrepreneurship program organized; What is the most important thing you learned about entrepreneurship from this program; What are the things you would have liked to learn in the entrepreneurship program, but you didn't learn?*" I also asked questions about their current careers and the impact of their entrepreneurship education on their current jobs such as: "*Are you currently running your own business; What is this business about; Why did you choose this type of business; Did the*

entrepreneurship course you took have an influence on you; If yes, how did it influence your start-up; Are you currently employed by a firm; If yes, how did the entrepreneurship course you took influence your current position?" These interviews were an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their entrepreneurship education and its role in their career development whether they became entrepreneurs or not.

I also interviewed two full time faculty members from the GPEI program. In these interviews I tried to understand the history, the objective, and the performance of the program. My objective was to confirm some findings from analyzing online documents and graduate interviews, as well as better understand the GPEI program from the point of view of its designers. These two interviews were face to face and semi-structured. I asked about the development of the program, their teaching philosophy, their resources for developing the content, their graduates, their current challenges, and their achievements.

Then, I collected comparable data using similar methods from a conventional graduate program at the same school of engineering as an element of comparison between the two programs. Comparing the programs amplified some of their organizational dynamics and made visible attributes of the two programs (Gephart, 2004; Suddaby, 2006) especially those with respect to the school of engineering. I ran six interviews with graduates from a traditional Master of Engineering program from the same school as the GPEI. The interviews were structured in a similar way as those with entrepreneurs. Although I asked if they started their own business, I focused more on their career and its relationship to their education. The multimethod of data collection enriched my understanding of each unit of analysis and the relationships among them (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The triangulation allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurship ecosystem (S. F. Turner et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data qualitatively using an abductive method consisting of multiple-stage analysis to develop theory (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021). I observed and confirmed anomalies in order to generate and evaluate hunches. I analyzed data using constant comparative methods based on constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). I compared between the traditional and entrepreneurship engineering programs as well as the various career paths of interviewed alumni. To increase trustworthiness, categories and themes were continuously negotiated between the authors (Wasser & Bresler, 1996).

As per table 1 of data structure, I had three units of analysis and several data sources for each. The unit of analysis were school of engineering, GPEI entrepreneurship program, and the career paths of GPEI graduates. The various data sources were online documents including graduates LinkedIn profiles, and interviews. I categorized these profiles based on their careers. I had the opportunity first to examine the LinkedIn profiles of the informants. This allowed me to develop an understanding of their career paths. I also had a deep pre-understanding (Thomas, 2010) of the curricula of the entrepreneurship programs under investigation from analyzing documents on the school of engineering and entrepreneurship programs.

Insert Table 1 About Here

As for the interviews, I employed repeated iterations of thematic coding (M. Q. Patton, 2002) between two stages. The first involved analyzing the interviews and content based on the descriptions provided by the informants. The second involved abstracting the themes emerged in the first stage with the intention of theorizing (Glaser & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In table 2, I demonstrate how the quotes lead us to first level open codes, second level constructs, and third level dimensions.

Insert Table 2 About Here

I started analyzing the first seven interviews with the GPEI program as the central unit of analysis. I tried to investigate the conditions that allowed such a program to emerge in the faculty of engineering, and the reasons that kept GPEI attractive to students and the faculty of engineering. After coding the first seven interviews, I decided to focus on categorizing interviewed graduates based on their current careers. I compared informants who ended up becoming entrepreneurs with those who became employees. I realized that most of the informants did not become employees, and I identified the various variables that lead to different career paths.

I then coded another five interviews and met again to decide that careers of the graduates from the GPEI program should become the major unit of analysis. Their choice of career trajectories became more insightful with the observations of the emergence of a new phenomenon. I identified three types of careers perused by the participants, entrepreneurs, employees, and entrepreneurship specialists. This last category was an unexpected career path. I decided to investigate more the conditions leading to its emergence. Consequently, the future careers became the major outcomes while the GPEI program became the disruptive actor in the ecosystem that led to the emergence of new careers and social actors.

With a third round of analysis, I found that entrepreneurship specialists are derivatives of a new social order, the professionalization of entrepreneurship. I focused on theorization of change in order to analyze the emergence of this new social order. I looked for the divergence between institutional vocabulary and change while acquiring legitimacy (Ocasio et al., 2015). I searched

for institutional vocabulary that organizations use for comprehensibility, when introducing change. However, in the case of a major change, the institutional vocabulary may be insufficient or might require introducing new concepts. I looked for emerging rhetorical strategies that combined both an emerging institutional vocabulary and theorization of change. I analyzed the rhetorical strategies and behaviors of the informants to compare the institutional vocabulary among the graduates of the GPEI program themselves and the interviewed professors teaching at the program. I also looked for symbolic references and institutional constructs referred to by the informants. Finally, I was able to identify a normalization process of an entrepreneurship industry and its professionals that was initiated by the entrepreneurship graduate educational programs. I knew I reached saturation when no new themes emerged after analyzing the last seven interviews that I kept till the end.

FINDINGS

The professionalization of entrepreneurship is the unintentional impact of GPEI on the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Figure 1 depicts this impact process and portrays the emergence of entrepreneurship professionals. It begins with the triple helix of innovation: significant political and cultural pressure have carved a desirable and a normative path for universities to follow. Entrepreneurship is culturally celebrated, and governments are encouraging commercialization of innovation at universities. Consequently, universities are responding with programs that satisfy political and cultural needs. In this case, I observed the nexus of academia, industry, and government, creating a graduate program for entrepreneurship and innovation for engineers at the school of engineering, The "Graduate Program in Engineering for Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEEI". Students were aware of the government's support, and one informant said when asked about any positive role the government plays:

"I guess a little bit. So, we took a company- within our grad work my supervisor- we took the most promising technologies- so we've been applying to try to start a not-for-profit business through a 15-million-dollar grant that the government offers. And we haven't been successful yet. And one of the hits on our application is always that we don't have any entrepreneurial experience."

Furthermore, students appreciate the direct and indirect role of industry in shaping the GPEEI program. Students feel comfortable to know that the teaching faculty has industry experience. One informants mentioned that when asked about the value of GPEEI, she said: *"For example, Dr. X was; he was an ex-(Major IT firm)…"*

In addition to attracting students with an engineering degree, the program also attracted a growing number of non-engineering graduates. Consequently, the Graduate Program for Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEI that was tailored to non-engineering undergraduate students emerged. The GPEI was developed to be nearly identical to the GPEEI in content but named differently for legislative and bureaucratic reasons. Graduates of the GPEEI had to be engineers, and given the demand pool, the GPEI became the most active program, attracting international students interested in immigrating to Canada.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Recruitment

Many graduates of these programs entered the work force, often attractive to small start-up companies that may have recognized the value of their training for emergent firms, a very small number, only two of the graduates, started their own firms, while others became professional entrepreneurship educators or coaches. Thus, three categories of graduate students appear as outcomes of these programs: entrepreneurs, employees, and entrepreneurship specialists.

Entrepreneurship specialists are either employed or self-employed in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. I identify three types of categories for these specialists: employees in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, self-employed in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, and developers of entrepreneurship education programs. Based on their education, expertise, and careers, the entrepreneurship specialists are viewed as entrepreneurship professionals that further institutionalize entrepreneurship in the ecosystem.

While initially designed to attract local innovative engineering graduates, the Graduate Program in Engineering Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEEI ended up attracting international engineering graduates who were interested in moving to Canada. The international students came mainly the Middle East, Latin America, and Central Asia. They found in the GPEEI a convenient access to Canada. The Canadian government immigration policy favours this path for acquiring permanent residency because it grants work permits to graduating foreign students from Canadian universities. Once these students find jobs in Canada, they become eligible for the Canadian permanent residency in less than a year. Typically, foreign students completed the program, found a job, and stayed in Canada. As one of the faculty members explained:

"Their intentions from what they tell us at the start is they want to start a business, and many of them, say 'I want to learn how to start a business, and then go back to my country and start my own business there'. A lot of them, of course, are interested in staying here (Canada) and become immigrants which we don't have a problem with."

Many of the foreign students were not interested in becoming entrepreneurs or starting their own new venture. Even if they were interested in becoming entrepreneurs, it was not their priority.

They wanted to secure their Canadian permanent residency first. When I asked Ricardo why he wanted to study in Canada and not Latin America, he replied:

"The difference I will say here in Canada, there are more opportunities here in Canada in terms of developing technology. There are more incentives from the government, from nom-profit organizations, from investors. Most of them are keen to come here in Canada rather than Latin America, where I studied and where I come from."

Moreover, they did not arrive at the program with an innovation that could be readily transformed into a business opportunity. They simply perceived the GPEEI as a traditional academic degree that teaches them about the subject entrepreneurship and not as a workshop that enabled them to become entrepreneurs. The initial vision of Dr. Basil did not materialize because it did not overlap with the vision of the incoming students. It evolved to become more about exposing student to entrepreneurial skills:

"Not to only have people who leave and then create their own company. It is really to teach leadership at organizational levels in a way that exposes the students to the variety of decisions that they have to make in pretty much every aspect of an organization, from the strategic, to the practical formed technical, to the operational, to marketing, to the business development, to the IP. Understanding how innovation brings all those [items] together and be able to understand accounting in corporate finance and be able to negotiate spec sheets with investors."

Furthermore, non-engineering graduates were interested in joining the GPEEI, but due to regulations from the Ontario Ministry of Education, non-engineering graduates cannot peruse an advanced degree of engineering such as the GPEEI. Consequently, the faculty and the school of engineering decided to create a new program identical to the GPEEI and called it the Graduate

Program in Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEI. The websites of the GPEEI and GPEI programs are 100% identical, the only difference is the title. When I asked the program director about the obstacles to admit non-stem graduates into the GPEEI program, he replied:

"It's more a provincial rule that say that you cannot bring a non-engineering to an M.Eng so we had to create a massive technology and get it to the provincial approval in order to be able to attract non engineers to our entrepreneurship program."

The only differences between the program were a few specialized elective courses that the non-engineering students did not qualify to take. In addition to international non-engineering graduates, the GPEI attracted two different categories of Canadian students: those who want to become entrepreneurs and those who want an MBA like degree without doing a graduate management admissions test (GMAT), a rather difficult and potentially burdensome qualification. It was noted, however, that very few Canadian-born and Canadian-educated students enrolled in either program, estimated at around five percent by the program director.

Ali is a non-engineering graduate Canadian citizen with an innovative idea for a new venture. He joined the GPEI program with the intention of developing his innovation and creating a business around it. He found the GPEI program very useful for him, and he appreciated the content of the program and the guidance he received from the faculty. Ali's vision was identical to Dr. Basil's vision about the program; however, in the interviews I found only two similar cases, as very few students seemed to actually want to graduate from the program and start their own business. When asked about why he chose GPEI, Ali said:

"When I came to GPEI, I really wanted to have a company, to have a start-up. I wasn't there for exams. I didn't care about putting up the diploma; I already had one to begin with, and

the master's degree doesn't make money for me. It's all about a portfolio. So, I wasn't there to get a degree. I was there to start a company like a mentorship, and it worked out on me."

Megan is an engineering graduate working for a well-established corporation. Megan got a promotion, and she is expected to lead a team of engineers to develop new products. Megan joined the program because she did not have time to complete a full MBA while keeping her job. Megan described her experience during the program as mediocre. She learned new useful skills that are usually taught in business schools; however, those skills could be learned through various workshops. Megan did not regret joining the program, but she does not believe it was the most efficient way to acquire business skills. Megan is working as a senior executive at a major IT firm, and she shared her perception about the program before joining. When asked: "why did you join GPEI?"

"Because I felt I needed to develop my career and my skill set. I was working and I knew that I… I think, I wasn't using my full skills, and in particular I had to show initiative and entrepreneurial or innovative abilities. You know… the alternative was to get an MBA, and I always thought MBAs were not necessarily the best use of time and resources. I felt this would give me an advantage. It would set me apart."

Samir is a newcomer to Canada, and he is facing challenges in finding a job. Samir is a non-engineering graduate that found the GPEI program a useful introduction to the Canadian job market. He joined the program with the intention of finding a job, and he ended up employed. The GPEI bridged newcomers to Canada with job opportunities as well. When asked why he had not pursued with his innovation after graduation, he said:

"I had the idea, I had the marketing side of it, then we had someone else who was the creator like text kind of things and someone who was also great at designing, so we complimented each other well. Unfortunately, I couldn't do it alone … it died there. I got a job, it was great (banking job) you know it was giving promotions and stuff so you kind of focus on that"

Program differentiation and description

The GPEEI program was created to serve innovative engineers. Consequently, it gained its legitimacy as an educational program from the school of engineering. Graduates from GPEEI acquire a master's degree in engineering, but GPEEI was designed to provide them with entrepreneurial skills based on experiential models and not on academic research. Furthermore, with the greatest demand on this program coming from non-engineering graduates, GPEI became not only a non-typical engineering program, but also, it served graduates from all disciplines in an area outside the expertise of the school of engineering. This fact created tensions, and the legitimacy of GPEI could not be solely based on the school of engineering going forward. One reaction has been the diversification of sources of legitimacy.

GPEEI and GPEI share their award of "Entrepreneurship Education Excellence" from the International Council of Small Business ICSB on the center of the front page of their websites. ICSB is a non-profit organization represented in over 85 countries for the advancement of micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Affiliating themselves with ICSB, GPEEI and GPEI gained legitimacy from the entrepreneurship environment that diffused that from the school of engineering. Thus, GPEEI and GPEI are hybrids between the fields of engineering education, school of engineering, and entrepreneurship ecosystem represented by the ICSB organization.

GPEEI and GPEI programs are identical except for one additional requirement for acceptance in GPEEI, an undergraduate degree in engineering. The other requirement is a university degree with a B- average in the last 10 courses. The requirements to be accepted in the program are not considered difficult. When I asked the program director about their selection process, his answer informed me of an interview with candidates. The programs looked for the driver or 'passion to become entrepreneur'.

"Something that's unique, we want to feel the concept of what are the signs that … somebody who started a company while going to school and got the grade because of what they did; or somebody who just got too bored of the traditional schooling system and this is why their undergrad was bad and had the C+. Then, creative they have some sense of leadership. We would look in details to the classes, were they failed something, and then would make a case for them. We had a C+ student who teams of A student something that did not come in this job, so we do have some anecdotal evidence that the students are worth fighting for. In terms of we have students from music or home decoration then as long as they have the grades and they have that entrepreneurial itch we will take them, with no prior experience to business and marketing or finance. And, yes, some of them do struggle, and we try to help them along as much as possible"

Both programs are 20 months long for full-time students, and they start in September of every year. On their website, GPEEI and GPEI claim that their graduate-entrepreneurs were able to develop their own technology-based businesses or "*the company for whom they work*."

GPEEI and GPEI programs have two complementary streams, a commercial stream and a technological stream. The commercial stream has three courses on entrepreneurial skills development such as opportunity recognition, leadership, opportunity development, sustainability

management, proof-of-concept, and business development. The technological stream has three courses on the topics of product design and innovation. The courses and modules are designed based on learning by doing concept. As Dr. Basil described it:

"When they come here, we try to put them in in situations. And, you try to set the expectations and tell them stories to further nurture that. And so, we have four methods of what I call experiential learning; one is essentially doing by learning experience, the other one is storytelling because the brain just likes stories… so I tell him case studies, which feed into that, the third one is mentorship by essentially, they have to connect to mentors."

The Venture Project is a fundamental requirement to graduate from GPEEI and GPEI programs. Students are expected to work on an actual innovation and turn it into a new venture before they graduate. The objective is to combine the commercial and technical streams in creating this new venture as put by the program director:

"a business and a viable Proof-of-Concept defined as the combination of (i) a technical plan for an engineering prototype product (ideally with an actual prototype device or software produced) plus (ii) an identified customer base and a plan outlining the way to commercialization."

The venture project requirement runs throughout the entire study period in order to bring an idea to the proof-of-concept phase. The commercial or entrepreneurial skills stream is expected to guide the incorporation of the prototype developed in the technical stream. The Venture project is divided into three phases: project preparation phase, prototype development phase, and incorporation phase.

Teams of students might be formed during the venture project part of the program. Because not all students have innovative ideas to work on, faculty members can suggest some ideas during

the program. Also, faculty members play the role of coaches and mentors throughout the program. As Jen's project was not viable for the second time, the faculty jumped in to help and secured her a project to graduate:

"We worked a lot on our replacement idea, and I came up with another one and it wasn't viable at the time. I don't remember why. In the end, Dr. James just introduced me to someone. I worked in his start- up instead and that didn't do too well either."

Before running the interviews with the graduates of GPEEI and GPEI, I was expecting two categories to emerge: employees and entrepreneurs. However, a third category emerged, which I identified as *entrepreneurship specialists*. It was clear from the interviews with graduates that many international students and local newcomers to Canada were not joining the programs to become entrepreneurs. Their objective was to get a degree from a Canadian University, find a job, and settle down to a new Canadian immigrant life[1]. Those intentions were clearly expressed by Mustafa when he described his feeling towards his colleagues: "*The actual intentions of some of the team members became clear that they just wanted the degree. Once they got their degree, they just bounced some went back home to their country, found a job, and they stopped, while others they just found a job in Canada and got their PR (permanent residency)."*

The Graduates

I found that most of the graduates ended up in the job market and GPEEI and GPEI seemed to have become a more convenient type of MBA for these students. By more convenient, I noted that there was no GMAT requirement, fewer courses, and the program was less expensive (less

[1] Canadian immigration law provides an opportunity for any graduate of a degree program to apply for and obtain permanent residence, typically leading to citizenship.

than half MBA's tuition fees at the same university). Moreover, graduates are getting a master's degree from the school of engineering at a reputable university.

When asked about how beneficial the program was for them, employed graduates praised the program structure and faculty for various reasons: the structure being learning by doing: "*something else great about this program was we worked the tools with professors*;" the program being learner centered: "*So the programs taught us how to be self-built, how to teach yourself things that you didn't learn in the program*;" faculty being experienced entrepreneurs: "*We had lectures provided by experienced entrepreneurs. Already they had their own company;*" and the exposure to the entrepreneurship culture: "*It's not necessarily about the courses selectively that part of things, but it's more a program as a whole… there's a, you know, certain culture that comes with entrepreneurship, right? And it's not just one course of the entrepreneurship, it's that - that continuance of doing a semester by semester by semester of like you're living and breathing entrepreneurship for two years to three years depending on how long you take to finish the program. And that's the value there, you get immersed in it*."

The only critical reply was from one graduate who was a Canadian engineer working for a reputable international IT company and wanted a part-time degree in business while keeping her job. She was reflective during the interview, and I was able to detect the mixed feelings of whether the degree was beneficial or not. Her reply on the benefits was: "*They were at a high level about what entrepreneurship is and less of the process, but I don't feel it gave me enough to figure out how to be entrepreneurial and innovative."*

Another observation regarding the employee graduates was regarding the program structure. Graduates were far more interested in the courses and modules than in the venture project. They

were more focused on learning rather than doing. As Ryan described the most important take away from the program, it was the knowledge:

"*It was one of the first classes and the topic was knowing ourselves in terms of personality, how are we going to be able to handle it, how we can handle entrepreneurship in terms of human relations, dealing with customers, with colleagues, and with partners, partnerships. So, it was important, and I think it's still important to know yourself first and then moving ahead with entrepreneurship."*

One possible constraint on firm emergence was that many of them did not have ownership over their idea. They did not come to the program with a clear business opportunity worth developing into a new venture. However, they either picked-up something quickly in order to fulfill a requirement for graduation or joined a colleague's project.

As for the few graduates who became entrepreneurs, all those whom I interviewed joined the program with a business idea if not a prototype. Farzin, a successful entrepreneur and graduate from GPEI, joined the program to build a new venture around his prototype. His business idea was an outcome of his thesis in a design degree. When asked about his product, he clearly described its evolution.

"So, the idea for the product began when I was in my thesis at my previous University, so I almost graduated, I was in my fourth year, and we had a program there where you have to do a talk about idea. So that's our big thesis project for the entire year you work with the idea. At that time my grandmother had all sorts of problems at home and one night my aunt asked me, you spent all the money going to university for designing and you call yourself a designer. Can't you design something for your grandmother? I think as a joke she said it, but it kind of got me thinking and I

asked her, what's wrong and she was explaining all the problems they had to lift and carry because of the medication she was taking.

I thought, I definitely had some success and then they were showing me the products that my aunt had bought these huge bulky expensive devices that you see in hospitals, basically like a crane and that stuff. So, I pulled my thesis back then, this is almost 4-5 years ago. I thought I'm going to design this device that uses no electricity, no batteries, something simple that you put in your home."

All interviewed entrepreneur graduates discussed previous entrepreneurial experiences, whether when they were teenagers or during their undergraduate years. They all maintained that they had 'the entrepreneurial spirit', but because they did not get any formal business education, they joined GPEEI or GPEI to acquire such knowledge. They wanted to get an institutional business entrepreneurship education from a well-recognized university. While they were also critical about the program, they still found it beneficial. Criticism was related to missing knowledge relevant to their entrepreneurial opportunity. Farzin noted some irrelevant aspects of the program, such as the business plan. Farzin sees and enjoys the chaotic aspect of entrepreneurship.

"You need to learn to change and adapt really fast and quick, because your business is going to change, your customers are going to change. It's going to take a year after you actually have a physical thing to sell for you to establish a stable business because you really don't know what you don't know, and student entrepreneurs they don't know anything - myself included. So, it takes time to learn, there's no planning, there's no sitting down for 6 hours doing market analysis when you have no idea what the market looks like."

When I discussed the role of the programs in creating entrepreneurs with the program director, Dr. Basil acknowledged that the programs do not create entrepreneurs, but train students on entrepreneurial skills that might be relevant to their future careers. This was a deviation from the initial objective of GPEEI and GPEI programs.

The employed and entrepreneur graduates had different approaches for the GPEEI and GPEI programs. Based on their approaches, their outcomes were different. However, they both adopted the same rhetoric when discussing entrepreneurship. It was clear to me that the programs shaped their terminologies and perceptions of entrepreneurship. The most common was the role of design in the process of starting a new venture as described by more than one employee graduate, for example:

"*It can help you to create your ideas and to follow a process like a design in a prologue, design in a preliminary market, design in the service that you would like to address to a specific market that you are thinking according to the product or vice-versa. You produce something that the market would like to have."*

This design process was also mentioned in virtually every interview I had, and most importantly, discussion surrounded how the venture project was structured in the GPEI program. Farzin, the entrepreneur graduate, was the only critical informant about this process, as depicted in his previous quote.

The most surprising finding for me was the emergence of a category of graduate students that I call *entrepreneurship specialists*. These graduates were a mix of employees and self-employed graduates that work in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They might be working as

administrative staff at incubators or accelerators, as consultants for entrepreneurs, or as developers for similar entrepreneurship education programs.

This category emerged as an unintentional outcome of the GPEEI and GPEI programs. Even the director failed to note that many graduates were working in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Furthermore, entrepreneurship specialists could be considered an early sign of an emerging entrepreneurship profession; thus, I argue that the GPEEI and GPEI programs are professionalizing entrepreneurship. The process of professionalization was driven by the normative force of entrepreneurship education, which introduced rhetoric, models, and concepts to its students.

I identified three subcategories of entrepreneurship specialists among the interviewed; graduates employed in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, those self-employed as consultants or coaches, and those who were developers of programs similar to the GPEEI and GPEI. The first subcategory of entrepreneurship specialists was graduates who ended up finding jobs in organizations that serve entrepreneurs or the entrepreneurship ecosystem. I interviewed graduates that worked at incubators. While their experience was based only on the model presented at the GPEEI and GPEI programs, they were considered competent enough to become experts and eligible to work with other entrepreneurs. Jay who works as a coach at incubators and an accelerator feels he has the qualifications to discuss and direct aspiring entrepreneurs. GPEI gave him legitimacy to practice coaching for entrepreneurs. When asked about how the GPEI program was useful for his current career, he said:

"*I do a lot of consultation with a lot of start-ups, and it helped me a lot when actually sitting down and talking about start-ups and helping them understand what their journey is.*"

The second subcategory of entrepreneurship specialists were graduates who ended up self-employed as consultants or coaches. While the first subcategory worked for organizations in the ecosystem, the second subcategory decided to become entrepreneurs, but their product was the model they were trained on at GPEEI or GPEI. I interviewed international students that graduated and went back to their countries of origin and found that there was an active entrepreneurship community. They offered guidance and coaching for aspiring entrepreneurs. These graduates made a product out of their training at GPEI and presented themselves as experts with international training in entrepreneurship from a reputable Canadian university. Their businesses frequently show signs of growth, and they many have established themselves as the experts and professionals in entrepreneurship in their respective regions. Mohamed describes how he incorporated the entrepreneurship education program into his coaching services. He made a business model around it in his Middle Eastern country.

"I came back to the program and asked one of the professors about this idea, if I could train entrepreneurs, how to improve their ability to pitch, and instead of having a Guru, teaching people how to pitch and go that way around. Entrepreneurs approach their pitch and get feedback based on their own needs. The professor liked it very much. He said you should target entrepreneurs and salespeople. Both of them will make money out of this and this is how I started this idea."

The third subcategory of entrepreneurship specialists were graduates who ended up developing similar entrepreneurship education programs at other universities. These graduates found themselves working at university-based incubators and decided to merge between the incubation and entrepreneurship educational programs. They appeared to be replicating the GPEEI and GPEI, with an upgraded localized version. They were critical of the programs they graduated from, aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and passionate about providing a better version.

This version was often centered on the incubation experience that also included a graduate degree in entrepreneurship from their host university. Moreover, they were aware that such programs attract international students and newcomers to Canada. This was an incentive for them to replicate the graduate programs so that they can recruit newcomers and international students. Wael is currently the director of a similar program at another Canadian university after being a manager of an incubator at the same university. Interviewing him drew out tensions because while trying to describe the benefits of entrepreneurship education programs, he was simultaneously critical of competitor's programs. When asked about the low success rate when it comes to graduating entrepreneurs for such programs, he said:

"There are people who couldn't find anything. So really you can argue that the program had no impact on them. And, there are people who opened a new career package for them. For example, one of the most successful ones that I know – two; one of them is currently a partner consulting at a top tier firm. And, really the only reason he got that job and managed to pass the interview process is because of skills he learned in the program. However, it wasn't what he learned about entrepreneurship, it was what he learned in the finance course about finance."

When discussing the usefulness of the GPEI, he also had a similar perception on entrepreneurship. He said:

"There are the tangible things related to how we do financial projections, learning some of the business tools like Spotify, Porter, this kind of decision method, all this kind of good stuff, right? There are other intangible skills, like for example, okay it's very easy to talk about that because I am one of these people.

I told you in my first job in my first week, I knew how to convince, to prepare a presentation to the VP of the University. I went and I kept digging. No one else I think in the department kept digging, or all the faculty, until I found his strategic concerns and I aligned my presentation and the purpose of the competition to go and ask him for money, and I had the confidence to go directly to him after I cleared of course with my boss and I went, and I got the money."

GPEEI and GPEI might not have had the expected impact of creating new ventures on their entrepreneurship ecosystem, but they have definitely impacted their ecosystem by institutionalizing and professionalizing it. The impact of GPEEI and GPEI created a positive feedback loop for an ongoing need for these programs in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

DISCUSSION

Legitimation Process

This study contributes to the theory of legitimation that describes the process of emergence of a new social order, in this case entrepreneurship education programs. It identifies elements that impacted and were impacted by the newly emerging program to facilitate the three stages of the process of emergence: foundation, sustainability, and evolution (Berger et al., 1998; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986). While entrepreneurship as a field and entrepreneurs existed before introducing the new entrepreneurship programs, legitimacy of this program was challenged especially that it graduated very few entrepreneurs. The legitimation process under discussion is for entrepreneurship education programs especially that the reason behind their creation is different from the reason for their continuation. Furthermore, the legitimation of an entrepreneurship program can be informative to the legitimation of other Business and Management Education BME programs.

In the foundation stage, the Graduate Program in Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEI emerged as an innovation in the school of engineering. The impact of the triple helix on the faculty of engineering led to the emergence of GPEI, an innovative entrepreneurship education program.

In the sustainability stage, three elements shaped the GPEI program: immigration policies, graduating students, and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Immigration policies indirectly made the GPEI program attractive for international students interested in immigrating to Canada. Students from this category were aware of the immigration laws that allows them to stay and work after graduation, and after one year of working in Canada, they were eligible to apply for the permanent residency. Program administrators were aware of this fact, and they started promoting the GPEI program in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Latin America.

Graduating students shaped the GPEI program. On one hand, employability pushed the program managers to include more business management skills than initially planned; on the other hand, intrapreneurship became a more frequent topic of discussion. Not everyone wanted to take the risk of becoming an entrepreneur as per the result, and international students wanting to stay in Canada had to find a job to be eligible for the permanent residency.

Finally, the entrepreneurship ecosystem offered the graduates of the GPEI program employment opportunities. Organizations active in the ecosystem such as incubators, accelerators, angel groups, and venture capitals became the primary employer of the GPEI graduates. These graduates seemed to know the entrepreneurship process and could speak the entrepreneurship jargon.

In the evolution stage, the impact of GPEI has been institutionalizing the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Rather than GPEI achieving its pre-set objectives of graduating entrepreneurs, it

maintained its existence by graduating entrepreneurship specialists who became integral members of the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Furthermore, while entrepreneurs can be considered disruptors of a social order, entrepreneurship specialists institutionalize the existing entrepreneurship ecosystem for maximum personal advantage. An innovative entrepreneurship education program, GPEI, which was introduced by the faculty of engineering to commercialize innovation, became an active element of normalization in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Members of a social order develop a referential belief about a hierarchy of their social order. This belief, described as legitimation of interpersonal hierarchies (Berger et al., 1998), becomes a social reality that drives the process of legitimacy for its members. The referential beliefs identify form categories of members based on their status, influence, and success, thus, defining the expectations for performance and success. Interestingly, these perceptions become more rigid with the degree of structure of their social order, but they are mostly implicit. This exposes them to interpretations and adjustments by those powerful members if they can create a common perception among the members of the social order. While the GPEI objective according to the faculty of engineering is to graduate entrepreneurs, failing to do so had little impact on the GPEI. It evolved to create a new essential role, training entrepreneurship specialists, in their ecosystem. As a result, the GPEI started acquiring legitimacy from the entrepreneurship ecosystem, organizations like International Council for Small Business ICSB, rather than being totally reliable on the legitimacy from the faculty of engineering. Thus, the status, centrality, of the influential members, GPEI, of the social order, entrepreneurship ecosystem, is based on the consensual acceptance of their actions among the other members in the ecosystem.

The process of acquiring legitimacy, legitimation, can be divided into three types: regulative, normative, and cognitive legitimacy (W. R. Scott, 1995). First, regulative legitimacy is controlled

by actors with regulatory influence on the environment of the social order. The most obvious actor in this case would be the governments, who can define the laws and procedures to gain legitimacy. Government supported GPEI through their encouraging policies to commercialize innovations and funding offered to new ventures. Second, normative legitimacy is controlled by actors that can accredit qualifications and behaviors in the environment of the social order. Educational institutions and professional associations can define what is considered morally desirable within their environment. The faculty of engineering supported GPEI with its normative legitimacy, and it went beyond its speciality by developing a second degree for non-engineers. Third, cognitive legitimacy is controlled by the most influential and successful members of the social order. These members can provide models to be imitated by the other members of their social order. GPEI is gradually acquiring an influential position in the entrepreneurship ecosystem through the newly founded class of entrepreneurship professionals. These professionals are setting up the tone, expectations, language, and ethics within the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The legitimation process of emerging educational programs undergoes four stages from novelty to widely accepted taken for granted social features. In the first stage, members of a social order, referencing the triple helix, develop a social innovation, GPEI, to fulfil an unsatisfied perceived local need for more entrepreneurs. In the second stage, more members and actors from the environment of the social innovation acknowledge it and link it to the acceptable cultural beliefs, values, and norms (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001). Incubators, accelerators, universities, angel investors, venture capitals, and new ventures hired graduates from GPEI and acknowledged their qualifications. At this point, the new innovation, GPEI, evolves to become part of the social order, in the entrepreneurship environment. In the third stage, with a growing membership, other universities validate the new social innovation (creating programs similar to GPEI). Similar

programs diffuse into more situations. The more they diffuse the more readily new members and other universities adopt the model with less explicit justification. With more diffusion it becomes a part of the social order schema, the entrepreneurship ecosystem, regardless of its functionality to graduate entrepreneurs. Later adopters are driven by institutional forces of legitimacy rather than by the functional forces of efficiency (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983; Zbaracki, 1998). In the fourth stage, when the new innovation diffuses across several social orders in the environment, members and actors believe that this innovation is acceptable and perhaps even better than other innovations. GPEI began to apply for, and win awards offered by the International Council for Small Business ICSB. This engagement was based on the bounded rationality of the members and actors in the environment, with entrepreneurship professionals being a member of the entrepreneurship ecosystem. At that point the new social innovation, GPEI and similar programs, become part of the status quo and new opportunities are made available for newer social innovations to emerge. I heard from the GPEI program managers of plans to develop a new undergraduate minor degree of entrepreneurship inspired by GPEI.

In conclusion legitimation of new social innovations undergo four stages: innovation, local validation, diffusion, and general validation. Once the new social innovation achieves the general validation stage it becomes part of the status quo even if the initial task of the new social innovation is to boost disruptive innovations.

Entrepreneurship Professionals

The model in figure 1 describes the emergence of an entrepreneurship profession caused by the introduction of a new graduate program in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship professionals are not necessarily entrepreneurs; however, they know the entrepreneurship ecosystem, its customs,

language, and tradition. They can explain things and put them in the form of stories. They were trained on that in their entrepreneurship education program. They acquired their legitimacy from their degrees GPEEI and GPEI.

Entrepreneurship specialists can be considered entrepreneurship professionals. They were trained in the same organization; they have a common perception of the entrepreneurial process; they use the same models; they speak the same language, and they are actively shaping the entrepreneurship ecosystem. When compared to the graduates from the graduate program in engineering, the characteristics of an entrepreneurship profession are apparent. Graduates of mainstream engineering program were trained in the same organization, have a common perception of their field, use the same models, speak the same language, and are expected to perform specific roles in a precise highly regimented way.

With time, the entrepreneurship professionals graduating from the GPEEI and GPEI are becoming more influential in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They become part of the normative entrepreneurship promotion activities at various institutions. The professionalization of entrepreneurship demonstrates a process of emergence and legitimization of a new professional category related to entrepreneurship as a step wise four stage process (Ridgeway & Berger, 1986).

In the first stage, the GPEEI and GPEI, as members of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, introduced a new category of graduates based on their career path. These entrepreneurship specialists are perceived as the experts in this area. In the second stage, which I observed, as more graduates from the GPEEI, GPEI, (and similar programs from other universities) become entrepreneurship specialists, they are recognized as professionals. Thus, the entrepreneurship professionals become new actors within the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

I also anticipate that in the third stage, with more members of the entrepreneurship ecosystem validating the new entrepreneurship profession, it would diffuse into more situations. Organizations within the entrepreneurship ecosystem will hire more entrepreneurship professionals. In the final fourth Stage, when the entrepreneurship profession diffuses across several organizations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, these organizations and actors come to believe that entrepreneurship professionals perform better than the other employees.

The term entrepreneurship profession is somewhat contradictory. It assumes that there is a recipe to create entrepreneurs. Even if such a recipe existed, once it is discovered and normalized, it loses its effectiveness and becomes useless. While the emergence and legitimation of an entrepreneurship profession is still in the second stage, there are signs that the process of legitimation will continue as long as prestigious universities offer programs such as the GPEEI and GPEI.

Entrepreneurship is connected to creativity, which is the farthest activity from a normative recipe driven behavior. In contrast, a profession is one outcome of the normative forces of an educational institution. These two terms appear to be contradictory, and the concept of an entrepreneurship profession makes little sense outside the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The entrepreneurship ecosystem is a field with active organizations competing for central positions. Active organizations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem vary in size and type. According to the triple helix model (Etzkowitz, 2002), some of the various types are governments, educational institutions, and industries. However, organizations that directly support novice entrepreneurs such as incubators, accelerators, VCs, and angel investors are more likely to shape the entrepreneurship ecosystem. These supportive organizations need professionals to work for them, and the

entrepreneurship education programs might be viewed as the right programs to train these professionals. This leads to the first proposition:

Proposition 1: Once entrepreneurship professional programs become an established normative force within the entrepreneurship field, they will successfully develop and introduce new concepts, models, and terminologies with little institutional challenge to the status quo.

After analyzing the results of the interviews, I found that, like many other educational programs, entrepreneurship education creates what could be called an entrepreneurship profession rather than entrepreneurs capable of creating new ventures. While I anticipated this research to examine the legitimation of the GPEEI and GPEI, I found myself describing the legitimation of the entrepreneurship profession. This finding is consistent with the normative isomorphic effect of educational organizations in institutional theory. The normative force gives legitimacy to the profession regardless of its rationality. The entrepreneurship profession is not efficient nor rational, and the educational program might not be as useful to entrepreneurs as claimed. Entrepreneurs, like Farzin, might not buy into the normalization of entrepreneurship, but they are, in any case, the minority, less than 5% of the students. However, entrepreneurs that are aware of the acceptable rhetoric and traditions in the entrepreneurship ecosystem have an advantage. They can package their messages making them more effective in accessing resources from the entrepreneurship ecosystem. This leads to the second proposition:

Proposition 2: Emergence driven by normative forces leads to the legitimation of a profession, independent of efficiency outcomes.

In this study, I had the unique opportunity of witnessing the emergence of a new profession. While it has been well known that professions were the outcome of educational institutions, the

finding shows that the graduates of the GPEEI and GPEI were the real agents of creating this profession. The graduates of the GPEEI and GPEI programs that were not entrepreneurs faced a precarious situation. They were not MBA graduates, a well-defined degree with clear expectations, yet they competed with MBAs when looking for work. The ones that ended up working in the entrepreneurship ecosystem found an advantage over their colleagues because the GPEEI and GPEI graduates were trained in a new set of entrepreneurship models and language. They were trained to theorize change and make sense of precariousness, and to tell convincing stories that narrate their learning objectives. Thus, while the educational program itself initiates a normative force of isomorphism, the graduates of this program build on this normative force to create a profession that reduces the uncertainty in their environment and gives them access to more resources and opportunities, leading to the third proposition:

Proposition 3: When the emergence of a profession is an outcome of an educational program, the process is driven by graduates seeking to reduce environmental uncertainty.

The GPEEI and GPEI programs had no intention of creating an entrepreneurship profession. Their intention was to create entrepreneurs, but this was not one of the outcomes of the programs – in that sense, they failed. Graduates who became entrepreneurs entered the program with considerable entrepreneurial experience and an innovative idea before joining the GPEEI or GPEI programs. Some of these successful entrepreneur- graduates questioned the relevance of the knowledge and skills they learned to their actual experiences as entrepreneurs. However, the GPEEI and GPEI programs were able to provide agreed upon terminologies, tools, and rhetoric that helps graduates access resources within the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Stated as a proposition:

Proposition 4: Entrepreneurship education programs may assist entrepreneurs otherwise lacking a formal business education by providing them with language and normative tools that facilitate activities in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

As a program under the school of engineering, the GPEEI was created to train and support innovative engineers to become entrepreneurs. The GPEEI can be considered a bridge between the school of engineering and the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Early on, the GPEEI had to evolve and become GPEI to admit non-engineers, who eventually became most students. Based on the findings on GPEEI and GPEI programs, while they administrated in the school of engineering, they actually fit better in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They have evolved from a location of education in the engineering field to a location of education in the entrepreneurship field. This led to the final fifth proposition:

Proposition 5: When institutionalized education reaches out to another discipline, there is a risk of losing field level identity in the sponsoring discipline to affiliate with the field identity of the targeted social order.

Generalizability, Limitations, and Future Research

This study was limited to the entrepreneurship education programs offered in one Canadian University at their school of engineering. There are similar programs among other schools of engineering in Canada. However, I did not extend this study to include those. Thus, the findings are limited to the experiences of the informants. Moreover, the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurship ecosystem in this study might be unique to Canada and not generalizable to other countries in the same way. One factor that limits the generalizability is immigration welcoming policies set by the Canadian government. There is a preference for

immigrants to Canada coming from education programs, and universities are playing a critical role in bringing newcomers and integrating them in the Canadian society and job market. To account for different immigration policies in different countries, similar studies in other countries would be valuable. Future research can be done to include more programs in and outside Canada to see if the same findings still hold.

While I have identified some signs that support the emergence of an entrepreneurship profession, this phenomenon is not yet fully established. With more graduates from more entrepreneurship education programs contributing to the entrepreneurship ecosystem, an entrepreneurship profession can eventually emerge and become a normative sub-field. The role of entrepreneurship education programs in shaping and establishing this emergent profession is fundamental. This argument is based on the role MBA programs played in establishing a management profession, and the consulting industry.

There are reasons for the emergence of the entrepreneurship profession to be reduced or even die off. If the entrepreneurship education programs cease to exist or if the dynamics in the entrepreneurship ecosystem change, the normalization forces of the entrepreneurship profession might be disrupted and might end before their maturity. Another factor that might possibly interfere with the emergence process might be competition from business schools. While their focus is mainly on management programs, business schools might begin to focus more on entrepreneurship programs, training, and entrepreneurship professionalism. Business schools can seriously challenge the legitimacy of engineering-based entrepreneurship programs for two reasons. First, they can develop evidence-based programs because the research on entrepreneurship belongs to schools of business and not in schools of engineering. Second, schools of business have stronger networks with organizations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I observed the nexus of academia, industry, and government, creating a graduate program for entrepreneurship and innovation for engineers at the school of engineering, The "Graduate Program in Engineering for Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEEI". Graduate entrepreneurship programs are one type of response by universities for the growing interest in entrepreneurship. In addition to attracting students with an engineering degree, the program also attracted a growing number of non-engineering graduate. Consequently, the Graduate Program for Entrepreneurship and Innovation GPEI that was tailored to non-engineering undergraduate students emerged. The GPEI was developed to be nearly identical to the GPEEI in content but named differently for legislative and bureaucratic reasons. Graduates of the GPEEI had to be engineers, and given the demand pool, the GPEI became the most active program, attracting international students interested in immigrating to Canada.

The disruption caused by the GPEI was creating a new social order - "entrepreneurship profession" - rather than entrepreneurs capable of creating sustainable new ventures. This turned the attention to an interesting and emergent new field of professionalization: the university certified, qualified, and increasingly recognized professional entrepreneur and entrepreneurship instructor. Like many other educational programs, entrepreneurship education created a profession (in this case "entrepreneurship profession)." While I anticipated this research would examine the legitimation of the GPEEI and GPEI, I found myself describing the legitimation of the entrepreneurship profession instead. This finding is consistent with the normative isomorphic effect of educational organizations in institutional theory. The professionalization of entrepreneurship is the unintentional contribution of the GPEI to the entrepreneurship ecosystem, rather than entrepreneurs capable of creating new ventures

The emergence of entrepreneurship professionals is legitimated by the university; thus, it is accepted in the entrepreneurship ecosystem independent of efficiency outcomes. When they become an established normative force within the entrepreneurship ecosystem, entrepreneurship professional programs can successfully develop and introduce new concepts, models and terminologies with little institutional challenge. While the emergence of the entrepreneurship profession is an outcome of an educational program, the process of emergence is driven by graduates seeking to reduce environmental uncertainty. Entrepreneurship education programs may assist entrepreneurs otherwise lacking a formal business education by providing them with language and normative tools that facilitate activities in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. While I presented some arguments that support the emergence of an entrepreneurship profession, this phenomenon is in its early stages. More longitudinal research on the graduates of entrepreneurship education programs is needed to better understand the outcomes of this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3: LET THERE BE LIGHT: THE EMERGENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY AMONG ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial identity shapes thoughts and actions of entrepreneurs during the process of opportunity recognition and new-venture creation. While university education facilitates the emergence of new identities among learners, entrepreneurship education is expected to facilitate the emergence of entrepreneurial identity among students. In my research I examine the nature, emergence, and evolution of an entrepreneurial identity among students and graduates of an entrepreneurship Bachelor of Commerce program in Toronto, Canada. After interviewing 49 students and alumni, I used both identity and social identity theories to conclude that entrepreneurial identity is a self-perceived meta-identity that enables individuals to reject aspects of their current role identities and create new ones. Findings show that entrepreneurship education helps students discover their entrepreneurial identity to a varying degree. Once discovered, entrepreneurial identity empowers individuals, specifically rebellious ones that are considered “unfitting” with respect to their designated institutional roles.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial identity shapes thoughts and actions of entrepreneurs (Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007; Newbery et al., 2018) during the process of opportunity recognition (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011) and new-venture creation (E. E. Powell & Baker, 2014). Examination of the nature, emergence, and evolution of an entrepreneurial identity provides valuable insights into the broader entrepreneurial process of new-venture creation (Crosina, 2018). An entrepreneurship educational program is an ideal context to examine the emergence process of entrepreneurial identities (Anteby et al., 2016; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). Research has examined various occupations associated with university programs such as finance (Lounsbury, 2002), organizational development (Church, 2001), public administration (Pugh & Hickson, 1989), sport psychology (Silva, 1989), and adult education (Wilson, 1993). The emergence of entrepreneurial identity, as an occupational identity, has been largely overlooked (Crosina, 2018; Nabi et al., 2017; Ollila et al., 2012). Entrepreneurial identity research can inform practices that extend beyond entrepreneurship and into precarious work environments. The research question of this study is if, and how, do entrepreneurial identities of students and alumni emerge and evolve as a result of an entrepreneurial educational program, including after graduation?

In this study, I examined entrepreneurial identities of students and alumni of a fulltime Bachelor of Commerce program in entrepreneurship at an urban Canadian University. To establish context, I met with the chair of the entrepreneurship department, full time faculty members, and administrators. I analyzed their curriculum and course outlines before attending several lectures. I interviewed 49 current and graduated students. I asked them about their self-perceived entrepreneurial identity, as well as entrepreneurial activities they had been involved in before, during, and after their education. While collecting data, I started my analysis with open

coding in an iterative fashion. Then, I axially coded to develop dimensions and characteristics of my themes and constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

My first finding was that entrepreneurial identity is a construct distinct from the identity of the entrepreneur or founder. Founder's identity is a role identity "what I do" while entrepreneurial identity is a self-perceived social identity "who am I". Entrepreneurial identity can be viewed as self-perceived meta-identity that allows individuals to recreate their roles, improve their status, and redefine their surrounding environments based on their self-awareness with respect to their environments. Secondly, entrepreneurial identity initially emerges as an anti-role identity. Entrepreneurial individuals appear to be rebellious at one point in their lives where they reject a role set by their environment. They are willing to challenge their surrounding institutional norms. Thirdly, entrepreneurship education helps individuals discover their entrepreneurial identity by becoming self-aware of their existence with respect to their environments. Consequently, entrepreneurial identity empowers individuals to create new roles and define new fields.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) are two different theories aimed to analyze interactions between one's self and environment. These interactions shape not only behaviours of individuals, but also social structures. Identity theory and social identity theory are grounded in different sets of assumptions generated at different levels of analysis. While Identity theory can be traced to the micro-sociological roots, social identity theory is based on macro-psychological contexts. It is important to understand both theories when analyzing entrepreneurial identity for two reasons. Firstly, on one hand, entrepreneurial identity can have a micro-sociological role identity perspective when

entrepreneurs are actively engaged in finding and developing their new venture. On the other hand, entrepreneurial identity can have a macro-phycological self-perceived aspect when individuals are considering starting their own business. Secondly, scholars who studied entrepreneurial identity come from either a macro-organizational theory or a micro-organizational behavior background. Thus, it is important to set the fundamentals of identity theory and social identity theory before analyzing entrepreneurial identity in the literature.

Role Identity Theory

Role Identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) focuses on interactions between an individual and his society when explaining behaviour. Institutions in society influence behaviours of individuals by shaping their identities (Blumer, 1969). Identities of individuals are defined by their institutional roles, and a salient identity emerges based on commitment to those roles. Salient identities have a higher impact on behaviour.

According to role identity theory, individuals are not independent psychological entities, but they experience multilayered social constructs that emerge from their various institutional roles. Individuals with different institutional roles have different identity compositions (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Roles are bounded by a set of behavioural expectations that are considered appropriate by others (Simon, 1992). Individuals acquiring a role behave according to their self-conception of those roles (Burke, 1980; Thoits, 1991). Thus, their role identities provide them with meaning for self, but this meaning and their behaviour evolves based on the feedback of others in their institutional social structure (Stryker, 2002).

Individuals have multiple roles leading to multiple identities, but some roles are more meaningful than others. Roles and their relevant identities are structures hierarchically based on

activity. Identities attached to dominant roles and are positioned near the top of the hierarchy because they are activated more often. While individuals are defined by their role identities combination and hierarchy, they develop salient identities based on the probability of taking action in a given context (McCall & Simmons, 1966; Stryker, 1968). Identity salience allows individuals with the same role identities to react differently in similar situations (Callero, 1985; Thoits, 1991). Yet, in strong contextual situations, behaviour is influenced less by identity salience than the situation itself (Stryker, 1968).

Identity salience is dependent on commitment of an individual to a certain role. Stryker and Stratham defined commitment as the "degree to which the individual's relationships to particular others are dependent on being a given kind of person" (1985, p. 345). Individuals highly commit to a certain role and its role identity if it grants them satisfaction such as resources (Oliver, 1991), self-concept, or self-esteem (Hoelter, 1983). Consequently, there are two types of commitment (Stryker, 2002): first, interactional commitment that reflects the number of roles associated with a particular identity (the extensivity of commitment), and second, affective commitment that reflects the importance of the relationships associated with the identity-in other words, the level of affect associated with the potential loss of these social relationships (the intensity of commitment).

In summary, role identity theory reflects a social psychological model of self where a social schema defines the self. Schemas are derived from roles that individuals occupy in their society. Some roles are more important than others for the individual; thus, identities reflecting the most important roles are more salient. While the outcomes of identity-related processes are well examined, less research covers the role of individuals during the process of emerging and transitional identities (Hogg et al., 1995).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory is a social psychological theory of intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self. Social identity theory explains individuals' self-identify with certain groups, and this is how self-categorization theory emerged (J. C. Turner, 2010; J. C. Turner et al., 1987). The basic concept is that individuals affiliate themselves with a social category such as nationality, political affiliation, or sports teams, and the characteristics of the self-selected social categories become determinants of the self-concept. The degree of affiliation with a social category shapes the self-concept of individuals.

Emerging social identities of individuals undergo two socio-cognitive processes. First, social categorization is a process of identifying intergroup boundaries by identifying group-distinct normative perceptions and behaviours. Individuals identify themselves and others according to these normative perceptions. This process is described in self-categorization theory. Second, individuals use a self-enhancement process to guide the social categorization process. People need to develop an evaluatively positive self-concept in relation to others. Self-enhancement motivates individuals to belong into and develop loyalty to a social category while making comparisons between the in-group and out-group members in a way that favour their own social category (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

Self-categorization theory (J. C. Turner, 2010; J. C. Turner et al., 1987) perceives the categorization process as a cognitive basis of group behavior. The process of categorization underlines both perceived similarities among in-group members and differences between in-group out-group members. Dimensions of similarities and differences vary based on the nature of the social category. Categorization of self and others into in-groups and out-groups defines the

social identity of individuals, and perceived similarities define the features of the group. Mature social categories have well defined group prototypicality or normativeness. In such groups, members are depersonalized, and they are treated as an in-group prototype rather than as unique individuals. Depersonalization of self allows social stereotyping and group cohesion to proliferate. Group cohesion among in-group members leads to altruism, emotional contagion, empathy, collective behavior, and shared norms. Self-categorization theory discusses the concept of prototypes, which is how people cognitively represent their social groups. A prototype is defined as a subjective representation of the attributes (beliefs, attitudes, behaviors) of a social category.

Prototypes are constructed from the perceptions of the in-group and out-group members based on their contextual interactions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Because prototypes are the most significant indicators of social identities, they are highly dynamic in both type and content. Social identities are dependent on intergroup dimensions of immediate social comparative contexts. Individuals try to create meanings that explain the normative behaviour of group members. These meanings are subjected to biases and motivations of in-group and out-group members. However, the process of sensemaking of a social category is always renegotiated in order to satisfy favourable conceptualization of self in that context.

In summary, social identity depicts social groups regardless of their size and nature. As a theory, it accounts for a range of group behaviours such as conformity, stereotyping, discrimination, and ethnocentrism. Group membership and group behaviours mediate between the social structure and behaviours of individuals. Identity salience reflects the identity of groups that maximizes meaning to individuals.

Identification

The process of evolution and emergence of new identities is called identification (C. R. Scott et al., 1998). Identities of individuals are dynamic because individuals are situated in dynamic environments and roles. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) used both role identity and social identity to define the self to be "socially defined, where the definitions are derived largely from the individual's membership in or occupancy of certain social categories." Individuals are not only members of multiple social groups and occupy multiple roles, but also these social groups and roles are evolving. Furthermore, new memberships and roles emerge along with the emergence of new identities.

The identification process shapes role identities of individuals, and it is essential to study the emergence and transitions of identities, which have been used by many studies. Identification involves modifications in the elements of an identity composed of content and behaviours (B. Ashforth et al., 2008). The core of an identity includes self-definition (B. E. Ashforth & Mael, 1989), values (Tajfel, 2010), and affect (Albert et al., 1998). It answers the questions who am I; what are my values, and how do I feel about it? The content of an identity includes wants, causes, beliefs, prototypical traits, and competencies (Elsbach, 2004). The content of an identity defines the characteristics of a social group. The behaviour of an identity sets the expected actions (Ashmore et al., 2004). Behaviours of an identity are manifestations of various roles expected from a social group.

The identification process occurs through an interaction between individuals and their environments that disrupts one or more element of their identities (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005). Individuals tend to resist changes in their identity because they want to perceive themselves as

consistent (Swann, 1990). Thus, identification would not have occurred without environmental triggers. Identification is a process of sensebreaking caused by environmental triggers and sensegiving interpreted by individuals (Pratt, 2000; K. Weick, 1995). When individuals face situations that contradict one element or more of their identities, this is a case of sensebreaking situation. It triggers a sensemaking process where individuals try to resolve contradictions in their identities. By the time individuals succeed in making sense of their new situations, they would have constructed a new identity or reconstructed their exiting one. However, Ashforth and Johnson (2001) extend this identification process to include successive episodes of emulation and affinity. The previously described process of sensebreaking and sensegiving is an episode of emulation, and it is followed by an episode of affinity that links sensemaking to emotions and vice versa.

Both role identity and social identity theories are needed to develop a profound understanding of dynamic identities of entrepreneurs (Ireland & Webb, 2007; Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Navis & Glynn, 2010). Employees that leave their jobs and start new ventures create new identities to make sense of their behaviour (Farmer et al., 2011; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). A study described how faculty members at universities construct identities as research entrepreneurs when starting new ventures (Jain et al., 2009). Another study shows how stereotyped Muslim women entrepreneurs in Netherlands acquire unique identities merging their religious, gender, and ethnic identities together (Essers & Benschop, 2009). Resource-constrained textile entrepreneurs in the US redefine their identities to address strategic responses that address their challenges by projecting who they want to be (E. E. Powell & Baker, 2014).

Identity of Entrepreneurs

Identity of entrepreneurs has been a recent subject of research (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). While the nature of an entrepreneurial identity that reflects an entrepreneurial role is not well defined in the literature, Murnieks & Mosakowski, (2007) used role identity theory to discuss the existence of an identity common among entrepreneurs. This identity was framed as motives that help entrepreneurs develop a meaning that conceptualizes their entrepreneurial role and drives their behaviour. They also concluded that entrepreneurs have multiple identities, and the entrepreneurial identity is related to maintaining self-concept.

Fauchart and Gruber (2011) approached identity of entrepreneurs from a social identity perspective to identify three archetypical social identities of entrepreneurs: Darwinians, Missionaries, and Communitarians. These archetypes were developed based on the founders' self-concept that drives their entrepreneurial activity. Darwinian entrepreneurs were driven by competition and growth. Missionary entrepreneurs were driven by a social cause. Communitarian entrepreneurs were driven by their role in supporting their communities. While the three architypes were described as pure, the identities of entrepreneurs were composed of combinations from these three archetypes.

Other studies find multiple entrepreneurial identities, rather than one salient to individuals starting new ventures (Cardon et al., 2009; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The commonality among these identities is their ability to drive behaviours of entrepreneurs. Cardon et al. (2009) emphasize the role of passion on entrepreneurial behaviour. They believe that "passion is aroused not because some entrepreneurs are inherently disposed to such feelings but, rather, because they are engaged in something that relates to a meaningful and salient self-identity for them." (Cardon et al., 2009, p. 516). The profiled three different identities of related to entrepreneurs: founder, inventor, and developer. Shepherd and Haynie (2009) emphasize the

importance of organizational identity construction that entrepreneurs facilitate. They design the identity of their organizations to be novel and competitive. Powell and Baker (2014) identify both single and multiple identities for entrepreneurs. These identities were both roles based and social based. They defined entrepreneur's identity as "the set of identities that are chronically salient to a founder in her or his day-to day work."

I explore the nature of this entrepreneurial identity using both theories in an entrepreneurship education context. Individuals joining a bachelor program in entrepreneurship are not only acquiring relevant knowledge and skills, but also developing a sense of belonging to a group (Tajfel, 1982) of aspiring entrepreneurs. In this case two different identity theories are required to understand the emergence of entrepreneurial identity: the macro-psychological social identity theory (J. C. Turner & Tajfel, 1986) and the micro-sociological identity role theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Entrepreneurship education has been a growing field within higher education contexts, with evidence and increased attention to graduate and undergraduate programs, courses, as well as student competitions (Etzkowitz, 2002; Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996). Universities are becoming more and more actively engaged in commercialization of their intellectual property (Dolfsma & Soete, 2006; Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996). This has resulted in the proliferation of dedicated programs to teach entrepreneurship as a distinct discipline (Collins et al., 2006; Falkäng & Alberti, 2000). However, direct impacts of entrepreneurship education on new-venture creation have not been successfully documented. While entrepreneurship education trains individuals, new-venture creation is a complex multilevel process (Gartner, 1989).

I examined the process of emergence of a self-perceived entrepreneurial identity for individuals who are current students and graduated alumni of a bachelor's program in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education is the best context for my research because it allows me to better identify the process of emergence and evolution of entrepreneurial identity and its influence on shaping future occupational identities. On one hand, self-selected students enrolled in an entrepreneurship program have already constructed a prototypical identity-narrative. Consequently, they create self-perceived identity of what defines an entrepreneur. This perception is subjected to change during the program, and their self-perception of how entrepreneurial they are is also expected to evolve. On the other hand, entrepreneurship students have a defined role as students, to graduate. Their student identity comes with obligations to learn and expectations to pass exams. Towards graduation, students are expected to transition to another role, occupational role. Graduates can become entrepreneurs or employees. In both cases, their self-perceived entrepreneurial identity is expected to shape their new occupational roles.

METHODS

I examined the process of emergence of a self-perceived entrepreneurial identity for individuals who were current students and graduated alumni of a bachelor's program in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education was the best context for me research because it allowed me to better identify the process of emergence and evolution of entrepreneurial identity and its influence on shaping future occupational identities. On one hand, self-selected students enrolled in an entrepreneurship program have already constructed a prototypical identity-narrative. Consequently, they created a self-perceived identity of what defines an entrepreneur. This perception was subjected to change during the program, and their self-perception of how

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I used an inductive qualitative method to shed light on the complexity of entrepreneurial identity because it allows researchers to examine 'how and why things emerge, develop, grow, or terminate over time' (Langley et al., 2013, p. 1). To address my research questions about the nature of entrepreneurial identities, and its emergence in a bachelor program in entrepreneurship, I started by investigating the entrepreneurship program at the school of business. The school of business under investigation was in an urban area. It was one of the biggest schools of business in terms of the number of students. Most of its students were first- and second-generation immigrants, and many students were the first generation to attend a university in their families.

I met with the chair of the entrepreneurship department, full time faculty members (Appendix A), and administrators. I learned from them the history of their program, their educational philosophy, their recruitment strategy for new students, and the structure of the entrepreneurship program including the required and elective courses. I asked for a detailed copy of the courses and analyzed their content making myself familiar with the when students take each course, what they learn, how they learn it, and who teaches it.

The major challenge facing this entrepreneurship program, according to interviewed faculty, was not graduating what was considered 'enough' students who became entrepreneurs.

As per the professors, there were three categories of students enrolling in this program. First, many students came from families running their own businesses. Second, some students were attracted to the concept of entrepreneurship based on how it was positioned in the media and society. Third, many students did not have a clear goal and joined the entrepreneurship program because it was considered an easy degree.

I met with the program administrative assistant and the career guidance counsellor. The administrative assistant gave me access to the course outlines and program structure. The career guidance counsellor enlightened me of the challenges fresh graduates face in finding a job after graduation. It turned out that professors and administrators encourage students to find jobs after graduation, and they do not encourage them to start their new venture immediately after graduation. Professors intended to help their fresh graduates build some work experience before becoming entrepreneurs. When I probed this belief, faculty and administrators expressed their concerns about the degree of maturity of their fresh graduates. They believed that many students did not show enough signs of independence and professionalism to start on their own venture.

Sampling

I recruited as participants students and graduates from the entrepreneurship program. Students from this school of business selected their major in their second year. I recruited student from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years. As a strategy, I recruited students taking entrepreneurship major courses. With the approval of professors, I took five to ten minutes of their class time to introduce ourselves, topic, and recruitment pitch. I asked students to write their name and emails if they were interested in participating. Within an hour after collecting their contact information, I emailed them the recruitment script, which asked them for a 45-minute interview. My intention

from recruiting participants from the four cohorts was to capture patterns that reflects how the entrepreneurial identity of students evolve during their different stages of their education.

As for graduates from the entrepreneurship program, I differentiated between two categories, those who graduated in the last two year of recruitment, and those who graduated at least two years prior to recruitment. As a recruitment strategy, I asked professors to distribute my recruitment email. Also, I looked on LinkedIn for graduates from the entrepreneurship program of the same school of business. I found many contacts of entrepreneurship graduates and asked them to participate. I also asked their help in recruiting from their professional contacts. I found alumni groups for this entrepreneurship program. I differentiated between fresh graduates who graduated in the last two years from those who graduated before that. I aimed to understand the impact of entrepreneurial identity on the role identity transition from students to career identity among fresh graduates while I also aimed to understand the impact of entrepreneurial identity on the career identities of graduates in the long run.

I interviewed 49 participants, four second year entrepreneurship students, five third year entrepreneurship students, 11 fourth year entrepreneurship students, four MBA entrepreneurship major students, seven alumni from entrepreneurship program who graduated after 2017, and eight graduates from entrepreneurship program who graduated between 2017 and 2003. To compare and triangulate (Jick, 1979), I interviewed ten graduates from the same school of business who became entrepreneurs but did not study entrepreneurship.

Data Collection

My semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) focused on self-perceived entrepreneurial identity of informants, as well as the various roles they had before, during, and after their

education in shaping and evolving their future career identities. I asked questions such as: what is entrepreneurship; who do you consider to be an entrepreneur; do you consider yourself an entrepreneur and why? I also asked about what informants did before their entrepreneurship program; what does it mean to be a student; and what activities (roles) they were engaged in? As for alumni (Appendix C), in addition to the student questions, I asked them about their careers, various job, duties, and aspirations for the future.

I started my interview in an open question, "can you tell me a little bit about yourself?" I did not interrupt the informants. I gave them the space and freedom to go in any direction. While doing that, I picked up on what they said and asked for elaborations. I followed-up on their answers with more questions in order to understand the various aspects of entrepreneurial identity. I collected their stories and made sure to understand their experiences from their perspectives. I asked the same question more than once during interviews in different forms focusing on their consistency.

I pushed the boundaries of my informants. Often, they contradicted themselves on some claims. This contradiction helped me identify potential opportunities for theorization and abstraction. I always ended my interviews asking them why they participated, if they want to add anything, and if I missed anything? Many informants described my interviews as an opportunity to reflect on their education and careers. I asked their help in recruiting their friends, and I asked them not to share details about their interviews with them. My interviews were customized in their structure and approach to match the preferences of each informant. However, I had a checklist of items that I made sure to cover during the interviews.

Analysis Strategy

Using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), I coded interviews and observations for categories and themes while acknowledging existing presuppositions. I monitored the flow of discourse among students and graduates from different cohorts conducting a discourse analysis (Gee, 2001). Discourse analysis allowed me to capture institutional language, assumptions, frameworks, tools, as well as behaviour introduced by the educational program and accepted by participants to assert themselves as members of a group with defined entrepreneurial identity.

I ran cycles of analysis that started with deeply analyzing data, developing theoretical categories, and relating these insights to existing literature on occupational identities and identification (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). While collecting data, I started my analysis with open coding in an iterative fashion (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). Using NVivo, I open coded the first ten interviews from various categories and ended up with more than 300 nodes. I developed broad and specific codes through several rounds of iteration, moving back and forth between broad and specific codes. Then, I started analyzing the code and categorizing them into various themes and constructs. I followed with axial coding to develop dimensions and characteristics of my themes and constructs.

I followed the previously described process of analysis until I reached a level of theoretical saturation. Once no additional themes and construct emerged, I checked to make sure each theme and construct was well defined and described. To develop identified gaps in my themes and constructs, I followed up with a selective coding approach where I went back to my interviews and looked for quotes that filled these gaps. A process that describes the emergence and evolution of an entrepreneurial identity unfolded.

FINDINGS

I found that entrepreneurial identity (EI) and entrepreneurs or founder's identity were two categorically different identities. Thus, I shall refer to the identity of entrepreneurs who started a new venture as founder's identity (FI). Three dimensions differentiated between these two identities: perception, behaviour, and affect. First, my informants described how they perceived themselves and the other entrepreneurship students collectively as a group. They also shared how they perceived actual founders of new ventures. This allowed me to differentiate between entrepreneurial and entrepreneur's identities based on perception. Second, my informants shared behavioural examples that were related to their identities. This allowed me to recognize entrepreneurial and founders' identities based on behavioural activities. Third, my informants expressed emotional statements related to their identities. This allowed me to include affect as a differentiating characteristic of entrepreneurial and founders' identities. Furthermore, from the data, I also identified a process of emergence of entrepreneurial identity and not founder's identity, among students studying entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial Identity

The construct Entrepreneurial Identity emerged from analyzing the data. Informants, who did not start new ventures described themselves as entrepreneurial rather than entrepreneurs. For them, entrepreneurs are those who started new ventures; thus, anyone who did not found a business can only be entrepreneurial as expressed by Michael a third-year student of entrepreneurship: *"I believe I have an entrepreneurial mind, but as long as I haven't done anything specific regarding that, I wouldn't consider myself an entrepreneur."*

When I asked informants to elaborate on the concept of being entrepreneurial, they described several conceptual categories. I aggregated them and grouped them in three theoretical

dimensions: perception, behaviour, and affect as shown in Figure 2. The first dimension was perception. It reflected how informants perceived themselves and their group of entrepreneurship students when compared to non-entrepreneurship major students. The perception dimension included three conceptual categories: unique mindset, belonging to multiple fields, and design thinkers.

Insert Figure 2 here

Entrepreneurship student informants perceived themselves to have a unique mindset that is different from the mindset of their non-entrepreneurship colleagues at the business school. Many informants referred to unique mindsets as a part of being entrepreneurial. For many informants, entrepreneurial identity is a mindset that enables them to become entrepreneurs. It was also one of the characteristics of the ingroup/outgroup of entrepreneurship students. Julie expressed her thoughts of what distinguished entrepreneurship students and whether she felt she belonged to this group:

> *Wow, that's me. I always had this mindset. Having that entrepreneurial mindset though, as a child, like I started businesses. So, for me, entrepreneurship is a mindset.*

Three types of unique mindsets emerged from the quotes of informants: messy mind, curios mindset, and growth mindset. Some informants described themselves as having a “messy mind”. They were not able to make sense of why they were different from their colleagues at school. When asked about their high school years, many informants did not follow a direct linear path from high school to university. Several informants were high school dropouts for several years before returning to school and graduate. Others had a few years of work experience before starting their university education. One informant had a history with troubled teenagers,

and one of his friends got shot and killed. Adam, a graduate of entrepreneurship used the term messy mind when describing this stage of his life:

> *I liked talking to professor X. He was the only one capable of making sense of my messy mind.*

Many entrepreneurship students see the world differently than what they are taught, and they always wanted to have their own way of doing things. They are driven by curiosity, and not by what they are told. When talking about how he processes material learned at school and information in general, Dave refers to thought traits that can be based on curiosity:

> *Some people don't entertain thoughts. Some people let it go to sleep and just pursue a different path, and then they realized later. It has its own traits. Some people are aware of those traits, and some people aren't, and some people don't want to take that path even though they do possess such traits out there*.

More explicitly Michelle lists a few characteristics of being entrepreneurial. While she includes critical thinking, healthy skepticism, and business acumen, she emphasizes the importance of a curious mind:

> *I guess last would be a curious mind. You- you should be open. You should ask people questions who are experts in their field and get second opinions. Even though you're doing your own research, you have to obviously place their expert opinion at the right hierarchy of importance.*

Another unique mindset is the growth mindset. Entrepreneurial individuals are perceived as having a work and a growth attitude on their mind. A growth mindset is believed to be the opposite of a limited mindset as per John's statement: *"You can have a growth mindset, or you can have, again, like a limited mindset, and always be negative and not necessarily believing in*

yourself." Moreover, work issues frequently occupy the minds of entrepreneurs even when they are spending time with family. Julia, a mother and entrepreneur, faces the dilemma of always thinking about her business while with her kids, and she calls her dilemma a mindset.

> *I try and stay very focused when I'm with my kids or when I'm with my husband, and try and be in that moment, but when my mind drifts, I'm thinking about work and how I can do something better or where an opportunity is. So, there is that mindset, but I'm not assuming all the risk in what I do.*

For many informants, being entrepreneurial is also perceived as an awareness of belonging to various fields with multiple identities. While they do not refer to them as field and identities, they described them as various roles in different environments. Informants capitalize on their hobbies and experiences to boost their entrepreneurial identity. Anjali a student from India experiences the belonging to multiple fields and the impact of her unique position on being entrepreneurial.

> *I understood a lot about the environmentally friendly ecosystem within Toronto, outside, what other countries are doing. And then after I went back home to India, I'm like, "Oh my god." Now I just started seeing things on an environmentally friendly level. And then I came back, and then the dots almost connected when I was in my final year.*

Furthermore, their ability to transfer experiences and knowledge from one field to the other shaped their entrepreneurial identity. Suzan considers herself entrepreneurial because she can shift her mindset between fields she belongs to. She says: "*I think you can definitely shift your mindset."*

Student informants consider design thinking an integral element of being entrepreneurial. Design thinking is a process developed by engineers to innovate based on desirability, feasibility,

and viability. Students learn design thinking and are actively trained on how to apply it in their third and fourth years. However, they do not perceive it as a tool to be used rather than a mindset fundamental to being entrepreneurial as per Carla a fourth-year entrepreneurship student:

> *Design thinking is a human-centered approach to solving problems. That's- easy statement. It's a creative problem-solving- people say method, I believe it's a mindset.*

Sylvia, another fourth-year entrepreneurship student has a similar view:

> *That- I almost started viewing it as- it goes hand in hand, the Design Thinking mindset and entrepreneurial mindset, at least for me."*

Thus, design thinking is necessary for being entrepreneurial for many informants that studied entrepreneurship and learned it at the university level.

The second dimension of entrepreneurial identity is behavioural. It reflects how informants described their behaviour as entrepreneurial individuals when compared to other non-entrepreneurial ones. The behaviour dimension included five conceptual categories: anti-institutional, rebellious, fields connectors, freethinkers, and problem solvers.

Entrepreneurial informants challenge the institutions they belong to. While they are aware of their field institutional logic, they decide to create their own rules. Their behaviour can be described as anti-institutional. They always appeared to be on the periphery of their fields. They are aware of their field, and they are aware of the fundamental assumptions shaping their fields. As entrepreneurial individuals, they challenge these assumptions. As per Tom a third-year student, the degree of normality of his behaviour leans towards uniqueness:

> *I don't know. I don't know what I would call myself, normal, unique. I'm just open to change. I don't like normal boring stuff. I get bored very quickly. I actually enjoy having*

things that are out of the normal, not to an extreme, because then I don't really like it when it's out of my control and stuff, but things that are pretty normal and doable

Brian, another second-year student, is driven by making his own rules that are not dictated by surrounding institutions. He expressed that clearly:

"For me, it's about taking control of my future, basically, not really- not- not letting society or- or the norms really put you in your place, and I'm always being the one to- as a kid."

Being anti-institutional is driven by their rebellious nature manifested in rejecting common norms around them. They wanted to do things their way, and they cannot be told what to do. David described his actions when something is not working as:

If something's not working, is to question it. Just because somebody tells you this is how it is, if you don't quite believe it, it's okay to challenge it and change it. And so, I think I bring that with me wherever I go.

Moreover, many informants consider themselves as rebellious and mention being rebellious clearly such as Andrew: "*I'm saying I'm a rebel and everything. Yes, when I was younger, I was- I would barely listen and I wasn't getting the best grades.*"

Informants who are anti-institutional and rebellious end up on the peripheral of their fields. This unique position allows them to become field connectors. They can transfer knowledge and skills between fields they were members of. They can be potential creators of new hybrid ideas that belong to more than one root field. Sandra believes herself to be a bridge between idea and results.

I had a professor once tell me that I was a bridge between an idea and the result… I kind of understood what he meant… I find I'm really good at, "Okay, this is the idea. This is

where we want to be. How do we make that happen? What needs to be done to achieve that?"

Stephanie considers herself to be an entrepreneur who bridges gaps between services:

I consider myself an entrepreneur, and there are many types of entrepreneurs. In general, what's common between entrepreneurs is that they have a fire inside them, the burning desire to create, to solve problems, to enhance situations, to bridge the gap between two services, for example. So, it's this urge, unsettling urge that doesn't go away. In fact, with the years, it grows bigger and bigger.

During their entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship students become aware of their entrepreneurial mindsets. They acquire the ability and tools to see their world differently. They thrive as free thinkers. Entrepreneurship courses and professors encouraged them to look at the world differently and provide them with tools to make sense and create order out of messiness. Chris, a fresh graduate, sees himself as:

Right now, I'm more of a thinker. I'm more of a dreamer myself, and one of the biggest problems I've had in life is action, doing things, thinking, making concrete steps to do the things that I wanted, to do the things to make those dreams come to life.

As entrepreneurship students, informants are in a department where their rebelliousness is appreciated. Several interviewed professors expressed their appreciation to rebellious students, and this opinion was promoted in the capstone courses. Students learn in their entrepreneurship courses how to offer solutions and to criticize systems around them. They identify problem solving as a fundamental behavioural characteristic of being entrepreneurial. Peter discusses his abilities in facing problems as:

I think for a lot of problems and stuff, I would use some of the tools, like design thinking. … I think yeah, kind of like an advantage on the problem-solving skills on that side. But then, I didn't have a lot of experience, so I was behind on the other stuff, but as a problem-solving side and looking at things in a broader scope and trying to find a solution, I think that was-

The third dimension of entrepreneurial identity is the construct of affect. It reflects how informants express and describe their emotions towards their being entrepreneurial when compared to other non-entrepreneurship individuals. The affect dimension includes two conceptual categories: empowerment and passion.

Entrepreneurial identity is empowering. Informants who are entrepreneurial feel they can do anything and solve any problem, as described by Mary, who graduated two years prior to our interview, and starting her own new venture:

I feel like I can. I believe that I can, and I believe that these restrictions can be overcome, which is something, I didn't have it at the beginning of business school. I felt like maybe you need a large corporation to sponsor you, or maybe you need to know this or that, or maybe you need to leave this corrupt environment and start in a less corrupt environment to succeed. But now I'm like, "Bring on the challenge. I want to do it. If it's more difficult, I want it." But I still haven't broken- like I haven't achieved all my dreams of building something on a ground scale and the economy, changing the system, influencing it, creating hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs. That's what I really want, and I'm still in the process of growing, even growing in the workplace, getting more tools, and I'm still on a mission.

Also, Casey clearly states how being entrepreneurial is empowering in her statement:

I felt empowered. Now that I think about it, it almost is entrepreneurial to feel empowered to do whatever it is that you want, in my opinion.

Informants connect entrepreneurial identity and behaviour with passion. They passionately approach challenges and solve problems. Passion is a fundamental element of their entrepreneurial identity and driver for their entrepreneurial behaviour as Emily stated:

I'm really passionate about finding something to solve this, and you're not really stuck on all of the iterations that you come up with, and you're not glued to them, and just being flexible within your mindset.

Entrepreneurial Identity is not Founder's Identity

Informants who considered themselves entrepreneurial described it as a mindset, an ability to solve problems, and a habit of thinking differently. Informants believed they obtained these characteristics, and they were entrepreneurial. When I asked if they considered themselves to be entrepreneurs, they believed that they were not, unless they had already founded a new venture. However, most of the founders whom I interviewed did not major in entrepreneurship. Moreover, very few graduates from the entrepreneurship program under investigation ended up becoming entrepreneurs even after eight to ten years after graduation. Informants that were entrepreneurs and founded a new venture reflected on their identity based on the three dimensions of perception, behaviour and affect as per figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 here

The perception dimension was constructed from three conceptual categories that emerged from the data: self-awareness, environment-imposed identity, and founder's identity. Informants that were founders became aware of their entrepreneurial and founder's identity long after starting their new ventures. They were doers. Their effort, time, and mindset were directed towards doing

and not reflecting on who they were. They were what they achieved as Maria a founder of an eight-year-old venture described it: "*Even when I created my company, I never thought of it as, "Oh, I'm an entrepreneur now.*" Jana founded her first business while she was studying. When asked about her identity, she always considered herself a student first even after graduating and going to graduate school. She said:

> *Yeah, I thought I'm mostly a student. I was still in the student mindset. Like if you'd meet me at a networking event, I wouldn't be like, "I'm an entrepreneur and I have my own social start-up." I would be like, "I'm a university student and I started a business."*

The social environment of founders made them aware of the concept of entrepreneur and opened their eyes on their founders' identity. The current status entrepreneurs have in society, and the appreciation they currently get in society, was not the case 15 years ago.

> *I never thought of myself as entrepreneur. I am a managing director. It is now when you ask me, I reflect and see that I am an entrepreneur. You know, 15 years ago, entrepreneurship was not the "cool thing" as it is today. It meant that you didn't have a job. Now it is different.*
>
> *Amy, an entrepreneur since more than 15 years.*

Some informants came from families of founders. For these informants, entrepreneurship was the norm as a career path. Catherine described her attitude towards entrepreneurship as being normal because all her close family members were founders.

> *My dad's an entrepreneur, my grandfather is an entrepreneur. It's kind of in my family to have their own businesses, so this is something I grew up around. And I've always wanted to be my own boss. I always thought of it as, "If I'm going to be working my whole life,*

> *I'd rather be working for myself making my own dreams come true as opposed to working for someone else and making theirs become reality."*

Informants described their identity based on their role as founders. Peter, a fourth-year student would only call entrepreneurs those who founded a business. When asked about who could be called entrepreneur, he answered: "*Someone who starts their own company or someone who runs a business or has- basically, anyone who started their own business.*" Moreover, entrepreneur informants were critical about entrepreneurship education as a path for entrepreneurship. As Frank an entrepreneur since more than eight years said about entrepreneurship education:

> *It was more of an academic approach, which I think entrepreneurship doesn't just involve academia. It's more about experience, putting yourself out there, and learning from your mistakes, and getting back up, and if you fail, so lots of- how do I say this? Lots of psychology too, like teaching an entrepreneur that if you fail, how you get back up, or how do you plan for emergencies? Right now, we're experiencing emergencies (COVID-19). Do entrepreneurs know about that? Are they prepared? Those are things that I've learned from living it, not from school, but school supports it and they can support it. I will study entrepreneurship for the sake studying something that's interesting, but not for the sake of becoming one.*

The behavioural dimension was aggregated from two role identities establishing a new venture and managing a business. Entrepreneur and student informants emphasized the role of founders who start new ventures. To be considered entrepreneurs, individuals would have successfully started a new venture by transforming an idea into an operating business. Founders' role identity is a retrospective identity where founders become aware of it after the fact of

starting a business. Several informants referred to their role as founders since they already founded a new venture and not because they are currently creating one. Thomas differentiated between having an idea and starting a new venture. He believed that to be an entrepreneur one must transform an idea into a new venture.

> *I think anybody can have an idea. I don't think everyone can be an entrepreneur. Ideas are a dime a dozen. Anybody can have an idea. It doesn't mean it's a good idea, first of all. Just because you have an idea, doesn't mean you're going to do anything about it. Plenty of people have lots of ideas all the time. I have ideas all the time. I don't do everything- something about all of my ideas.*

When I asked entrepreneur informants more about their current role, they brought out the second conceptual category as business managers. I asked informants that founded business since more than two years to describe their role. They ended up describing the role of a CEO or business manager such as managing, leading, and solving problems. Eventually, they realized that their role was more like a CEO and less like an entrepreneur, but they identified as entrepreneurs at some point in time. Even some of them referred to their role as "founder and CEO."

As CEO, a founder is expected to make decisions such as firing and hiring.

> *We started to encounter scenarios where early employees just weren't keeping up with the pace of the company, or with the pace of the technology that we were now starting to deal with. We had to say goodbye to some people. Some went nicely, some didn't go nicely, a lot of hard lessons in terms of how to effectively manage people and get the most out of them, what to expect from them, and what kind of culture to create within your models.*

As CEO, a founder is expected to grow the business and acquire multiple skills.

The way I frame it when I'm working with new clients is I'm a grower, not necessarily a manager. I can fix problems; I can grow and scale companies.

As CEO, a founder is expected to lead.

So that thing, the leadership, I guess, entrepreneurship is basically leadership, being a leader and someone who impacts the world positively. That's how I define it. It's always been there.

As CEO, a founder is expected to manage teams.

I started having to manage, for example, my own team, this became a big challenge.

The affect dimension of founder's identity was not initially obvious when analyzing the transcripts. It took me time to go over the interviews and listen to the records more than once to come out with two conceptual affect categories shaping the identity of founders, anxiety and excitement.

Most of the entrepreneurs-informants were lifestyle entrepreneurs and not serial entrepreneurs who create new ventures with an exit plan to start another one afterwards. They had to keep up and manage the various daily challenges. Anxiety was detected in their tone and words. It was not easy to be a founder who was expected maintain an organization against the daily challenges. James shared his experience with anxiety. He stated: "*I had to open up and I was suffering from anxiety which I didn't know why. I didn't even know that I had anxiety for many years. So, now I acknowledge that and now I am okay with that.*"

Along with anxiety, entrepreneur informants also shared the pleasure of excitement that balances anxiety. Being a founder, for some, is as enjoyable as riding a rollercoaster. James also expressed his excitement when his new venture started experiencing growth. He said:

It's a very exciting time. We are busier than ever and strapped for time, more than ever, so it's- I've been told that's a very good sign because when you're a day ahead of the chaos, it means that you're in a very upward growth curve, so that's exciting. It's never been more demanding before.

When comparing entrepreneurial identity and founder's identity, it was clear that the former is related to creativity while the latter is related to execution. I asked entrepreneur informants about their identity before and while creating their new venture. They described the characteristics of entrepreneurial identity referring to concepts such as: mindset, lifestyle, and solving problems. As one informant described it: "*I think you can be entrepreneurial without being an entrepreneur, but if you're going to label yourself as an entrepreneur, I would say that you would have your own venture of sorts.*" Thus, I concluded that there was a difference between an entrepreneurial identity and founder's identity which is more a behavioural a role identity.

Emergence of entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurship education

The entrepreneurship program investigated was a four-year (eight semesters) undergraduate program at a business school in Canada. In its promotional flyer, the program listed for future students several possible future career paths such as starting a new business and being entrepreneurial within organizations. It stressed that students would develop courage and determination, and it considered entrepreneurship to be a calling.

"*Launching a winning start-up; creating a sustainable and competitive enterprise; even being entrepreneurial within organizations; you'll learn it all. And you'll develop*

courage and determination you never knew you had. Entrepreneurship is a calling. Answer it at …"

The first year was an introductory year with general business courses such as accounting, economics, information systems, marketing, human resources, management, and statistics. Students did not take an entrepreneurship course in their first year. In their second year (third and fourth semesters), students took only two introductory entrepreneurship courses. In their third semester, students are introduced to the topic of entrepreneurship in a course with many guest speakers.

In their fourth semester, students took their first disruptive entrepreneurship course on identifying opportunities. This course was open to students minoring in entrepreneurship as well. In this course, students were expected to go out of the classroom, have walks in the neighbourhood, start a weekly journal, and write reflections. The instructor teaching this course emphasized the importance of the beginning journey each student had to go through while being inspired by external factors. Students were expected to have a group project of solving a problem they identified in their environment. Students were lectured on creativity, photography, drawing, yoga, meditation, and design thinking. Several students identified this course as an eye opener.

In their third year (fifth and sixth semesters), entrepreneurship students took six entrepreneurship courses. One course was an entrepreneurship literature course where students read academic journal papers on the subject matter. The objective of this course was to make students aware of the limitations of their knowledge. Some students identified this course as an eye opener for their own reality.

One of the most influential courses, according to informants, was a capstone course that students take in their third year. It was a one-year course (over two semesters), and it is only

offered to students majoring in entrepreneurship. This course was the most impactful course on the entrepreneurial identity of students. It incorporated the three elements of entrepreneurial identity: perception, behaviour, and affect. First, the capstone courses facilitated the emergence of perception of being entrepreneurial among students. In the capstone course students learned and practiced design thinking, which facilitated the emergence of the entrepreneurial mindset among students. Also, this course created a sense of group belonging among entrepreneurship students because they took it together at the same time for two years (third year capstone course and fourth year capstone course). This consolidated the entrepreneurship student's common identity by creating an ingroup / outgroup dynamic, because the capstone courses were exclusively offered for entrepreneurship major students.

Second, the nonorthodox delivery of the capstone courses resonated with the free-thinker and rebellious behaviour of entrepreneurship students. The capstone courses were learner-centered courses. Students were divided into teams of founders, and their final project was a new venture. Teams worked for two years in order to achieve this target. Some students that were more institutionaly oriented felt frustrated with the lucid structure of the capstone courses. However, entrepreneurial students, who were free-thinker and rebellious, felt comfortable with the loose structured capstone courses. They were able to identify a problem of their interest and develop a solution. The two capstone courses allowed entrepreneurship students to develop the behavioural aspect of their entrepreneurial identity.

Third, two capstone courses emotionally attached entrepreneurship students with their entrepreneurial identity. They used emotional statements that reflected empowerment and passion in describing their experiences during the capstone courses. Students felt empowered and capable of changing the world. The professors of the two capstone courses were able to empower

students with the motivation to create for profit new ventures and not for profit firms. The two capstone courses created social entrepreneurs. Moreover, students were very passionate in expressing their emotions towards entrepreneurship, the capstone courses, and the professors teaching these courses.

Informants became aware of their entrepreneurial identity during their years entrepreneurship education. One informant described her experience during the program:

> *"I was like, 'Wow, that's me. I always had this mindset. I was always focused on making money. I found I was very good at negotiating and selling.' And so it just, it made me really realize who I am."*

Informants studying entrepreneurship were able to detect events during their entrepreneurship program that were eye openers. I asked about "aha!" moments. Some referred to courses, others referred to encounters with professors. But by far the capstone courses were the most impactful when it comes to becoming aware of their entrepreneurial identities.

Second-year and many third-year students did not develop awareness of their entrepreneurial identity. Their answers about entrepreneurship were generic, and I was able to detect the institutional language in their description of entrepreneurship. When I asked Dave a 2nd year student about entrepreneurship he said:

> *Someone who starts their own company or someone who runs a business or has- basically, anyone who started their own business.*

When I asked how his perception evolved in two years, he said it did not. However, some third year and many fourth-year students had personalized definitions for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial. They became aware of their own entrepreneurial identity. I did not observe that all students became entrepreneurial during the program. However, they claimed to become aware

of what entrepreneurial means, and they seem to acquire certain tools such as design thinking, which enables them to solve problems and think creatively.

When I asked if they sense a difference between students majoring in entrepreneurship and other Bachelor of Commerce Students they said yes.

> *I'd say an example would be even going on the escalators at [school]. You can generally see what person fits into what program, not to sound judgmental, but kind of just based on their demeanor, what they're wearing. I noticed a lot of people in real estate, for example, I'll see them go into the real estate section of the classes, and they're very much cleaner cut, very professional, just very, very business. That's their thing. With entrepreneurs, I see a wider range of personalities. I see people that you would think would be art students or other people that you would think are just very professional.*
>
> *Bob a 4th year entrepreneurship student*

Informants who studied entrepreneurship perceived themselves as creative. They believed creativity was an essential constituent of their entrepreneurial identity. Creativity was the construct that differentiated between entrepreneurship major students and non-entrepreneurship students. Bill replied to a question how entrepreneurship students were different from other BCom students:

> *I mean, not to sound stereotypical, but a lot of people in other business programs are much more kind of "suit and tie," like very- I don't want to say preppy, but very "to the point," very just "business, business, business," whereas I find entrepreneurship students have a lot more- not that other business students don't have creativity, but I personally see a lot more creativity in entrepreneurship students than I do in others.*

Furthermore, they were under the impression that their entrepreneurship courses not only developed their creativity, but also evaluated their degree of creativity as a learning outcome. They were expected to learn about creativity and demonstrate it in their projects. Informants discussed the design thinking process as an approach to develop creative solutions for problems. Several informants advocated design thinking approach with passion.

DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurial identity is not only an independent construct from founders' identity, but also falls under a fundamentally different category of identities. Entrepreneurial identity can be considered a meta-identity that can be realized through entrepreneurship education and plays a role in the identification process. Entrepreneurial identity plays a significant role in the identification process of rebellious individuals. Entrepreneurship education empowers entrepreneurship students by allowing them to realize their entrepreneurial identity.

Entrepreneurial identity a Meta-identity

Entrepreneurial identity is a personal meta-identity (Reger et al., 1998) that enables individuals to challenge their current institutional roles, recreate new roles, improve their position in a field, and redefine their surrounding environments. Meta-identities have been discussed under the context of organizational identities. After a major development in their activities, organizations create a meta-identity to become more inclusive, integrative, and reflective of their current activities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000), for example a shipping company that acquires a train company might want to identify as a transportation company. On the personal level, once entrepreneurship students become aware of and capable to manage their multiple identities, entrepreneurial identity becomes their meta identity that allows them to integrate and synergise those multiple identities. Thus, the concept of meta-identity can be

borrowed from organizational level to individual level. After all entrepreneurial individuals are enterprising individuals aspiring to create organizations around their ideas.

On the perception level of entrepreneurial identity, the element of belonging to multiple fields empowers entrepreneurial individuals and translates to the element of freethinkers on the behavioural level. Assuming that a unique identity is connected with each field, entrepreneurial individuals are aware of their multiple identities, and they are capable of taking advantage of them. This is revealed in their behaviour. The behavioural element of entrepreneurial identity enables entrepreneurial individuals to deinstitutionalize (the construct of anti-institutional) and deconstruct (the construct of rebellious), then institutionalize (the construct of field connectors) and construct (the construct of problem solvers) organizations. Thus, entrepreneurial identity is the identity of realizing and manipulating identities of entrepreneurial individuals.

In contrast, founders' identity is a role driven identity that is realized by founders through their environments. Society considers an individual to be an entrepreneur after creating a new venture. Founders' identity is attached to the behaviour of starting and managing a business. This is a very clear and concrete role that is different from the thought process leading individuals to it. Entrepreneurial identity is connected to the thought process rather than a concrete role that could be easily identified.

Entrepreneurial identity allows entrepreneurial individuals to identify patterns in their environment, make sense of their surroundings, and suggest actions to take accordingly. Informants perceive entrepreneurial identity a mindset or a world view, and they consider design thinking a way of living rather than as a tool. Entrepreneurial identity provides individuals with an optimistic lens to look at contradictions and a positive attitude to resolve paradoxes.

Through their entrepreneurial identities, individuals than be creative and solve problems by connecting various fields. Individuals have multiple identities because they belong to multiple groups and acquire multiple roles. Entrepreneurial individuals transform skills and knowledge from one field to the other through their entrepreneurial identity that embraces their multiple identities. Individuals can then rearrange their perceptions and behaviours driven by affect to construct new identities and new organizations attached to this identity. Such identities are seeds of new organizational identities or new ventures.

Entrepreneurial identity and the process identification

For entrepreneurial individuals, entrepreneurial identity plays an essential role in their identifications process. However, identification for entrepreneurial individuals entangles creating new aspired organization with its unique identity and identifying with this new organizational identity. Thus, entrepreneurial identification involves episodes of deidentification and identity-creation as demonstrated in Figure 4.

Insert Figure 4 here

Entrepreneurial identity initially emerges as an anti-role identity in the deidentification episode. Rebellious entrepreneurial individuals reject a role set by their current organization and challenge its institutional logic. They do not want to be confined to a role set by someone other than themselves. By challenging their institutional role, entrepreneurial individuals deidentify with organizations and institutions they belong to.

Entrepreneurial individuals do not deidentify with one institutional role to identify with another institutional role. They deidentify with as many institutional roles as possible and aspire to create their own organization with its unique institutional roles in the identity-creation episode. This episode is a combination of successive steps of creation and identification. While

entrepreneurial individuals reject confined institutional roles and deidentify with their organizational fields, they are aware of the various fields in their environment and the institutional logics associated with those fields. Entrepreneurial individuals create new ideas for new organizations by connecting various institutional logics from various organizational fields. Furthermore, when a promising idea for a new organization emerges, entrepreneurial individuals identify with it as their own new identity. Entrepreneurial identity enables entrepreneurial individuals to create a new organizational identity and identify with it.

From a role identity theory perspective, entrepreneurial identity is an anti-institutional identity where individuals challenge their institutional roles trying to redefine them. From a social identity theory perspective, entrepreneurial identity is a self-perceived identity that once individuals become aware of, it empowers them to view and create new fields and opportunities. Both role identity and social identity theories are needed to better understand entrepreneurial identity, because it has sociological as well as psychological elements intertwined together. Individuals, when being entrepreneurial, are critical and creative at the same time. They are simultaneously trend-disruptors and trend-setters. Entrepreneurial identity enables individuals to challenge the institutional norms and forces of organizations in their environments; then, it empowers entrepreneurial individuals to visualize a different approach that addresses issues in their environments.

Affect is as a driver for entrepreneurial individuals applying their entrepreneurial identity. Empowerment and passion, the affect constructs of entrepreneurial identity, are critical in transforming perception into action. Entrepreneurial individuals that are passionate of their growth mindset and felt empowered by creativity, becomes anti-institutional, rebellious and

problem solvers. Empowerment and passion are drivers of the deidentification and identity-creation episodes of entrepreneurial individuals.

Entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurship education

This research contributes to the field of entrepreneurship education by providing a better understanding of its possible impact on the entrepreneurial identity of students. Entrepreneurship education helps many students become aware of their entrepreneurial identity. They learn what is entrepreneurship and how to become entrepreneurial; however, they do not learn how to become founders. Once individuals become aware of their entrepreneurial identity, they engaged in entrepreneurial activities within their current roles. These activities are not limited to starting new ventures.

Entrepreneurship education benefits rebellious individuals and allows them to discover their entrepreneurial identity. Rebellious and anti-institutional individuals have often experienced rejections and blame for not listening or following the rules. Their institutionalized environments push them to the margins. The come the learn entrepreneurship after experiencing low affiliations with organizations in their environment. They can make little sense of their uniqueness. During their entrepreneurship education, they discover their entrepreneurial identity. It provides them with a sense of belonging, and it gives them a reasonable meaning that justifies their previous experiences with organizations in their environment.

Entrepreneurship education empowers these individuals to create new roles and define new fields. They have a positive perception about the world and their role in changing it. One might justifiably believe that this is over optimism. Entrepreneurship students who get in touch with their entrepreneurial identity get the perception that they can change the world. Consequently, a

common theme emerged among these students involved their urge to tackle social and environmental issues.

Entrepreneurship education can give students a voice and a sense of belonging but does not enable them to act and become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education facilitates the emergence of entrepreneurial identity among students but cannot transform their orientation into a founder's identity. Not being embedded in an institutional field, entrepreneurship students with little work experience do not have enough exposure to enough organizations and their logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Thus, unexperienced entrepreneurship students are less likely to form new ventures out of their creative ideas. Very few entrepreneurship students become founders. Many good students who learned about entrepreneurship become entrepreneurship specialists working in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

As for practical insights, entrepreneurship education can be valuable for learners as a minor degree of institutionalized majors like engineering. While entrepreneurship is currently offered as a minor, the two capstone courses are exclusively offered to entrepreneurship majoring students. One suggestion can be to offer these two disruptive capstone courses over two to four years to non-business students. Engineering students that are interested in entrepreneurship can be granted an entrepreneurship minor after taking the two capstone courses in their senior years, and another two years can be part of a graduate diploma at their university-based incubator. In such an educational program, engineering students can develop their projects into a sustainable new venture while being coached and granted access to university resources.

CONCLUSION

My research on the emergence and evolution of entrepreneurial identity has theoretical as well as practical contributions. It defined entrepreneurial identity and differentiated it from

founders' identity. This research also explores the impact of entrepreneurial identities on founders' identity. It expands the bases of identity and social identity theories to accounts for emergence and evolution of entrepreneurial identity (Cardador & Pratt, 2006). My findings can inform educators about identity aspects to consider when designing their educational programs and workshops that aim to boost entrepreneurial identity among students with various identities at the university and even beyond university level such as training adults, immigrants, and seniors that are entrepreneurial and interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

This study is limited to an urban Canadian university environment. The findings and conclusions are to be taken as insights and prospective models to be tested in future studies. While the findings do contribute to our understanding of entrepreneurial identity and the identification process, the findings are not conclusive.

CHAPTER 4: ENTREPRENEURIAL BUT NOT ENTREPRENEUR: HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY SHAPES IDENTITY OF ENTREPRENEURS AND OTHER CAREER IDENTITIES

ABSTRACT

Graduates of entrepreneurship programs acquire an entrepreneurial identity that empowers them with a creative mindset. In this paper, I answer the question, how does this entrepreneurial identity help graduates develop a meaning that conceptualize their entrepreneurial role in their future careers? I examine how entrepreneurial identities shape the future careers of those who study entrepreneurship. I analyzed and coded 83 interviews with students and graduates from an undergraduate (43 informants) and graduate (32 informants) entrepreneurship programs, in addition to eight informants who took entrepreneurship courses at some point in their university education and founded new ventures. I found that entrepreneurial identity acquired during entrepreneurship education shapes the profiles of graduates, and five career paths were identified: dream-building, entrepreneurship pop culture, institutional entrepreneurship, investment entrepreneurship, and new venture path. I argued that entrepreneurship education might not prepare its graduates to become founders, but it empowers them with entrepreneurial identity awareness and entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. Finally, graduates of entrepreneurship education can perform entrepreneurial activities beyond new venture creation. They know about entrepreneurship but not much about how to become an entrepreneur.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial identity is a meta-identity that enables individuals to challenge their current institutional roles, recreate new roles, improve their position in a field, and redefine their surrounding environments. Entrepreneurial identity shapes thoughts and actions of entrepreneurs (Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007; Newbery et al., 2018) during the process of opportunity recognition (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011) and new-venture creation (E. E. Powell & Baker, 2014). How entrepreneurial identities shape the identity of entrepreneurs provides valuable insights into the broader entrepreneurial process of new-venture creation (Crosina, 2018). When choosing to study entrepreneurship at the graduate or undergraduate university level, individuals have a minimum degree of awareness of their entrepreneurial identity. Research has examined various occupations associated with university programs such as finance (Lounsbury, 2002), organizational development (Church, 2001), public administration (Pugh & Hickson, 1989), sport psychology (Silva, 1989), and adult education (Wilson, 1993). In a previous study, I examined how entrepreneurship education increases the awareness of entrepreneurial identity among students. However, how entrepreneurial identity impacts the various career trajectories is understudied. Answering this question extends beyond entrepreneurship and into work environments. Recent technological advancements (Cardon, 2003; Petriglieri et al., 2018) are disrupting work environments and redefining occupational identities (Kuhn, 2016; Tripsas, 2009). In such work environments, my research question is how does developing an entrepreneurial identity shape career identities including the identity of entrepreneurs?

In my study, I examined the impact of entrepreneurial identities on the career paths of 83 informants who studied entrepreneurship. 43 informants majored in entrepreneurship at the undergraduate level, and 32 informants majored in entrepreneurship on the graduate level. Also,

eight informants who founded new ventures took entrepreneurship courses at different stages in their lives. I asked the informants about their entrepreneurial identities, their careers, and how their entrepreneurial identities shaped their careers. While collecting data, I started my analysis with open coding in an iterative fashion. Then, I axially coded to develop dimensions and characteristics of my themes and constructs.

I positioned profiles of informants on a two-dimensional matrix: how institutional they are versus how aware they were of their entrepreneurial identity. Thus, study resulted in three major contributions. First, entrepreneurship education might not prepare its graduates to become founders, but it empowers them with entrepreneurial identity awareness and entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. Individuals, who are aware of their entrepreneurial identity use it in various ways to progress their careers. Alumni of entrepreneurship programs developed a sense of belonging which reflects their entrepreneurial identity. They used their entrepreneurial identity in their careers, sometime in their current job roles and sometimes to create new roles. The degree of institutionalization of the roles of informants impacted how they made use of their entrepreneurial identities. Second, entrepreneurial identity self-awareness and entrepreneurship institutional knowledge from entrepreneurship education interacts with other environmental elements that participate in shaping the final profiles of entrepreneurship students after graduation. Third, entrepreneurial identity seems to play a role in the process of new venture creation. Founders are confident and aware of their entrepreneurial mindset, and they use it in the process of identifying a gap and creating a solution. However, when discussing entrepreneurial identity with them, founders are less focused on it when compared to other entrepreneurial individuals, and they might not have the institutional language to discuss their entrepreneurial

activities when compared to entrepreneurship students who learn the comprehensive institutional language of entrepreneurship at school.

Theories of Identity and Occupational Identity

Identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) are two different theories aimed to analyze interactions between one's self and environment. These interactions shape not only behaviours of individuals, but also social structures. Identity theory and social identity theory are grounded in different sets of assumptions generated at different levels of analysis. While Identity theory is traced to the micro-sociological roots, social identity theory can be traced to the macro-psychological contexts. Role identity theory reflects a social psychological model of self where social schema define self (Hogg et al., 1995). Schema are derived from roles that individuals occupy in their society (Gedajlovic et al., 2013; Valliere, 2013). Some roles are more important than others for the individual; thus, identities reflecting the most important roles are more salient (B. Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Callero, 1985; Stryker, 1968). While the outcomes of identity-related processes are well examined, less research covers the role of individuals during the process of emerging and transitional identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Social identity depicts social groups regardless of their size and nature. As a theory, it accounts for a range of group behaviours such as conformity, stereotyping, discrimination, and ethnocentrism. Group membership and group behaviours mediate between the social structure and behaviours of individuals. Identity salience reflects the identity of groups that maximize meaning to individuals (Hogg et al., 1995).

Occupational identities 'who I am at work and what I do' are special types of social identities related to current or future careers (Baran et al., 2012). Ashforth et al. (2008) argue that

workers develop their occupational identities through an ongoing process of constructing an identity narrative, enacting an identity based upon that narrative, and interpreting how that identity informs their identity narratives. However, there is a problematic issue in current identity theory when applied to entrepreneurial identities (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Occupational identity emerges from a person's organizational or occupational group, their occupational roles, physical objects that comprise work environments, as well as work-related narratives and meanings (Cardador & Pratt, 2006). Those basic elements are dubious for novice entrepreneurs (Burton et al., 2016). As members of an occupational group, individuals are recognized as entrepreneurs only after establishing their new ventures, yet their entrepreneurial identity emerges much earlier in the process. Occupational roles for novice entrepreneurs are neither clear nor consistent; they have to multitask to grow their new venture. Physical objects that comprise work environments of novice entrepreneurs are not well-defined. Work-related narratives for novice entrepreneurs are in the process of emergence. Unlike other occupational identities, entrepreneurial identities are not role-defined (B. E. Ashforth & Mael, 1989), but they are associated with emotional and intrinsic values common among entrepreneurs (B. Ashforth et al., 2008).

Role identity and social identity theories have a history of competition (Hogg et al., 1995). However, recent work on identification found both theories to be complementary. When studying role transition, both theories could apply and explain different aspects of the identification process (B. Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Entrepreneurial identity is active during identity transition (Duening & Metzger, 2017). To study the process of identity transition, two different identity theories are required to understand the emergence of entrepreneurial identity: the macro-psychological social identity theory (J. C. Turner & Tajfel, 1986) and the micro-

sociological identity role theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Social identities 'who I am' are self-perceived identities that emerges from an awareness of group memberships (Hogg et al., 1995; Tajfel, 1982). Social identity theory is a social psychological theory of intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self. It may be more useful in exploring intergroup dimensions and in specifying the socio-cognitive generative details of identity dynamics (Hogg et al., 1995).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Identity of Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Identity

Identity of entrepreneurs has been a recent subject of research. While the nature of an entrepreneurial identity that reflects the entrepreneurial role is not well defined in the literature, Murnieks & Mosakowski, (2007) used role identity theory to discuss the existence of entrepreneurial identity relative to other common identities of entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial identity helps entrepreneurs develop a meaning that conceptualizes their entrepreneurial role. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) approached entrepreneurs' identity from a social identity perspective to identify three archetypical social identities of entrepreneurs: Darwinians, Missionaries, and Communitarians. Other studies find multiple entrepreneurial identities, rather than one salient to individuals starting new ventures (Cardon et al., 2009; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The commonality among these identities is their ability to drive behaviour of entrepreneurs. Cardon et al. (2009) emphasize the role of passion on entrepreneurial behaviour. Powell and Baker (2014) identify both single and multiple identities for entrepreneurs. These identities were both roles based and social based. They defined entrepreneur's identity as "the set of identities that are chronically salient to a founder in her or his day-to day work."

In my previous study, I found that entrepreneurial identity is a construct different than entrepreneur's or founder's identity discussed in the literature (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; E. E. Powell & Baker, 2014). Entrepreneurial identity is as self-perceived social identity that allows individuals to challenge their current institutional roles, to recreate new roles, to improve their position in a field, and to redefine their surrounding fields. Entrepreneurial identity is an anti-role identity that shapes the identity of entrepreneurs. When individuals reject a role set by their environment and challenge their surrounding institutional elements, they use their entrepreneurial identity to redefine their roles or create new ones. Entrepreneurial identity enables individuals to challenge the institutional norms and forces of their environments beyond just entrepreneurship. It empowers individuals to visualize a different approach that addresses issues in their environments. However, this process is under studied.

Individuals studying entrepreneurship become more aware of their entrepreneurial identities. Entrepreneurship education has been a growing field within higher education contexts, with evidence in increased attention to graduate and undergraduate programs, courses, as well as student competitions (Etzkowitz, 2002; Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996). However, direct impacts of entrepreneurship education on new-venture creation have not been successfully documented. While entrepreneurship education trains individuals, new-venture creation is a complex multilevel process (Gartner, 1989). Individuals joining a bachelor program in entrepreneurship are not only acquiring relevant knowledge and skills, but also developing a sense of belonging to a group (Tajfel, 1982) of aspiring entrepreneurs. Self-selected students enrolled in an entrepreneurship program have already constructed a prototypical identity-narrative. Consequently, they create self-perceived identity of what defines an entrepreneur and what is entrepreneurial.

I explored how entrepreneurial identity shapes career identities. Alumni, of entrepreneurship programs are expected to be aware of their entrepreneurial identities. Also, entrepreneurs are expected to have an entrepreneurial identity embedded in their founders' identity. In this research, I examined the impact of entrepreneurial identity on entrepreneurs and other careers pursued by those who studied entrepreneurship.

METHODS

In order to address my research questions on how entrepreneurial identity shapes identities of entrepreneurs and other career identities, I interviewed informants who studied entrepreneurship at the graduate of undergraduate education, in addition to founders who took unformal entrepreneurship courses or workshops. I asked them about their education, their careers, and their understanding of entrepreneurship. Interviews will take between 45 and 60 minutes and they will be recorded and transcribed.

Sampling

In order to address my research questions on how entrepreneurial identity shaper entrepreneurs and other career identities, I interviewed 83 informants who studied entrepreneurship either in their graduate or undergraduate education, in addition to eight entrepreneurs who took entrepreneurship courses or workshops, but they found a new venture. These new ventures were at different stages of maturity. I asked them about their education, their careers, and their understanding of entrepreneurship. I initially considered founders of new ventures to be entrepreneurs. When I asked participants to self-identify, their answers reflected the complexity of founders' identity. However, they all considered themselves entrepreneurial, or

they had an entrepreneurial mindset. Interviews took between 45 and 60 minutes. They were all recorded and transcribed.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews focused on their career history, self-perceived entrepreneurial identity, and their understanding of the concept of entrepreneur. I asked them about their various current roles and how their education shaped who they are. I asked questions such as: what is entrepreneurship; who do you consider to be an entrepreneur; do you consider yourself an entrepreneur and why? I also asked when they became entrepreneurs, when they realized that they are entrepreneurs, and when do they stop being entrepreneurs.

I started my interview with an open question, “can you tell me a little bit about yourself?” I did not interrupt the informants. I gave them the space and freedom to go in any direction. While doing that, I picked up on what they said and asked for elaboration. I followed-up on their answers with more questions to understand the various aspects of entrepreneurial identity. I collected their stories and made sure to understand their experiences from their perspectives. I asked the same question more than once during interviews in different forms focusing on their consistency.

In my interviews, I pushed the boundaries of my informants. Often, they contradicted themselves on some of their claims. This contradiction helped us identify potential opportunities for theorization and abstraction. I always ended my interviews asking them why they participated, if they wanted to add anything, and if I missed anything? Many informants described my interviews as an opportunity to reflect on their education and careers. I asked their help in recruiting their friends, and I asked them not to share details about their interviews with

them. These interviews were customized in their structure and approach to match the preferences of each informant. However, I had a checklist of items that I made sure to cover during the interviews.

Analysis Strategy

Using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), I coded interviews and observations for categories and themes while acknowledging existing presuppositions. I monitored the flow of discourse among students and graduates from different cohorts conducting a discourse analysis (Gee, 2001). Discourse analysis allowed us to capture institutional language, assumptions, frameworks, tools, as well as behaviour introduced by the educational program and accepted by participants to assert themselves as members of a group with defined entrepreneurial identity.

I ran cycles of analysis that started with deeply analyzing data, developing theoretical categories, and relating these insights to existing literature on occupational identities and identification (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). While collecting data, I started my analysis with open coding in an iterative fashion (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). Using Nvivo, I open coded the first ten interviews from various categories and ended up with more than 300 nodes. I developed broad and specific codes through several rounds of iteration, moving back and forth between broad and specific codes. Then, I started analyzing the code and categorizing them into various themes and constructs. I followed with axial coding to develop dimensions and characteristics of my themes and constructs.

I axially coded the data using institutionalism and entrepreneurial identity awareness as two dimensions. I followed the previously described process of analysis with until I reached a

level of theoretical saturation. Once no additional themes and construct emerged, I checked to make sure that each theme and construct was well defined and described. To develop identified gaps in my themes and constructs, I followed up with a selective coding approach where I went back to my interviews and look for quotes that fill these gaps. I unfolded an identification process that describes how informants changed roles using their entrepreneurial identity.

FINDINGS

Two dimensions emerged and allowed me to axially code the data. The first dimension was Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness, which reflected the degree of self-awareness informants had towards their entrepreneurial identity. This awareness was an outcome of entrepreneurship education. The theme of awareness emerged among informants after reflecting when asked about what it meant to be an entrepreneur. Peter, a graduate for the entrepreneurship program described traits and said:

> *Some people are aware of those traits (Entrepreneurial), and some people aren't, and some people don't want to take that path even though they do possess such traits out there. It's a personal thing.*

Helen described it as being mindful in her statement:

> *But again, when you are trying to act as a glue, it even becomes more important that you would be mindful about many things that maybe a simple inventor or only one inventor would not even think about it or be aware of it or even don't care about it.*

When I analyzed the profiles of informants using the dimension of Entrepreneurial Identity Awareness, I found variations with the degree of awareness among them.

The second dimension was Institutional Conformity, which reflected the degree of identification and compliance with an institutional role among informants. The theme of

institutional conformity emerged from the answers of informants on questions about their current roles and how good they were in doing their jobs. One of those roles were being a student, where Nadia a graduate from the entrepreneurship program proudly shared her achievements as a student and said:

> *I actually graduated as a valedictorian from my master's, and I graduated with honors from my undergraduate program, and I took many, many, many scholarships that relied on my GPA and a lot of student engagement. And even in school, I was an A student, and I'm highly academically inclined.*

Different profiles of informants varied on the dimension of Institutional conformity from less to high institutional.

Furthermore, my findings entailed seven different profiles of informants that were impacted by entrepreneurial identity and other environmental constructs to undergo change. These profiles had different driving energies and were basis for five distinguished paths.

Profiles of Informants

Seven profiles of informants emerged from analyzing the data: messy minds, job seekers, visionaries, entrepreneurship specialists, intrapreneurs, part-time entrepreneurs, and founders. Table 2 shows how many informants were positioned at some point under one profile. Two were initial profiles: messy minds and job seekers. These were experienced either before joining the entrepreneurship programs or during the early years of the program; furthermore, initial profiles were noted for their low awareness on entrepreneurial identity dimension while the entrepreneurial identity awareness of the remaining five profiles was higher to various degrees. Four were final profiles: entrepreneurship specialists, intrapreneurs, part-time entrepreneurs, and

founders. These profiles were experienced either by the fourth year of the entrepreneurship program or after graduation. One profile, Visionaries, appeared as a final and transitional profile.

Insert Table 2

I profiled many informants as messy minds because they had a messy experience during and after high school. They did not join the entrepreneurship program immediately after graduating high school. Some experienced traumas wither due to a bad influence from friends or an accident that caused a major disruption in their lives. Tom, a graduate from the entrepreneurship program who became a founder, reflected on his experience during high school and described it as traumatic. He said:

> *In high school, honestly, I don't know what to say. I was in with the wrong crowd and made some bad decisions. I met a couple friends who I was too close with for no reason; one ended up having a kid, one was put in prison, one actually was killed. It was all sorts of trauma.*

Sally, also a fourth-year student, was a disciplined student studying animal science. She experienced an accident and had to change course. She said:

> *I have a background in Animal Science and Veterinary Studies at University of Guelph, and then I had an accident. I had to stop, and then I switched to- and then I went to hair school for two years, and then- I come from an entrepreneurship background.*

Messy mind informants experienced rejection, blame, and shame. They were perceived as rebellious who did not follow the rules. Tom described it in his words as:

> *my mom would probably argue that I'm very rebellious. I mean, I'm not a group thing kind of guy is the way I'll respond to that.*

They were blamed for making mistakes because they did not listen, and they felt a kind of shame from always being in trouble. Messy minds were not aware of their entrepreneurial identity before joining the entrepreneurship program.

Another initial profile of informants was job seekers. This profile shares with messy minds a low awareness of the entrepreneurial identity dimension among informants, but job seekers tended to be highly institutional on the institutional conformity dimension in contrast to messy minds profile. Job seeker informants shared their clear objective of finding a job after graduation. Although they are studying entrepreneurship, they still see university education as an essential requirement to find a job. They chose to study entrepreneurship for their interest in learning more about the topic and not to become entrepreneurs. Emily, a second-year entrepreneurship student, described her experience with choosing entrepreneurship as a major. She was interested in finding a major that would get her a job after graduation. She said:

> *When I was looking at what to major in, I didn't really think that it was possible to do a major in Entrepreneurship and then get a job after that that would be in a conventional setting, like going to work for a big business or something.*

Job seekers also portrayed themselves as less entrepreneurial because they are risk averse. They conformed with their institutional role as students and later employees. Peter, a second-year student in entrepreneurship did not hesitate to explain the reason behind looking for a job and not founding a business. He stated:

> *I wouldn't say I'm very entrepreneurial because I don't like taking risks. That is something I struggle with, truthfully, because- taking risks. Honestly, I'm afraid to like- having no income and then trying to make a business work. My ideal situation would be I have a steady income, and then I can try to make the situation*

The visionaries profile emerged from an outstanding category of informants. Many fourth-year students and fresh graduates fell under this category. They were highly aware of their entrepreneurial identities, yet they were low on the institutional conformity dimension. Visionary informants believed they were working towards changing the world. Some of them became social entrepreneurs while others became artists. They are driven by self-identified causes regardless of the institutions and institutional roles in their environments. They perceived themselves as avant-gardists:

> *I like avant-garde, weird art. I really- I always liked the idea. I did art in high school, and I like being able to make things that I find kind of silly, but other people find a lot of depth in it. I really enjoyed that, and so I thought I would like to do something like that in the future.*

Driven by a cause, some visionaries started a social venture while it was hinted by a couple that it was not going well.

> *I started a not-for-profit organization, and I continued with that for about a year. It went decently okay. It's still going on.*

The entrepreneurship specialists' profile of informants included those who work in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They were graduates from the entrepreneurship program that ended up teaching entrepreneurship, mentoring entrepreneurs, or working at incubators and other entrepreneurs' support organizations. They knew theories and models related to entrepreneurship without becoming founders of new ventures. I positioned them as highly aware of their entrepreneurial identity awareness dimension and highly institutional on the institutional conformity dimension. They enjoy learning about entrepreneurship, discussing this topic, and supporting founders.

I think the Incubator's role and being within the incubator community has changed my perspective immensely about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, because other than being in university and trying to do your own thing, now at the incubator, I'm getting to work with real life entrepreneurs, people who have real life businesses who depend on those businesses, who want those- those businesses to succeed. You're helping and you're assisting people who are high potential entrepreneurs to build and start and scale into world class businesses or help them- help their start-ups become world class businesses.

The intrapreneurs profile of informants emerged when employed graduates from the entrepreneurship programs described themselves in a specific way. The used this term to reflect their awareness of their entrepreneurial identity and to depict their institutional role as employees while being consistent with their entrepreneurial identity, as one informant described it: "*I need to be an intrapreneur, someone who creates, and drives change and innovation within an existing business.*" I positioned the intrapreneurs profile of informants as relatively aware of their entrepreneurial identity on the entrepreneurial identity dimension and relatively institutional on the institutional conformity dimension.

The part-time entrepreneurs' profile of informants was created to capture a pattern observed in the data. Many employed graduates from the entrepreneurship programs shared information about their part time business activities. They were either actively investing in the financial markets or in side businesses. Although they were employed, they still considered themselves entrepreneurial in using their time and other recourses to create extra income. While they are relatively highly institutional on the institutional conformity dimension, they are also relatively aware of their entrepreneurial identity.

I started doing some stuff on my own too. I started like- it wasn't nothing too crazy, but I started importing stuff from China, selling it, trying to see how it works online, meeting people, shipping, that kind of thing.

Finally, the founders' profile of informants also emerged, although the number of founders of new ventures among graduates of the entrepreneurship program was very low. To better understand the career path of founders, I had to interview graduates from other programs who founded new ventures. I realized that founders were less aware of their entrepreneurial identity as a distinct identity from them. While they might not be able to talk about entrepreneurship using institutional language, entrepreneurship was part of their reality. They practiced entrepreneurship without knowing over thinking of it or entrepreneurial identity as a construct. They just started a small business activity and grew it with time. Later, they became interested in entrepreneurship as a construct and topic of discussion after realizing that this wass what they already did, as Kevin described: "*During university I started my small little business. It was just a trading business, so I was just doing trades and that's where I got interested in entrepreneurship in general.*" Founders had a unique ability to balance institutional roles; thus, they were somewhere in the middle between non and highly institutional on the institutional conformity dimension.

Energies Driving Informants

The five types of energies driving the various profiles of informant to evolve were destructive, knowledge, potential, executive, and balancing energies. Different informants had different passions and objectives. When analyzed deeply, I chose the term energy to reflect what drives the passion, objectives, and action of informants of different profiles. Energy in physics can be transformed into force of action, but not all energies are active. Some of them are

potential or have the ability in the future to initiate action. The five energies driving informants explain their actions or lack of.

Destructive energy was associated with students profiled as messy minds. These students had a strong drive to challenge institutions and break the rules. Sometimes, it had medical reasons such as ADHD like in Liam's case who said:

> *When I was in high school and middle school, I was- I have- I was diagnosed with ADHD, and that really- I didn't understand what it was at first, and then I started realizing it really has an influence on my studies and my character and everything. The fact that teachers would say, "Oh, you have to work 10 times harder because you have this disability," made me be like, "Oh, yeah? Okay, screw you.*

In other cases, messy minds students identified as rebellious who did not want to behave as the majority.

> *It's about taking control of my future, basically, not really- not- not letting society or- or the norms really put you in your place, and I'm always being the one to- as a kid, yes, I would rebel against authorities school, or my- my family, and I think that really gave me the entrepreneurial mindset in- in the sense that I look at where most people are going and I'm like, "No, that's not where I want to go. I want to do this."*

Knowledge energy drove highly institutionalized students profiled as job seekers to learn and achieve as students of entrepreneurship. Job seekers were driven by questions about entrepreneurship. This was typical for institutionalized individuals to understand their environment, learn about their role, and work hard to complete their duties. In the case of entrepreneurship students, their duties were to acquire knowledge about the topic of entrepreneurship.

One thing I would be curious about, which might not be Included in your study or a part or even important to your study, but something that I think I would be interested in learning more about is what kind of backgrounds entrepreneurial people come from. Do they tend to be wealthier, or poor, or middle class or- just I guess households, and how they're- how they come to be entrepreneurial. I think that's something that could be interesting.

Potential energy emerged as a feature of visionary informants. It drove their vision and creativity. It allowed them to identify social causes and innovative projects. It gave them ambition and the believe that they can taking over the world.

What I do have is the desire or the drive, ambition, whatever any of these words- type of words you want to fill in the blank with, to do the learning even though I may not have time. I have other commitments, I'm exhausted, whatever.

Potential energy put some visionary informants over the clouds and even gave them a dose of narcissism.

I asked people sometimes this question, "How would you describe me?" I've had a variety of answers. Some people tell me I'm reliable. Some people like no- intelligent. I feel like a narcissist talking about myself.

However, potential energy did not always translate into action, and some visionary informants realized this, as stated by Chris who said:

I did put myself in a bit of a hole here because there are people who have ideas; they still have potential. It's not quite successful because they're still figuring it out, but it's still building. There's some momentum behind it.

In contrast, executive energy was the energy of translating potential into action. It was identified with job seekers who were looking for institutional roles to play after graduation. Job seekers were doers driven by executive energy.

You tell me to do something, you'll get that. The problem is that can annoy people in a corporate setting where you have division between departments and roles and responsibilities and seniority and all these things. It doesn't go over very well.

Executive energy allowed graduates that were job seekers to incorporate knowledge they acquired during their entrepreneurship education in their work environments.

I incorporate aspects of entrepreneurship in the job that I do. I do data analytics and analyze opportunities and trends in the marketplace and fixate on different things that I'm working on. I would say that practicing, even in the current role that I have within a larger company, that I would be- what do you call those- intrapreneurs? I still use the mindset. I just wouldn't consider myself an active one right now.

Balancing energy was a special type of energy driving founders of new ventures. They were keen to always look for the various forces and work on balancing them.

It's a balancing act is what I'm saying. It's a balancing act. Some companies don't need any help. They just- some just need free cheap labor, like interns. Some need legal advice, it depends. It depends, really. Everybody has unique needs.

Founders did not only use balancing energy to find the right dose of effort needed to achieve on the business level, but also, they used it to balance their personal and career needs.

I have to do the finances for the start-up. I have my own personal life and side business where I have to set the website up and do all that.

Career Paths of Entrepreneurship Students and Graduates

The evolution of informant profiles during and after graduating from the investigated entrepreneurship program occurred through five distinctive paths: dream-building, entrepreneurship pop culture, institutional entrepreneurship, investment entrepreneurship, and new venture path. Emerging from data analysis, each path connected two profiles as shown in figure 5.

Insert Figure 5

The first path, dream-building, reflected the evolution of messy minds junior student of entrepreneurship into visionary senior student and graduates. Messy mind students started realizing potentials in themselves and others. They were transformed from being the rebellious outcast who did not listen and follow instructions to become an entrepreneurial visionary individual with dreams of changing the world. They distinguished themselves between a job seeker path and an entrepreneurial path that changes the world.

> *I've seen people where I knew that they would change the world one day, and I've seen people who are crashing it about, taking the nine to five paths, which doesn't mean that it's a bad thing. It's actually easier. It's just a different mindset. I've definitely people who seem like a very good- change- people who are going to change the world one day. I've seen those people.*

They also reflected on their talent and environments to reinvent themselves. Emma, a fresh graduate who is trying to become an entrepreneurial artists shared how she rediscovered her talent after being forced to ignore it.

> *I think I've always been creative. I've always loved to draw, do art in my high school. My high school had a lot of performance art and stuff. I was always super involved in that, whether it was producing something, or directing it, or doing the costume design, all that*

stuff. I've always been super involved in that, but I think that when I graduated high school, I didn't think that a career in Creative Arts was a possibility. My parents would always tell me, my mom especially, would be like, "You know, how many people want to be an actor? Come on, you're not going to be an actor." And so, I think I shut that off in my mind.

The second path, entrepreneurship pop culture, reflected the impact of the perception of entrepreneurship in society on visionary and job seeking informants. Entrepreneurship was celebrated in society, and organizations to support entrepreneurs were funded within and around universities. Incubators, accelerators, angel investment groups, and venture capital were growing in numbers and providing job opportunities from graduates from the entrepreneurship programs. Many graduate informants were working at these organizations because of their knowledge about entrepreneurship, and they became entrepreneurship specialists. They referenced media outlets when describing the perception of the public on entrepreneurship. They acknowledged that they were also influenced by entrepreneurship pop culture although some were critical of it.

You will never know what CBC, and CTV, and Global, and the Toronto Star are going to do stories on. You can't rely on that just because you have a high social value company in education helping everybody that they're going to care. What they care about is readers, which makes sense, and viewers. So, I do see that a lot. There was one guy, poor guy, he made it to the Dragon's Den. I'm sure you know, there's hundreds and hundreds of businesses that apply to Dragon's Den, and he made it on the show. He was selling a stick. That's it. It's a stick. It's a piece of wood, and it's a couple of meters tall. They laughed at him, and they had a right to do so, because they shouldn't have even put him on there. It's a joke. They were putting him on there to make other people laugh. That, I disagree with but

still. Again, one kind of wonders, "If entrepreneurs are being turned into celebrities, where it's not about the entrepreneur-"

The third path, institutional entrepreneurship, emerged with visionary and job seeking entrepreneurship students becoming full time employees after graduation. They referred to themselves as intrapreneurs who were always looking for opportunities to innovate within their roles. For them, entrepreneurship was an institutional role. They acknowledged not being founders of new ventures, but they also described themselves as entrepreneurial within an existing organization. As well, graduates, who ended up working with their family businesses, described themselves as intrapreneurs. The institutional entrepreneurship path reflects the entrepreneurial role informants played within their institutional role.

I have gotten into the mindset that entrepreneurship would have been the best possible option for me to study, considering my family background, because apart from everything else that the Business and Management program offered, that was the one thing that resonated with my circumstance the most, that I would have to be in a position to manage and lead. And I feel like the course, Entrepreneurship, really helps with that.

The fourth path, investment entrepreneurship, emerged to reflect investment activities performed by job seeking entrepreneurship students and full-time employed entrepreneurship graduates. Many informants were categorized as part-time entrepreneurs because they had either invested in or started a small business in addition to their role as students or employees. For informants who pursued the investment entrepreneurship path, they did not limit their identity to their institutional role. They were aware of the existence of opportunities around them, and they were always looking for them.

I'm always looking for new opportunities, for investment opportunities and stuff, but I wouldn't say I'm an entrepreneur. I haven't put anything in, let's say, in real life yet, so I wouldn't say I'm an entrepreneur right now. I believe I have an entrepreneurial mind, but as long as I haven't done anything specific regarding that, I wouldn't consider myself an entrepreneur.

The fifth path, new venture, described the path informants who were founders, pursued to start their new venture. Only two visionary informants that graduated from the entrepreneurship program ended up creating new ventures. However, I interviewed founders who graduated from the same school of business to understand their path. They were successful in creating an opportunity out of their talents or passion regardless of their awareness of their entrepreneurial identity. Founders that studied entrepreneurship did not connect their founding a new venture to their education, as one informant entrepreneurship graduate, who was not a good student, described it:

I love music. I've always loved music and people, and when you put them together, what do you get? You get an event usually, so- so that's- that was my process

Another founder who did not study entrepreneurship shared his unique perception of the world. He said:

I do see the world in a slightly different lens. In my life, in my day-to-day, I'm constantly looking at business models, I'm looking at products and for whatever reason, my mindset, I'm always thinking about, "Is this product or service that I'm looking at, is it good enough or can it be improved?" I think naturally a lot of people do because naturally, as consumers, you- you buy and interact with products, and you're always looking at the

degree to which that product or service solves your personal needs. I think where I'm different is- people are always looking at things or evaluating how- how good they are.

DISCUSSION

Entrepreneurship education might not prepare its graduates to become founders, but it empowers them with an entrepreneurial identity awareness and entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. Once aware of their entrepreneurial identity, individuals use it to redefine their roles or reposition themselves to access more resources. Individuals use their entrepreneurial identities as an anti-institutional identity to challenge their current role identities; then, after they spot opportunities, they redefine their roles or create new roles to present themselves differently and access more resources. This allowed them to present themselves as intrapreneurs rather than just employees in a firm.

Graduates of entrepreneurship education can perform entrepreneurial activities beyond new venture creation. Individuals who graduated from entrepreneurship programs ended up having full time jobs. However, they always managed to present their employment or careers with an entrepreneurial twist. For those who ended up working in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, they did not perceive themselves as employees. Their jobs and careers were about entrepreneurship. They had to be entrepreneurial and apply their entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. For those who had jobs and side investments, they were entrepreneurial in managing their investment or part time businesses. Finally, for those who were only employees, they insisted on being intrapreneurs. Entrepreneurship education impacts how individuals perceive their career identities.

Entrepreneurship Education and Careers Paths

Entrepreneurship education, in its undergraduate and graduate forms, impacts the career path of entrepreneurship students through offering entrepreneurial identity self-awareness, entrepreneurship institutional knowledge, and motivational energies. Entrepreneurial identity self-awareness empowers students by providing them with a unique sense of belonging (B. E. Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and self-efficacy (Locke, 1997). Entrepreneurial identity as a social identity among entrepreneurship students answers the fundamental question: "who am I?" Furthermore, entrepreneurial identity emerging from education gives students self-efficacy, which manifested itself as the belief one's capacity to solve problems and create innovative solution. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1999) is an expected outcome of educational programs. In addition, entrepreneurship education provides students with institutional knowledge about entrepreneurship and its ecosystem.

Entrepreneurial identity gives students passion (Cardon et al., 2009), referred to as motivational energy, which manifests itself differently with different individuals. These motivational energies along with other environmental elements drive students' evolution and shape the final profiles of entrepreneurship students after graduation as shown in table 3.

Insert Table 3

University education programs attract students looking to be placed in jobs after graduation; thus, university programs offer them institutional knowledge. However, undergraduate entrepreneurship education also attracts students that do not believe in the value of institutional knowledge offered by university education. These students are profiled as messy minds. They are anti-institutional and harbor destructive energy, but they seek a bachelor's degree as a check box for social or promotional reasons. During their studies, messy minds gain from their entrepreneurship education more than just a degree. They are in touch with their

entrepreneurial identity, which transforms them into creative visionaries. Undergraduate entrepreneurship education gives messy mind students a sense of belonging to a group of entrepreneurial individuals that are visionaries. Messy mind students are not detected in graduate entrepreneurship programs probably because by the time individuals apply to graduate schools, they are more institutionalized and expect institutional knowledge from school.

Job seeking students, in both the undergraduate and graduate programs, join to learn about entrepreneurship. They seek the institutional knowledge offered by the entrepreneurship programs. However, in addition to the institutional knowledge, they are also in touch with their entrepreneurial identity, and they all refer to themselves as being entrepreneurial. They acquire a sense of belonging to their group of students and their entrepreneurship programs. Entrepreneurial identity awareness gives job seekers three new horizons depending on their environments.

First, job seekers who are aware of their entrepreneurial identity, driven by the energy of knowledge, and positioned in an active entrepreneurship ecosystem to pursue a career path as entrepreneurship specialists. Entrepreneurship specialists work for organizations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem such as incubators, accelerators, angel groups, and VCs. They are the gate keepers of the entrepreneurship institutional knowledge. They design programs, train entrepreneurs, and promote entrepreneurship in their communities. They know the institutional language that allows them to discuss entrepreneurship, yet they do necessarily know how to create new ventures. They talk about entrepreneurship, but they do not practice it as founders.

Second, job seekers who are aware of their entrepreneurial identity, driven by the energy of execution, and positioned in an institutional role pursue a career path as intrapreneurs. Intrapreneurs have a job in a firm that they do not fully own, including family businesses that

they have not founded. Intrapreneurs try to bring their entrepreneurial mindset to their job in order to grow and develop the firm they work for. Intrapreneurship is a term used by entrepreneurship students and graduates to reflect their active role as employees. While there might not be a significant difference between them and other employees, it is of no doubt that entrepreneurship graduates that work for firms see themselves as intrapreneurs and not as any other employee.

Third, job seekers who are aware of their entrepreneurial identity, driven by the energy of execution, and positioned in an institutional field, pursue a career path as part-time entrepreneurs or investors. After becoming aware of their entrepreneurial identity, job seekers can spot opportunities in their institutional fields. A job seeker, who has a full-time stable job and a passion for sports as a hobby, invested in a part time sport's venture. Another job seeker, who has a table full-time job and a passion for music, started an event management part time business organizing parties. While the size and structure of the new venture may not be enough to scale into a sustainable new venture, all part-time entrepreneurs have full-time jobs. They can be considered as active founders of small ventures.

As for visionary entrepreneurship student and graduates, they are already aware of their entrepreneurial identity; however, they also benefitted from the entrepreneurship institutional knowledge they acquired from their entrepreneurship education. This institutional knowledge comes in different forms, such as terminology, processes, symbols, and rules. Graduates of the entrepreneurship programs learn the definitions of entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, new ventures, and other terms. They also learn about opportunity recognition and development processes. They use symbols to refer to new ventures and investment series. They also have rules of engagement with their ecosystem such as pitching, market to go strategy, and pivoting. Institutional

knowledge gives visionaries rules to anchor their creativity, and they evolve in three new horizons depending on their environments.

First, visionaries who acquire the entrepreneurship institutional knowledge, driven by their potential energy, and positioned in an active entrepreneurship ecosystem, pursue a career path as entrepreneurship specialists. Visionaries are creative and highly aware of their entrepreneurial identities. If they find themselves in an active entrepreneurial ecosystem, they end up becoming entrepreneurship specialists. Some of these visionary entrepreneurship specialists are active in starting new incubators. Others work as consultants for various organizations on the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Almost like the entrepreneurship specialists profiles described earlier under job seekers, visionaries follow a different path towards the same end profile.

Second, visionaries who acquire the entrepreneurship institutional knowledge, driven by their potential energy, and positioned in an institutional role, pursue a career path as intrapreneurs. Visionaries, who find themselves in an institutional role such as a job refer to themselves as intrapreneurs. They believe they perform their tasks and duties in an entrepreneurial way. Regardless of how accurate their perception is, they have a strong belief that they are entrepreneurial even when performing a regular job. Visionary employees refer to themselves as intrapreneurial. Similar to the intrapreneurs profile described earlier under job seekers, visionaries follow a different path towards the same end profile.

Third, visionaries who acquire the entrepreneurship institutional knowledge, driven by their energy to balance forces, and positioned in an institutional field, pursue a career path as founders. Visionary individuals, when they have access to resources from an institutional field, have the tendency to become founders. Founders are visionaries, but founders are driven by the energy to balance forces in their institutional fields to create a new venture out of an opportunity.

Very few interviewed founders have studied entrepreneurship. They tend to be entrepreneurs by practice and not by entrepreneurship knowledge. In addition to balancing their entrepreneurship knowledge with practice, founders also balance their entrepreneurial identity awareness. They know that they are creative and entrepreneurial, but they are not overly obsessed to show it. They become aware of their identity as founders and entrepreneurs from their environment. It is not a self-initiated identity such as the entrepreneurial identity.

Entrepreneurial Identity and New Venture Creation Process

Entrepreneurial identity seems to be a prerequisite for new venture creation. Founders are confident and aware of their creativity. The process of identifying a gap and creating a solution becomes their entrepreneurial identity (who they are). It is the identity that can capture paradoxical dichotomy in individuals and their environments. Founders are aware that they are different, and they belong to a group of likeminded individuals. Entrepreneurial identity is their social identity that enables them to reject, analyze, and create new role identities.

New venture creation is a process of organizational identity creation facilitated by the entrepreneurial identity of the founder. Entrepreneurial individuals can act upon opportunities available for them in their fields. Being immersed in an environment with skills and interests, entrepreneurial individuals can spot opportunities in the form of needs, wants, and challenges. Their entrepreneurial identity enables them to create a new identity that can address emerging opportunities. This new identity can be driven by financial or social rewards; however, self-actualization is always a key driver. When entrepreneurial individuals are successful in addressing an opportunity that is scalable, they give birth to a new venture, social or commercial, with its own independent identity. Thus, founder's identity is a transitional role identity. Founders, also known as entrepreneurs, become aware of their status after the fact. That is when

they reflect on their process of creating a new venture. By the time their new venture matures for them to reflect, they become CEOs. Founder's identity is a role identity of individuals who transform an opportunity into a new venture after creating its own independent organizational identities.

Founders are less focused on their entrepreneurial identity when compared to other entrepreneurship education graduates. although they use it the most to resolve paradoxes they face. Founders are the best at using their entrepreneurial identities to pivot, innovate, and resolve challenges. They balance their various roles and inconsistencies among these roles. I compare them to native speakers of English as an example that can express their ideas and thoughts perfectly using their native tongue, but they might not be as competent on a grammar exam as those who acquired the language. Native speakers of English use their language better than non-native speakers, but many non-native speakers might know about English more than native speakers. Similarly, entrepreneurs might use their entrepreneurial identity very well, but those who studied entrepreneurship know more about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the long-term impact of entrepreneurial identity, which is actualized during entrepreneurship education, on future career identities. Entrepreneurial identity, an anti-institutional identity, allows individuals to redefine their role identities and occupy a position of advantage where they can bring more value. Entrepreneurial identity is not founders' identity, the identity of entrepreneurs. Founders' identity is a transitional identity. It is balancing between being entrepreneurial and belonging to an institutionalized field. Founders need to be embedded in a field in order to understand how the various institutional roles and forces within their field interact. Using their entrepreneurial identity, founders can bring value to

their field by creating new roles for their new venture. However, these new roles must gain legitimacy in their field for the new venture to access resources. Once successful, the new venture establishes its own independent organizational identity. Therefore, entrepreneurial identity is a prerequisite for founders' identity, and founders' identity is a transitional identity to the emergence of an organization identity of the new venture.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The studies discussed in this thesis shapes both my academic and personal identities. On the academic level, the studies in this research unleashed my interest in studying the emergence and evolution of multi-level institutional logics and their respective identities in the setting of social, commercial, and institutional entrepreneurial activity. With the current disruptions caused by technologies of the digital era, the nature of work is changing, and precarious work identities are emerging (Petriglieri et al., 2018). I see entrepreneurs as coordinators of their own multiple identities to create new ventures with independent organizational identities. By entrepreneurs, I mean founders of new ventures, activists organizing a social venture, and institutional entrepreneurs leading change in their organizations. On an organizational level, entrepreneurial firms can shape their external environments by redefining the identities of their industries. Emerging industries are emerging fields with new independent field logics. Therefore, I perceive the entrepreneurial process to be one of identity emergence and evolution from an identity of an individual to one of an organization or even a field.

On the personal level, my studies gave me a better understanding of myself and my multiple identities. I became aware of my multiple identities within the same category. As a citizen, I embraced both Lebanese and Canadian identities as well as reflected of what it means to be a global citizen. As professional identities, I embraced being a chemist and a manager as well as incorporating them all into my academic identity. As for my career identity, I revisited my various previous roles as employee, manager, and entrepreneur while I was a PhD student. I reflect all these identities, and I can recall any one of them to be my saliant identity based on the situation in my career as an academic.

My three studies are about making sense of my life as much as making sense of the phenomenon of entrepreneurial identity. My PhD is an inner journey that took me deeper into my cognition as much as an external journey in the academic world. As a result, I have a better understanding about myself and the world of academia; thus, I am ready to submit my thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Entrepreneurship Education Programs Interview Guide – Faculty/Staff

About Respondent:

When did you join the B-com in entrepreneurship program and for what role?
What is your current role in the B-com in entrepreneurship program? For how long?
What did you do before joining the program?
What experience do you have with entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs?
In your personal opinion, what is '**entrepreneurship'** and who do you consider an **entrepreneur**?

B-com Entrepreneurship:

What are the current objectives of the B-com in entrepreneurship?
Can you share some history on the B-com in entrepreneurship? How did the program evolve?
How is the program structured? How is it different than a B-com in management or strategy?
Who should join the program? Who should not join the program?
What courses had the most impact on students?
What courses were irrelevant, and you wish you didn't take? Why?
What activities do you offer related to entrepreneurship?
Do you think more universities would have a B-com in entrepreneurship? Why/why not?

Current Students and graduates:

How does the B-com in entrepreneurship shape the students/graduates' perception?
Would you give me examples?
Where are your graduates now?
Any final thought about the program, students, and graduates?

Please note, that this is a semi-structured interview and the list of questions is not exhaustive. In addition to asking clarifying questions to ensure understanding (ie can you tell me more about that?), we may also follow themes that emerge during the interview.

Appendix B: Entrepreneurship Education Programs Interview Guide – Students

About Respondent:

Are you currently a fulltime/part-time student of B-com in entrepreneurship program?
What year? Or when will you graduate?
What do you aspire?
Why did you join the program?
What do you expect to learn or acquire?
Where do you see yourself after graduation?
Where do you see yourself on the long run?

Defining of Entrepreneurship:

In your personal opinion, what is '**entrepreneurship'** and who do you consider an **entrepreneur**?
Who is your **role model** entrepreneur and why?
Are you currently an entrepreneur? What type of entrepreneur are you?
Do you see yourself becoming like him/her (role model) type of entrepreneur? Why?
What do you need to be there?
Have you always thought like that about entrepreneurship? What were your previous perspectives?
What made you change your perception about entrepreneurship? How? And Why?
Does your **friend** and **family** see you as an entrepreneur? Why do you think so?

B-com Entrepreneurship:

How did the B-com in entrepreneurship shape who you are right now? Would you give me examples? Can you recall any Aha moments?
Would you recommend the program to high school graduates and why?
Who should not come to this program? Why?
What courses had the most impact on your understanding of entrepreneurship and you becoming entrepreneur?
What courses were irrelevant, and you wish you didn't take? Why?
What activities you were engaged with during your studies and were beneficial?
How useful or not useful they were?

Summary Questions:

What is entrepreneurship?
Who is an entrepreneur?
Who are you? And what do you do for living?
For how long will you be doing what you're doing right now?
Why did you participate?

Please note, that this is a semi-structured interview and the list of questions is not exhaustive. In addition to asking clarifying questions to ensure understanding (ie can you tell me more about that?), we may also follow themes that emerge during the interview.

Appendix C: Entrepreneurship Education Programs Interview Guide –Alumni

About Respondent:

When did you graduate from the B-com in entrepreneurship program?
What do you do right now? What do you aspire in the future?
What did you do since you graduated and what was your aspiration back then?
Why did you join the program?
What did you expect to learn or acquire?
Where did you see yourself after graduation?
Where did you see yourself on the long run?

Defining of Entrepreneurship:

In your personal opinion, what is '**entrepreneurship'** and who do you consider an **entrepreneur**?
Who is your **role model** entrepreneur and why?
Are you currently an entrepreneur? What type of entrepreneur are you?
Do you see yourself becoming like him/her (role model) type of entrepreneur? Why?
What do you need to be there?
Have you always thought like that about entrepreneurship? What were your previous perspectives?
What made you change your perception about entrepreneurship? How? And Why?
Does your **friend** and **family** see you as an entrepreneur? Why do you think so?

B-com Entrepreneurship:

How did the B-com in entrepreneurship shape who you are right now? Would you give me examples? Can you recall any Aha moments?
Other than the B-com in entrepreneurship, what shaped who you are right now?
Would you recommend the program to high school graduates and why?
Who should not come to this program? Why?
What courses had the most impact on your understanding of entrepreneurship and you becoming entrepreneur?
What courses were irrelevant, and you wish you didn't take? Why?
What activities you were engaged with during your studies and were beneficial?
How useful or not useful they were?

Summary Questions:

What is entrepreneurship? Who is an entrepreneur?
Who are you? And what do you do for living?
For how long will you be doing what you're doing right now?
Why did you Participate?

Please note, that this is a semi-structured interview and the list of questions is not exhaustive. In addition to asking clarifying questions to ensure understanding (ie can you tell me more about that?), we may also follow themes that emerge during the interview.

Appendix D: Codes and Constructs (Chapter 2)

3rd Level Dimensions	2nd Level Constructs	1st level Open Codes	Quotes	Quotes
Triple Helix			you need to have a university that provides knowledge and training and people who go to the university, who then receive that knowledge and are trained who then would become the talent. Then you need to have industry to provide experience to those people.	
	Academia	Legitimacy, Impact	The reason why I came to Canada to this program is because of my mentor. I had a mentor back in Mexico. He was my Professor. He gave me a lecture about business. When I told him that I wanted to start up a business, he told me about entrepreneurship.	When I went to this program I learned not just to become an entrepreneur, I learned everything. I learned everything, professionalism, ethics, behavior and everything you can't imagine I was taught in this school. Even the way you look at other people, not being judgmental. I was really blessed with getting accepted in this school.
	Government	Support, ecosystem	The difference I will say, there are more opportunities here in Canada in terms of developing technology. There are more incentives from the government, from nom-profit organizations, from investors. Most of them are keen to come here in Canada rather than Mexico, where I studied and where I come from. This is one of the huge differences, being more entrepreneurial here I would say.	The strongest part of this ecosystem is the support that the government is providing in certain ways. There are angel investors and there are people with interest in doing this and with skills and other wide communities.
	Industry	Industry Experiences Faculty, Industry Experienced students	In my opinion the good number of entrepreneurs are the ones who have been working in an industry for years. So they have seen the problems first hand and then they came out and they started to think about how to address that problem and then they developed something that became very successful.	the program was, let's say, as a bridge from the companies over there, let's say the Billion Dollar companies in North America and in Canada specifically, come to share their knowledge and experience to the students.
Newcomers	International Students		I am originally from Kazakhstan and I'm not from Canada. I was born there and I was raised there in Kazakhstan	I was born in Iran and Iranians are entrepreneurial to begin with but the difference in Iran, there is no support for entrepreneurship.

	Engineers	Career Change, Engineering Mindset, Convenient MBA	I am an Industrial Engineer, and I am an international student. I did that in Mexico.	I talked to my director, I was like, well I'm thinking of taking an MBA, what do you think and his advice to me was actually was what guided me. He said, "You know what, from what I see folks as in engineers that go into MBA, I tend to see that a lot of them actually don't end up coming back to engineering, but rather they get into the financial industry. So, they get into banking and things like that or they just move away from engineering after taking an MBA." So, I ended up looking for other programs, and I found the entrepreneurship program. I chose the program, got into the program, started the program, and I still didn't know what entrepreneurship was.
	Non-engineers	Interaction between Eng and non Eng	I got a training during my medical studies at a Specialist Hospital in Riyadh. I studied medical technology	You would see the engineer and the artists having the argument. It was more like the exercises in workshop itself to do something and yes it was fun. So that was if I recall correctly as to about user-centered design and how you can build exactly what they need, nothing more nothing less. They wanted us to get involved and see different views and stuff, but it was good this was like watching a TV commercial.
Faculty of Engineering		Faculty Need	I'm happy with this program because I'm able to do what felt was missing within the engineering faculty. When you feel you're right, you're right where we need to be.	
	GPEEI		What I liked about that course is like I am an Engineer and I am used to a very structural way of thinking and doing things. This course was something very different which we have to be more open and more flexible to give solutions to the problems. So, I didn't expect these types of courses and that was I think something very different than that I was used to do in the past	The aspects about financials, that's something I didn't get either in the undergraduate or the GPEEI. Yes, having the understanding very well how the finance works in the companies in real life, not only in the theoretical terms but also how to really develop these types of project forecasts and having more understanding of how this works or depreciation or many topics.
	GPEI		What stopped us from admitting non-stem graduate into the GPEEI program was more a provincial rule that say that you cannot bring a non engineering to an M.Eng. So, we had to create a GPEI and get it to the provincial approval in order to be able to attract non engineers to our entrepreneurship program.	Well the GPEI which was the second version after the GPEEI is masters of technology in entrepreneurship and innovation. And it's meant to attract non stem graduates from any engineering discipline in their undergraduate to be able to enter the faculty of engineering and earn a Master of Technology rather than masters of engineering.

Graduates		Entrepreneurs Graduates	Mixed feelings impact	My first customer was a Turkish manager at Evergreen Brickworks who took the chance. Who believed in us and basically bought the product. So, we got our first round of investment from Angel One and we did our first round and we got our first investment. Then we made the decision to go to the Middle East. It was so funny because the investors who were not us, not black and Muslim did not understand the decision to do that, but we understood the decision very well. We went to the Middle East and out product was getting bought like candy, right. We had partnerships, we sold four to five products in the matter of three months.	I am the only one (entrepreneur) from my generation and I think it happens in every generation one or two teams or one or two startups continue. I just continued because as I said this was a plan that I made. I had savings; I saved money to leave (my job) without having a salary after graduation. That's my passion and clarity to pursue this career. A key factors that have allowed me to continue on this. So, yes I don't see the value a lot on the program.
		Employees Graduates		I would say that's the reason I got the job, that's what the employers saw in me like oh there's an innovation side of him which is cool and yes I was hired as business system analyst, but I would say I used what I learnt in terms of this area of work, I had things to innovate around me, and make sure I work on then kind of I would say that's the only part maybe innovation helped but the other thing is it helped me get the job for sure.	Actually my GPEI education had a lot of impact on my career. Like how to deal with different culture and different people – multinational.
ENT Normative	ENT Professionals	Graduates	Employees in ENT Ecosystem	I decided to be self-employed, but within a very specific time right now in the country (KSA) that just happened, the Vision 2030 and I'm just waiting for the right opportunity. Yes, that's why I moved working with the government as part of the Vision 2030 just to find out when is the right time and the right opportunity to jump on.	I'm also now running the entrepreneurship center in one of the universities in Saudi Arabia. Working in a university is much, let's say not challenging, I would say much happy, let's say joyful than anywhere else because you get this energy from the students and you teach them what they taught you in Canada or in the program.
			ENT Edu Program Developers	I am a professor. I teach at a College and part-time at University. I'm teaching at the same program (GPEEI) now that I graduated from.	I mean if I weren't a student, for GPEI, I couldn't find this job at the University. In my current job, I'm a coordinator at an extracurricular program. We are trying to use this approach of first start with a problem and then try to move to a solution, based on what you learn about your customer and your problem. That is a thing that we teach in the program that I am coordinating, so, in that sense it is linked. Because the students that are registered in this program, they also need to develop a small project, but not a business.

			Self-Employed in ENT Ecosystem	So, to answer your question, no I don't see myself as being the business mentor or a technical mentor, but I believe I have enough reason and experience to realize how to engage those people in a project. In other words, I act as a facilitator or the way that they call it, we are glue to hold everything together, like inventor, entrepreneurial mind of person to run with the opportunity, business mentors, technical mentors, funding, developing proposals to governments or to pitch the idea. So, we bring everything together and we provide comments, inputs, feedback and insights to the extent possible.	All the skills I learned in GPEI was transferred to my business. Another thing, after I worked in the GCC here I built more, let's say network and understand more of the industry here and with both combination I got these results.
	Ent Profession		ENT Process	Yes, the program was about having an idea and being able to commercialize it, but this idea has to be related with innovation and engineering. So, the idea of having the methodology in order to go through several steps from an idea to commercialize it as a productive service. That was the main goal of this. Of course you have to take one idea and example and go through it, but the main goal was not to make that business like very successful, but the importance was to understand the methodology behind that. So, after the program if you want to develop many ideas you can follow up the same process.	
			Demand	So the expectation is that the they (students) wants to learn how to start a business. We (Faculty) interview every student's even if they have a great A+ grades. We do not really care about that as much as we really take care about do they have the entrepreneurial itch. Do they have what it takes? Sometimes we go to battle with the graduate school for them to admit a C+ student that we think is really going to perform really really well because of that character.	Their intentions from at least from what they tell us they wants to start a business and they many of them say I want to learn how to start a business and then go back to China India and start my own business there. A lot of them of course interested in staying here in that become can I get immigrants which we don't have a problem with and and I think a lot of them are attracted by the multidisciplinary nature of the opportunity program because one of the key rational behind why we teach entrepreneurship.
			Legitimacy ICSB	The program visibility took off in 2016 when we won the only Canadian institution to win the international the ICSB award in excellence in entrepreneurship education. We had we had 60% surge in applications and quality applications so.	

			ENT Industry	I don't know what's wrong with the world right now, there's lots of changes, but if I will be part of; let's see the change in entrepreneurship sector industry in Saudi Arabia, I would like to welcome the Canadians here, to be honest. I want to be the bridge between Saudi Arabia and Canada in this industry. The Entrepreneurship industry. If you go and see how many license was issued for accelerators and incubators in the GCC from 2012 until now you will be amazed. So, people are doing this as a business now. It's a business that you can make money out of it. Many entrepreneurs, they are entrepreneurs and they have good ideas, but they don't have the skills to scale and develop the idea to become a successful company. So, they have to go through these incubators, accelerators, entrepreneurship centers. From there they grow. A lot of, let's say businessmen look at it as a project, as a service. So, it is an industry right now here in the GCC.	At the beginning when I came to Saudi Arabia it was rare that some people who haven't heard about entrepreneurship and even when I tell people, I tell them that they say, "What, not interested." Nowadays we have many entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, actually.
		Behaviour	Expected Behaviours	Like really taking you through how to raise money and what to look for in raising money. Other than the presentations and the evaluations and all of that yes, that's great from a technical perspective, but really sitting down with investors and understanding how they can be and how do you deal with these situations and things like that is very important.	
			Execute Strategies	Each and every student had to have a project or a practicum. So almost everything that you would learn in each course you had to apply the same concept to your business. For example, if you are taking the course like go to markets, I think the name of the course was something similar to 'Go to Market Strategy' development. You had to think about the strategy, how you want to take your business to the market and then execute on that, and so yes it was everyone had to do that.	I remember that one of the things was doing market studies the idea was that, you identify the business opportunity, you believe it's a good business and it has a large market, now how do you perform secondary market research and then primary market research. So, secondary market research, people tend to more do that because it's easier relatively, but we had to also perform primary market research, like go to end user, go to the value chain that's involved in the specific projects and kind of get first hand from those entities, their opinion about what they think about the business idea or about the product or about the pricing strategy, do they buy this product for this much or that much.

			Networking	Actually, it might be the only thing that the networking, even when I finished my degree I wasn't very good at networking and I don't like putting this presentation, I don't like anyone to tell me present something. I have a problem in speaking in public. So maybe when I was in Canada I had to take courses about presenting in public and speaking in public and that was beneficial for me. But other than that entrepreneurship was a very good program for me actually.	I would say more contact with organizations or that is important for your product like more networking, I would say. Networking, I think this is the one.
			Pitch Investors	I know in one class, we kind of did that for one or two classes, but that's not enough, right. Like really taking you through how to raise money and what to look for in raising money. Other than the presentations and the evaluations and all of that yes, that's great from a technical perspective, but really sitting down with investors and understanding how they can be and how do you deal with these situations and things like that is very important.	In one course there was an investor speaker. He is a lawyer and investor. He said that if there is one skill that entrepreneurs would master, it's going to be the ability to pitch because you could have the best-rated business plan, the best product or service in the world, if you don't convey it to me in 3 minutes, then I will not look at your business plan. So from that insight, I came back to the program and they asked one of the professors about this idea if I could train entrepreneurs, how to improve their ability to pitch.
		Discourse / Rhetoric	Entrepreneurship	I think in Canada people are more aware of that it's okay to fail the first time, the second time, the third time. That is the nature of the business.	The first part is, basically it's what entrepreneurship is, what is the difference between entrepreneurship and just starting a small restaurant for example, is there a difference between that or not and then it was all about how do you come up with an idea, how do you test if this idea has been done or not and how do you start approaching the people just to validate the idea so it's basically validating your idea which is that was the first part you got to learn or that was the focus in the first part of the program.
			Mindset	To let yourself in a mindset that when you are building a business, you are allowed to do a mistake. A mistake in the sense that you can try and see how it goes and it might be a mistake, but it will be a valuable mistake that will make you learn and grow and if it was a mistake to avoid it in the future.	Well, to me entrepreneurship mindset means the right evaluation of the situation – business situation and staying within optimism while being realistic, and also know how to extract value. So, that's very brief, my definition of being an entrepreneur.

			Opportunity	If the business opportunity is so obvious from the start, then no one can start a successful business because there are so many other people with more resources that if it was so obvious, if good opportunities were so obvious, then other people would have done it before you. It means that when you face an opportunity, you should look at the bright side and also stay positive that yes, you have a vision and hopefully along the way you'll find those like-minded people with the same passion and then you can find the team that you need and the investment that you need in the future. However, that should be in the context of reality and rationale. So, if I have a crazy; if I ran into a crazy idea and without having the skillsets or right people, I try to capitalize on that blindly, then it's too much of optimism or disconnect with reality, that's what I mean.	
			Risk	The entrepreneurship program helped me to become more risk taker.	What is the most important thing in your opinion that I learned about entrepreneurship from this course or from the program is not to be afraid to do a mistake.
			Success	Sometimes, well first of all a successful entrepreneur is someone who eventually can lead a successful business, can establish a business and then make that business successful.	For having a successful business, you need to have a team and an entrepreneur cannot do everything on their own. That was one of the main messages that was very clear after taking that course that if you are thinking about a successful business you have to have a team.
			Vision	You need to share the same vision among your team mates, and if you try to get involved in everything you cannot do everything to the level that you are talented.	
		Symbols	Business Modeling	I got to learn to learn a lot with Dr. Y from business development, let's say perspective. How did I develop these methods? I combined two different business models together and I used some of the knowledge, let's say that the skills I learned in GPEI in business development to develop this part of the company which how can I combine the two ideas together and then test the market. One of the things that I learned is to run before you walk. We did this, we combined them and we just tested the project if it's working or not. It did work and we had good results. So we just pushed the limits. They told us, "Okay, if it's working let's push for more." We asked more drivers to join us and we scaled and we refined again and we did	One of the reasons why they found a fit is because I knew and actually used in my business cases in the interview, the business model canvas from Strategyzer. The value proposition didn't fully click for me until more recently, was when I actually bought the book.

				what we had to do and it worked. I don't know how but it worked.	
			Design	From an entrepreneurship perspective I learned all the fundamentals, but if I were to learn something I would like to learn how to create my own slides and my own presentations and everything with advanced, let's say touch. How can I say this, like, the world is changing now. So putting the business plans and the presentations and all these things you need to prepare to present for the investors it shouldn't be written now. It's all infographic and design. So if you don't have the skills and infographic and, let's say designing and creating things in a creative way, you will be let's say behind, the market; you will be not updated as much as the people are doing right now. So, this is one of the skills I would have liked. Until now, I'm trying to develop and become more, let's say updated with the world in the way of you presenting your projects, your business, whatever you are presenting for the investor.	Designing and just common all those things. What else I would say just the whole design thinking methodology as well, professionally and even in life matters as well and recently I have been using a lot.
			Pitch Presentation	How to pitch your business plan, how to make it short enough but interesting enough. I think that would be the good one. That's the one I remember, right now.	Definitely public speaking, I guess. It was really advanced during the course and during the program because we were kind of forced to go out there and to participate in as many competitions as we can which means that we have to be in front of the audience and being able to present your idea and answer questions, not to be afraid of public speaking, and doing an Elevator Pitch. So, I guess that is one of the valuable skills that I was able to get during the program.

			Project Management	Startups and mostly projects. First of all influenced me getting hired in a lot of the roles that I had because that was always a point that people have asked me about in interviews where they were like oh tell me about your project management, tell me about your certificates you have, what's your role and all that kind of stuff and I feel like that was me doing my my current job and my previous jobs.	I would say Modern Project Management Methodology.
			Sales	Some people think that a sale, if they called one person then they are going to close the deal with that one person and that doesn't work. So when I took the course with Dr X they said if you want to close 3 people, at least you should have 200 prospects. They taught us about the the sales to change the entrepreneurs' idea about how many people you should call to close one deal. Also, how to set the prices.	

Appendix E: Codes Table (Chapter 3)

Entrepreneurial Identity	I believe I have an entrepreneurial mind, but as long as I haven't done anything specific regarding that, I wouldn't consider myself an entrepreneur.
	Entrepreneurial like the behaviors and actions that are generally business-minded, that are leading towards someone developing a viable, feasible sustainable business, and someone who generally has the mindset of an entrepreneur.
	I guess anyone can- anyone who's an entrepreneur can be entrepreneurial, but not everyone who's entrepreneurial can be- is an entrepreneur. There are people who have the mindset, but are not necessarily entrepreneurs.
	I guess at one point, I did. I definitely say I'm entrepreneurial, but I would consider myself an intrapreneur.
	So entrepreneurial behavior or traits, and you can see it from people doing school projects, those who want to change the world, be strong, they challenge themselves, they're not quitters, and they're leaders, but at the same time, they support their peers. That to me is entrepreneurial, and I hope that answers your question.
	Entrepreneurial is possessing certain qualities, being really self-driven, disciplined, motivated, willing to challenge certain things. I think being creative is a big part of it, and that ability to look outside of the box, and maybe see other perspectives.
Belonging to multiple fields	I'm really passionate about skateboarding and action sports. Skateboarding is something I've done all my life, so that'd be something that I think would be really cool to get into, because it would be literally following my passion and working for something that I love.
	I love music. I've always loved music and people, and when you put them together, what do you get? You get an event usually, so- so that's- that was my process
	I understood a lot about the environmentally-friendly ecosystem within Toronto, outside, what other countries are doing. And then after I went back home to India, I'm like, “Oh my god.” Now I just started seeing things on an environmentally-friendly level. And then I came back, and then the dots almost connected when I was in my final year.
	there isn't just one entrepreneurial mindset. I think there are multiple spectrums of that and each fulfill an area of entrepreneurship that needs to be done.
Design Thinkers	It's a way of thinking about things. It's a way of approaching things and you have to live, breathe, and do it. You can't just be like, “I'm going to follow these five easy steps and that's design-” No, that's not design thinking because the steps, first of all, are not linear. You go back and forth, and it's a very rigorous process.
	Design thinking is a human-centered approach to solving problems. That's- easy statement. It's a creative problem-solving- people say method, I believe it's a mindset.

	The way I said entrepreneurial mindset is, it's actually inspired by Design Thinking. I'm not sure you're familiar with Design Thinking. It's just a way of thinking. For example, I- I don't have valid data to back up for this, what I'm saying, but the way I think entrepreneurial mindset is you view things differently than everybody else does.
	That- I almost started viewing it as- it goes hand in hand, the Design Thinking mindset and entrepreneurial mindset, at least for me.
Unique Mindset	Curious: You want to do this." It was more like, "Take it as it comes," trying to talk to people to try to get a job, call everyone I know,
	Curious: some people don't entertain thoughts. Some people let it go to sleep and just pursue a different path, and then they realized later. It has its own traits. Some people are aware of those traits, and some people aren't, and some people don't want to take that path even though they do possess such traits out there.
	Curious: Yes, it's silly. It's stupid. So, critical thinking, healthy skepticism, and obviously, if you understand business in general, then it's a lot easier to start putting pieces of the puzzle together. I guess last would be a curious mind. You- you should be open. You should ask people questions who are experts in their field and get second opinions. Even though you're doing your own research, you have to obviously place their expert opinion at the right hierarchy of importance.
	Growth: I think you can definitely **shift your mindset**. You can have a growth mindset, or you can have, again, like a limited mindset, and always be negative and not necessarily believing in yourself.
	Growth: I try and stay very focused when I'm with my kids or when I'm with my husband, and try and be in that moment, but when my mind drifts, I'm thinking about work and how I can do something better or where an opportunity is. So there is that mindset, but I'm not assuming all the risk in what I do
	Messy Mind: I liked talking to professor X. He was the only one capable of making sense of my messy mind.
	Messy Mind: It hurts your brain to think about it sometimes, or to figure out what's next, because there's so much going on that you're trying to make sense of the chaos basically, the unknowns. Sometimes, you don't even know what you don't know.
	Messy Mind: I did pursue ideas that I had, but my ideas died quickly, because there was really no interest beyond the niche as well as I didn't really put in much work to find the information, because I really didn't know what I was doing. Even in a group setting, no one really knows what they're doing, so we could all do something, but it didn't really work out in the end.
Anti-Institutional	It's just not healthy in the long term. It's not something that's sustainable, I would say. We decided to break up the rules

	Because there's no rules. Entrepreneurship is creating something from scratch. There's absolutely no rules. Anything goes, right? You can be as ridiculous as you want to be. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work, so you just try something else.
	Accounting is a set of rules. Finance is a bunch of math. Even economics, it's just graphs and it's- this is how things work in the world. It's very- it's just- it's a box of- this is how things work. To me, entrepreneurship is the opposite of that. It's what can you come up with that doesn't fit into that box?
	these strategies or these things that are rules in the universe. Whereas if it's- if you actually want to know if it's true, you have to go and check it for yourself.
	What do you mean by entrepreneurial? I think being creative is a big part of it, and that ability to look outside of the box, and maybe see other perspectives. I think that's a big part.
	I feel entrepreneurship is the same way. That goes back to my definition of it allows you to do whatever you want to do, specifically, because you get to be your own boss. You get to- you get to make the rules on how you're going to do stuff. Even if- even if you make a competitor to Apple, you're able to pick your exact job.
	I found people were more structured, that rules were in place for everything that you did, that there wasn't really an open opportunity for you to express viewpoints or ideas that really got heard, in any kind of sense, so then you ended up just being quiet, and just falling into the mold of- of going in and doing your work, and going home and feeling comfortable.
	I decided that I wanted to leave. I had said, "I've been working here. I haven't even built an opinion about working here yet," but now that I've had that perspective, I just decided that direction wasn't the way that I wanted to focus my ambitions. Jumping in- I don't know. It was intere- because I've- the Entrepreneurship that I did
	For me, it's about taking control of my future, basically, not really- not- not letting society or- or the norms really put you in your place, and I'm always being the one to- as a kid
	Like I said, school teaches you structure. You need to learn how to abide by some rules, and some rules you need to reject, and I feel that that's what school taught me.
Rebelious	I would rebel against authorities school, or my- my family, and I think that really gave me the entrepreneurial mindset in- in the sense that I look at where most people are going and I'm like, "No, that's not where I want to go. I want to do this." Entrepreneurship gives you the skills and the tools in order to make your future a reality.

	When I was in high school and middle school, I was- I have- I was diagnosed with ADHD, and that really- I didn't understand what it was at first, and then I started realizing it really has an influence on my studies and my character and everything. The fact that teachers would say, “Oh, you have to work 10 times harder because you have this disability,” made me be like, “Oh, yeah? Okay, screw you. I'm going to- I'm going to do what I want to do, and I'm still going to do good in school and whatever,” just to prove everyone wrong. It was that- that rebellious feeling of- basically, I want to- I want to get what I want and I want to do it my way basically. That's- that's where the rebellious-
	I'm saying I'm a rebel and everything. Yes, when I was younger I was- I would barely listen and I wasn't getting the best grades
Field Connectors	what's common between entrepreneurs is that they have a fire inside them, the burning desire to create, to solve problems, to enhance situations, to bridge the gap between two services, for example. So it's this urge, unsettling urge that doesn't go away. In fact, with the years, it grows bigger and bigger.
	it’s a jack of all trades, yeah. everyone in entrepreneurship has their own unique passions and interests and whatever, going back to that thing where you should be working on whatever you actually care about working on, not just be forced to work on something else. Then that- and that's where the ambiguity helps, because you get that flexibility and freedom. You do become a jack of all trades,
	I saw that Canada was able to flourish due to international relationships with other countries and trade, and I saw that other countries around the world are deprived from this privilege so I connected the dots and I said if artisans in less fortunate areas of the world, economically unfortunate areas of the world have the opportunities to sell internationally, they will have the ability to break the poverty cycle and be economically empowered, so I connected artisans in villages starting here in Palestine, and then Haiti and Peru, to the international market.
	I just thought that whatever it is that I wanted to do, I could now do it. It's not like the resources changed. They were still available before, but I guess how I view things changed. After that, I went on this tangent of doing multiple things.
	in the last three months, I've incorporated an importer, registered it. I have my medical device importing license. I have a pipeline of clients. I have a pipeline of manufacturers. It's because this opportunity came up and I knew I had the skills and the relationships to essentially connect the dots to then satisfy and extract value. And I think that's what entrepreneurs do.
	I don't think entrepreneurs are overly true entrepreneurs, not just specific subject matter experts who have kind of fallen into “Oh, I had a great idea within this very niche-y sector.” I mean, that is entrepreneurship in itself, as well as to be able to take a risk and do that. But pure entrepreneurs, it doesn't matter what sector. You put them in a situation and they'll find value extraction in some activity. I think in one word, I'd call it the hustle.
Free-Thinker	I was able to break them on a microlevel, on a personal level. First, I broke these chains in my mind because, as I told you, they were weighing me down,

	I broke them in my mind, so I started deconstructing them. I'm not telling you I'm completely free, but I spot myself when I'm being- when I'm losing this internal locus of control
	For me, it's about taking control of my future, basically, not really- not- not letting society or- or the norms really put you in your place, and I'm always being the one to- as a kid
Problem Solvers	Yes, so I have this fire inside me, and I got in touch with this desire to create and to solve problems, business problems in the world.
	They don't- they see the problem, their problem, and they just try to fix that problem. They fix their problem- everyone else's problem in that own niche, I think. That's what entrepreneurship to me is, someone trying to solve a problem by creating their own business.
	I'm really passionate about finding something to solve this, and you're not really stuck on all of the iterations that you come up with, and you're not glued to them, and just being flexible within your mindset. And that's really what I think entrepreneurship is. You look at every opportunity, look at everything as an opportunity and a learning experience.
	whether you're working in a larger company or working that- that- you don't- problems come to you, you're not inventing and creating problems, or understanding problems or understanding opportunities that didn't exist.
Empowerment	I just find it- it's having that passion towards changing the world somehow or establishing something that requires a lot of creativity and logical thinking, and just going about it and giving it a shot, and not being afraid of failing because that's how you learn and you improve.
	Ever since I was young, I knew that I wanted to do something, but I never connected the dots, because when not when you're young, you don't think about establishing a business.
	It might motivate you, and it might open up doors in the sense of the people that you connect with and the resources.
	I feel like I can. I believe that I can, and I believe that these restrictions can be overcome, which is something, I didn't have it at the beginning of business school. I felt like maybe you need a large corporation to sponsor you, or maybe you need to know this or that, or maybe you need to leave this corrupt environment and start in a less corrupt environment to succeed. But now I'm like, "Bring on the challenge. I want to do it. If it's more difficult, I want it." But I still haven't broken- like I haven't achieved all my dreams of building something on a ground scale and the economy, changing the system, influencing it, creating hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs. That's what I really want, and I'm still in the process of growing, even growing in the workplace, getting more tools, and I'm still on a mission.
	I suddenly thought that- I felt empowered. If I want to do something, Ryerson University and my Entrepreneurship program is the place that would allow me to basically do whatever it is that I want, if that makes sense.
	I felt empowered. Now that I think about it, it almost is entrepreneurial to feel empowered to do whatever it is that you want, in my opinion.

	I think I deserve- I deserve to be successful. Right now, that's why I say I'm on my way to becoming an entrepreneur.
Passion	you need to be motivated and dedicated and passionate to build something like that,
	just doing what you want, if you pursue your passion.
	I take that personally, and I'm very passionate about what I do, and I don't look at it as a job. It's a career. It's a lifestyle for me. That passion for me is there where I don't stop work at 5pm.
	I'm really passionate about finding something to solve this, and you're not really stuck on all of the iterations that you come up with, and you're not glued to them, and just being flexible within your mindset.
	I work on something really hard, and I'm really passionate about it, I think no matter what, that I will achieve success and I'll become very successful in it, and that I deserve that because, I don't know, I think differently than- than most of the people.
	the thing is when you're young, you don't really think things through fully. You have an impulse, you have a passion for something
Awareness	Even when I created my company, I never thought of it as, “Oh, I'm an entrepreneur now,” but it's like a very social thing that, “Oh, you have your company and that makes you an entrepreneur.” I think that, to me, it was normal in the past before university, before I learned there's a big movement towards entrepreneurship, I thought it was a normal thing to just go build your life, establish a company, earn a certain income, and support other people. It's normal. It's part of the- it's a normal thing, if that makes sense to you, so I never thought of myself as, “Okay, I'm an entrepreneur now,” or “I used to be.” I guess it just happened. I never thought there was a specific point where I became one. It was just I've noticed myself kind of leaning towards that path and it just happened, if that makes sense.
	I definitely say I'm entrepreneurial, but I would consider myself an intrapreneur. Like I said, I like the coaching, I like to work as part of a larger organization, so if you classify an intrapreneur as an entrepreneur, yes. But I mean, I coach a lot of people, but I don't actually run my own business now where I'm on the front line of any business right now.
	being an entrepreneur is you put everything on the line to make something work, and then these are the people that leave their full-time jobs and take a risk to launch a business.
	I don't think it's like an on and off switch where you're like, “Oh, I guess I'm an entrepreneur now.” I think it's just certain things that you know about yourself, but you don't necessarily label it. Ever since I was young, I wanted to do something for myself that would not only help myself, but also help other people.
	You have to have your eyes open on these opportunities, and don't be focused on the wrong stuff, because if you are, you're going to miss out on these amazing new opportunities.

	Yeah, I thought I'm mostly a student. I was still in the student mindset. Like if you'd meet me at a networking event, I wouldn't be like, "I'm an entrepreneur and I have my own social startup." I would be like, "I'm a student at Ryerson University and I started a business."
	because that's- I knew my first mission was my degree or my degrees. I felt like I was giving myself increments of growing as an entrepreneur. Maybe I didn't allow myself to actualize all my entrepreneurship abilities, because I had other priorities done, which was my- even my master's.
	I have my own business. I take clients, hair clients, at my house. I do run a small business, but what I say- my school is priority, so if these people can fit in around my school schedule, yes. So, to some extent, yes.
Environment Imposed Role	I realized that I was meant to be an entrepreneur, and I wanted to pursue entrepreneurship as a- as a career path in life. Several months later, I met my business partner.
	my dad's an entrepreneur, my grandfather is an entrepreneur. It's kind of in my family to have their own businesses, so this is something I grew up around. And I've always wanted to be my own boss. I always thought of it as, "If I'm going to be working my whole life, I'd rather be working for myself making my own dreams come true as opposed to working for someone else and making theirs become reality."
	I think that, to me, it was normal in the past before university, before I learned there's a big movement towards entrepreneurship, I thought it was a normal thing to just go build your life, establish a company, earn a certain income, and support other people. It's normal.
	Imagine growing up in a family like this, where you're surrounded by entrepreneurship and innovation, I'd say, literally 24/7. You hear different stories of your grandfather, how he struggled, how he was adaptable, how he was resilient, how he was able to leverage and bootstrap and build something literally out of nothing. This shows you that entrepreneurship is possible, that anyone can do anything they want, that anyone can innovate as long as they have the passion, as long as they have the determination, as long as they have the motivation.
	I think a lot of people think that it's "cool" to be an entrepreneur. It is, but not in the way that I find people make it out to be. There's this whole thing, like if you go on Instagram, people are like, "Hustle and grind," and "Never stop working," all of this is crazy 80-hour weeks.
Founder	Who would I call an entrepreneur? That's a good question. I think it could be a broad term or A defined term, depending on who it is. Anybody from the Dragon's Den or from similar- I think business owners or operators can be entrepreneurial or entrepreneurs.
	Someone who starts their own company or someone who runs a business or has- basically, anyone who started their own business.
	Definitely self-motivated, self-motivated to not be afraid of failing, especially in the early days of being an entrepreneur because it's normal.

	I would need a successful business that is self-sustaining. I would need to have a, “I can do it,” like a do it attitude, something where I could really do things. Right now, I'm more of a thinker. I'm more of a dreamer myself, and one of the biggest problems I've had in life is action, doing things, thinking, making concrete steps to do the things that I wanted, to do the things to make those dreams come to life.
	my boss is extremely smart. He's an entrepreneur himself. He built the company.
	Not really. I haven’t had entrepreneurial- I've had a venture that was less- I didn’t- was successful to my standard. I haven't- it wasn't something I haven't done- I wasn’t able to do it on my own quite yet, but I was hoping that I could get to a point where I would be.
	I think you would have to do something specific, because right now, it's becoming a very broad term, everyone likes to use it, but I'd say you would have to show facts that you succeeded at something to call yourself an entrepreneur, or started your own thing or venture or something. I think that's when you would call yourself an entrepreneur.
	my parents is always an entrepreneur. They have their own company and it’s what makes sense to me is- an entrepreneurship- an entrepreneur is someone who have their own company and build it from the ground up.
CEO Identity Role	CEO: we started to encounter scenarios where early employees just weren't keeping up with the pace of the company, or with the pace of the technology that we were now starting to deal with. We had to say goodbye to some people. Some went nicely, some didn't go nicely, a lot of hard lessons in terms of how to effectively manage people and get the most out of them, what to expect from them, and what kind of culture to create within your models.
	CEO: In the past year and a half, we've learned a lot of sales lessons. That's probably been the most difficult growing pain that we've had, because we're all- the founders are all very development-centric. I'm a production CEO.
	Solve: Definitely an entrepreneur is someone who challenges themselves day-to-day and they're not quitters; they know that it's okay to fail and get back up, and just find a solution. You have to always find a solution, and that's what an entrepreneur is to me.
	Solve/Grow: The way I frame it when I'm working with new clients is I'm a grower, not necessarily a manager. I can fix problems, I can grow and scale companies
	Solve: I thrive when it comes to, “Here’s a problem,” and fixing it versus being provided, “Here is your workflow.
	Lead: An association with entrepreneurship, of being a leader and being someone who wants to create solutions, and come up with something that, again, could impact the world.
	Lead: So that thing, the leadership, I guess, entrepreneurship is basically leadership, being a leader and someone who impacts the world positively. That's how I define it. It's always been there.

	Manage: I don't want to be that kind of manager that's controlling you, or, "Your ideas don't count," stuff like that.
	Manage: I started having to manage, for example, my own team, this became a big challenge
Started Business	she was creating a way for designers to make more money and have their products be brought to life in fine jewelry.
	I started my company. Right out of university,
	I started my own social media channel back in 2011.
	I've started my own social enterprise, a social startup that helps artisans connect to the international market and sell their arts and crafts online and to businesses
	I think anybody can have an idea. I don't think everyone can be an entrepreneur. Ideas are a dime a dozen. Anybody can have an idea. It doesn't mean it's a good idea, first of all. Just because you have an idea, doesn't mean you're going to do anything about it. Plenty of people have lots of ideas all the time. I have ideas all the time. I don't do everything- something about all of my ideas.
	my parents is always an entrepreneur. They have their own company and it's what makes sense to me is- an entrepreneurship- an entrepreneur is someone who have their own company and build it from the ground up.
	Because to me, an entrepreneur is somebody who's- when I label specifically "entrepreneur," I think that somebody is really doing something completely, totally on their own without the support of another company.
	I think you can be entrepreneurial without being an entrepreneur, but if you're going to label yourself as an entrepreneur, I would say that you would have your own venture of sorts.
	It would have been a small business owner or somebody that's- yeah, somebody who just ran your own business
Anxiety	I had to open up and I was suffering from anxiety which I didn't know why. I didn't even know that I had anxiety for many years. So, now I acknowledge that and now I am okay with that.
	It's about just all the stress on your mind, and those who are really passionate about finding a solution are the ones that are going to make it through, because others will be like, "You know what? I'm just going to go back to work. This is too much. I'm starting again at ground zero.
	So what's next for you? Interviewee: I think that's the hardest question. I think that's what's causing me a lot of anxiety, a lot of stress right now is that- that idea of what's next
	I've had depression and anxiety, so I've never- not always been able to do the things I've wanted to, but I've done them anyways. It's taking me a bit more time than I would have liked, but I'm still proud of where I am today.

Excitement	I think entrepreneurship generally it is very exciting.
	It’s tough, but exciting.
	I was so excited about it and I came up with this idea.
	That was really exciting because it was the first deal that I closed and it happens to be like the first sales that we are going to have.
	you need to have everybody on board, and be passionate, and excited about what you're doing.
	It's a very exciting time. We are busier than ever and strapped for time, more than ever, so it's- I've been told that's a very good sign because when you're a day ahead of the chaos, it means that you're in a very upward growth curve, so that's exciting. It's never been more demanding before.

Appendix F: Table of Codes (Chapter 4)

Dimensions	D1 EI Awareness	But again, when you are trying to act as a glue, it even becomes more important that you would be mindful about many things that maybe a simple inventor or only one inventor would not even think about it or be aware of it or even don't care about it.
		I think you just—you as a person have to become aware of—there are going to be times when you, you make two steps forward, in this sort of disorganized—you are trying to always stay as structured as you can in all of this unstructured environment, because you are paving a little bit of a new path.
		a lot of times there isn't really a positive or negative, it just, it's all perception.
		Some people are aware of those traits (Entrepreneurial), and some people aren't, and some people don't want to take that path even though they do possess such traits out there. It's a personal thing
		Here's the thing: I don't see a point of studying entrepreneur. Entrepreneur is something that you- if you see a problem, you fixed it. You haven't- you work around it. That's entrepreneur to me. I don't see the point of going to school to study it. You don't have to study a business. You just do it. The reason why I'm going to school is because one, that built the connection of the- I want to build the resources and the connections of how am I going to use all those resources to build my businesses.
		I know founders who didn't even pursue business. They went for design programs or social studies. Again, entrepreneurs may not know it's in them, and they might not even proceed with global- business school or entrepreneurship, but it just comes naturally to them. But I do remember spotting a few from the entrepreneurship program.
		Yes, well you see after going to the program and now with some experience we didn't call it entrepreneurship what I was doing. I'd say I started my business
	D2 Institutional Conformity	I actually graduated as a valedictorian from my master's, and I graduated with honors from Ryerson for my undergraduate, and I took many, many, many scholarships that relied on my GPA and a lot of student engagement. And even in school, I was an A student, and I'm highly academically inclined.

		Good student, hmm. I don't know what to say. I'm- it depends on my- I'm not very, how did you say? I'm pretty flexible, but in a bad way, fluctuating pretty much. If you look at my grades first year, I was doing amazing. Second year, I failed a couple classes, and then third year, I was in the Dean's list. So it was always- so it depends.
		I didn't see a progression through more education to be my path. It was kind of like a means to an end.
		my mom would probably argue that I'm very rebellious. I mean, I'm not a group thing kind of guy is the way I'll respond to that.
Profiles	Entrepreneurship Professionals	I am a professor. I'm teaching at the same (Entrepreneurship) program now that I graduated from.
		I think the Incubator's role and being within the incubator community has changed my perspective immensely about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, because other than being in university and trying to do your own thing, now at the incubator, I'm getting to work with real life entrepreneurs, people who have real life businesses who depend on those businesses, who want those- those businesses to succeed. You're helping and you're assisting people who are high potential entrepreneurs to build and start and scale into world class businesses, or help them- help their startups become world class businesses.
		I was more interested in learning about the academic study of entrepreneurship. I found a lot of the courses that talk about philosophy and historical analysis and all this kind of stuff, the research into entrepreneurship level were courses I found the most interesting.
		I was looking to learn. It was mostly I wanted to understand how academically entrepreneurship was seen.
	Founders	during university I started my small little business. It was just a trading business. So I was just doing trades and that's where I got interested in entrepreneurship in general.
		I got exposed a lot to this world of auto identifying objects around you. I'm trying to come up with applications or solutions that didn't exist before. Smart solutions to problems that didn't exist before and this idea came out of that.
		I was a manager for a pizza place in high school. I was- I got promoted up pretty quick through there, but didn't really want to do that full-time. Then, I was attracted to working in construction, started my own business.
		I had my own startup in Montreal for seven years, which I founded, ran, and sold, and I've been working as a consultant for startups ever since.

		We began in late 2008, so we're about seven years old now. We began as a game studio, and we've produced about 40 different games to date.
	Intrapreneurs	I felt I needed to develop my career and my skill set. I was working and I know that I, I think wasn't using my full skills and in particular I had to show initiative and entrepreneurial or innovative abilities
		I also want to maybe work at a startup as well, see how that- more leeway in terms of helping it grow and making decisions and whatnot and being a part of that. If it's not my business, it's someone else's startup.
		I need to be an intrapreneur, someone who creates and drives change and innovation within an existing business.
		I think I'm more of an intrapreneur. But I'd like to see myself as an entrepreneur one day.
		I would consider myself an intrapreneur. Because to me, an entrepreneur is somebody who's- when I label specifically "entrepreneur," I think that somebody is really doing something completely, totally on their own without the support of another company. Whereas an intrapreneur, you have the support of another company.
	JobSeekers	I graduated from the Entrepreneurship program in 2018. I am currently working for Indigo Books and Music. I'm actually working as a Service Desk Analyst. We offer mostly IT support for all of our retail locations, both of our warehouses in Calgary and in Brampton, and our home office employees as well in Toronto. It's- it's kind of a job that I- I don't want to say that I fell into, but it wasn't what I was looking to do. I really liked Indigo as a company and when I graduated, I was really looking to get out of my part-time job and look for something full-time. So I started to apply to anything that I thought I could do at Indigo, because I wanted to work for them. I have, actually, to my surprise, really enjoyed my time working in IT.
		When I was looking at what to major in, I didn't really think that it was possible to do a major in Entrepreneurship and then get a job after that that would be in a conventional setting, like going to work for a big business or something. I didn't think that many people would be looking to hire someone with an Entrepreneurship major.
		I wouldn't say I'm very entrepreneurial, because I don't like taking risks. That is something I struggle with, truthfully, because- taking risks. Honestly, I'm afraid to like- having no income and then trying to make a business work. My ideal situation would be I have a steady income, and then I can try to make the situation

	Messy Minds	In high school, honestly, I don't know what to say. I was in with the wrong crowd and made some bad decisions. I met a couple friends who I was too close with for no reason; one ended up having a kid, one was put in prison, one actually was killed. It was all sorts of trauma.
		When I was 21-22, I was not self-aware enough to be able to take myself out of myself to listen to others as much. As you grow, you're able to be- you're- when you're young, you think you're the only person in existence and you think everyone else experiences life the way that you do.
		I have a background in Animal Science and Veterinary Studies at University of Guelph, and then I had an accident. I had to stop, and then I switched to- and then I went to hair school for two years, and then- I come from an entrepreneurship background.
		So, from a young age, I always listen to my- from a young age, my parents just- I was always the last one picked up from daycare, and my parents always joke, “Oh, if I worked for myself, I'd have more flexibility, I'd be able to do stuff.” My dad was always a very driven person and got a lot done. He grew very fast in his career. For me, hearing that and listening to that, I always had this mindset instilled in me that it's cool to work for someone, but eventually I want to work for myself. I'm driven like him. I want to do better than what my parents did, and I want to do it all by myself. So, when I was- when I was graduating [inaudible 1:50] at the time, I had- had an opportunity to do contracting, and I called it my own business, gave it a name, filed a business license and everything. I did it for a year, and then started university. When I came here, to Ryerson, I did not want to continue my classes. I was having a really hard time doing anything. A lot of the supply demand curves, the charts, the theoretical knowledge behind it didn't interest me or was too complicated. The math was complicated. I felt really dumb, even though I'd never thought I was dumb before. I remember sitting down next to- next to this one student and I asked him what- what he was doing in this class, and he goes- he goes, “Yeah, I'm an ENT major,” and I go, “What's that?” He goes, “Entrepreneurship,” and I looked into the program, looked into what they do. The next semester, I had a full course load in economics, I dropped everything, picked up two classes in entrepreneurship, and two electives, and then prayed to God that my transfer went through so that way it would be official. I was pretty much at my last leg at that point. I was ready to drop out of university or get into entrepreneurship.

	Part-time Entrepreneurs	I had actually a baby. So, one year I was like okay may be I have to take maternity leave and just sit down and see what I can do with the baby. I actually established two workshops with, for clay arts, under the name Let's Paint shop and I got really famous and, by the way I am having Saudi citizenship too. So, I invented the first Saudi clay art product and it went to the market
		I plan, if all goes well, is do a couple of licenses, get my CFA, and then go work at a trade desk somewhere, one of the banks, perhaps. That'd be my plan, and then keep a side business to pay for gas or go to the movies or something.
		I used to work for the City of Toronto as a swim teacher. I was like, "Why don't I do my own thing?" I started making my own ads on Kijiji, working for myself, getting my own clients. Now, I have a jersey business, so I import jerseys, sell them. Most recently, I started working on my own brand, which I will be putting on jerseys to make custom jerseys, custom sportswear, because I'm into sports a lot. I'm going to be starting to make custom wear for teams and stuff like that.
		I started doing some stuff on my own too. I started like- it wasn't nothing too crazy, but I started importing stuff from China, selling it, trying to see how it works online, meeting people, shipping, that kind of thing.
	Visionaries	Social ENT: I started a not-for-profit organization, and I continued with that for about a year. It went decently okay. It's still going on
		Social ENT: I started thinking about, what are valuable things in life? There was obviously money, happiness. It's the traits. That's why I got started with not-for-profit, because I did not believe in just solely capitalism and traditional for-profit approach of institutions and organizations within our society. I wanted to make an impact within not-for-profit/charity sector and bring some values within that. I was doing that for about a year after graduation.
		Social ENT: I recently founded a company with my friend called the Circle Shop. We basically want to increase awareness of climate action and tackle the UN Sustainability Goals number 12 and 13, which is responsible consumption and production, climate action. We do that by different avenues. We also just started selling eco-friendly home products online, so there's that.

		Artist: I thought one area was definitely art- definitely the art area. I started painting almost- I quickly got into painting seriously because of how my values are getting shifted after running an organization. I've been painting a lot. Now, I call myself a self-taught artist. I make artworks. I try to sell them within my community. I sold a few, but I'm not doing great because I'm still a beginner. My whole entrepreneurial journey shifted in a very drastic way over the last three years, just at a personal level for me, because- before going to Ryerson, I always thought about entrepreneurship as a way to make money and a way to make a living. As I was doing the education program there, I noticed that it wasn't all about money. It was more about community settings and being happy as a-altogether.
		Artist: I like avant-garde, weird art. I really- I always liked the idea. I did art in high school, and I like being able to make things that I find kind of silly, but other people find a lot of depth in it. I really enjoyed that, and so I thought I would like to do something like that in the future.
Paths	Dream Building Path 1	With entrepreneurs, I see a wider range of personalities. I see people that you would think would be art students or other people that you would think are just very professional. An art student, maybe more colorful clothing, longer hair, more flamboyant outfits, I guess, more personality expressed in their clothing and in their demeanor, as in maybe piercings or tattoos or maybe colored hair, stuff like that, where with- I find with other business students, it's much more clean cut, black and white, a lot of suit and ties, nicer clothes, stuff like that.
		I think I've always been creative. I've always loved to draw, do art in my high school. My high school had a lot of performance art and stuff. I was always super involved in that, whether it was producing something, or directing it, or doing the costume design, all that stuff. I've always been super involved in that, but I think that when I graduated high school, I didn't think that a career in Creative Arts was a possibility. My parents would always tell me, my mom especially, would be like, "You know, how many people want to be an actor? Come on, you're not going to be an actor." And so, I think I shut that off in my mind.
		entrepreneurial behavior or traits, and you can see it from people doing school projects, those who want to change the world, be strong, they challenge themselves, they're not quitters, and they're leaders, but at the same time, they support their peers.

		I've seen people where I knew that they would change the world one day, and I've seen people who are crashing it about, taking the nine to five path, which doesn't mean that it's a bad thing. It's actually easier. It's just a different mindset. I've definitely people who seem like a very good- change- people who are going to change the world one day. I've seen those people.
		when I told you what entrepreneurship is, I think that that would be me saying what I think a social entrepreneur- to me, okay, when I was 20 for example, if you asked me what I wanted to do with my life, I would never have answered the question honestly, because I thought that my answer was ridiculous. But in my head, my answer was that I want to change the world. Now if you ask me what I want to do with my life, I'll probably give you that answer. To me, that's social entrepreneurship. It's wanting to change the world for the better and being unafraid to question systems that are just so integrated in our society because they've been that way for hundreds of years.
		this all started a year and a half ago, or almost two years ago, where I'm like, "Oh, climate change is a real thing." I personally tried to incorporate things to reduce waste in my life. It was very difficult. It still is very difficult. That's when I started looking at websites and doing research, trying to understand the UN report and just all those other things. I started developing principles like, "This is good. This is bad." Stuff like that, I guess.
		I found that if they draw pictures, if they sing a song, and they want to change the world, and tell the stories, yes. If they creative- if they create a destruction in the industry, then yes. Artists, are they entrepreneurs
		It's about the person who is able to leave their comfort zone and try to attack a problem, either big or small, with the resources that they have, in the environment that they're in, with their capabilities, and try to solve it.
	Entrepreneurship Pop CulturePath 2	earlier when we (society) were talking about success and failure, you were saying that before there was a very low tolerance to failure about entrepreneurship. We're talking about entrepreneurship related failure and success and then you said that, okay, "You see I told you, this is not going to succeed, but now things are changing, now they are more aware that in order to succeed, failure is a process. It is important to fail in order to better succeed.

		I just remember, I think- what I'm thinking right now is just watching Dragon's Den and liking it a lot, having a very, very strong interest for it. From there, I was like, “I want to start thinking about- why don't I- instead of me watching TV, why don't I watch my professor talk about it, or see how this is done?” kind of thing. I think that's the start, I think.
		you will never know what CBC, and CTV, and Global, and the Toronto Star are going to do stories on. You can't rely on that just because you have a high social value company in education helping everybody that they're going to care. What they care about is readers, which makes sense, and viewers. So, I do see that a lot. There was one guy, poor guy, he made it to the Dragon's Den. I'm sure you know, there's hundreds and hundreds of businesses that apply to Dragon's Den, and he made it on the show. He was selling a stick. That's it. It’s a stick. It's a piece of wood, and it's a couple of meters tall. They laughed at him, and they had a right to do so, because they shouldn't have even put him on there. It's a joke. They were putting him on there to make other people laugh. That, I disagree with but still. Again, one kind of wonders, “If entrepreneurs are being turned into celebrities, where it's not about the entrepreneur-”
		Who would I call an entrepreneur? That's a good question. I think it could be a broad term or A defined term, depending on who it is. Anybody from the Dragon's Den or from similar- I think business owners or operators can be entrepreneurial or entrepreneurs. I'm trying to think. I don't really have a name that comes up as- like Richard Branson-type. He's an entrepreneur type thing. I think that's got different things that I couldn't really just throw a name at it.
	Institutional Entrepreneurship Path 3	I think you can be entrepreneurial without being an intrapreneur- or, sorry, I think you can be intrapreneurial without being an entrepreneur, but if you're going to label yourself as an entrepreneur, I would say that you would have your own venture of sorts.
		I'd like to say I am. My parents were very entrepreneurial as I was growing up, and I’ve just kind of- I guess, they- they showed me about it. All through high school, every year I would start a new business for the summer, and just see how that would work. I really like cars, so I started with car cleaning businesses, trying to tweak them each year to see what I can find, and see what works and what doesn't.

		I have gotten into the mindset that entrepreneurship would have been the best possible option for me to study, considering my family background, because apart from everything else that the Business and Management program offered, that was the one thing that resonated with my circumstance the most, that I would have to be in a position to manage and lead. And I feel like the course, Entrepreneurship, really helps with that.
		My grandfather is a true entrepreneur, my father is an intrapreneur. My father ended up joining the family business or doing the family business in 1992. He was a true intrapreneur, where we had- where he had- or where he played a major role in innovating and- and- and growing the family business from inside by using innovation and entrepreneurship. He opened- or he started the office supplies department where we work with laptops, copiers, ink, and stuff like that. He was the first person who started this department within the family business.
	Investment Entrepreneurship Path 4	Yes, during university I started my small little business. It was just a trading business. So I was just doing trades and that's where I got interested in entrepreneurship in general. I didn't have any prior experience in terms of studying, but I had some experience with trading. That's what got me interested in getting the entrepreneurship degree, just to understand what I am missing in terms of education.
		I'm always looking for new opportunities, for investment opportunities and stuff, but I wouldn't say I'm an entrepreneur. I haven't put anything in, let's say, in real life yet, so I wouldn't say I'm an entrepreneur right now. I believe I have an entrepreneurial mind, but as long as I haven't done anything specific regarding that, I wouldn't consider myself an entrepreneur.
		I'm looking at it like always in the investment opportunities. I have people in the States and stuff. I'm always asking them maybe if we can buy an old house or something, repair it, and then we can rent it out or sell it or- I'm connected with people who trade on the stock markets. I'm asking them for advice, so I'm trying to do something like that. I think that's why I would say that- that's why I say that I'm entrepreneurial, but as I said, I haven't really done anything specific yet.
		I remember one of the- one of my group members, he was somewhere from the Middle East and he had already worked on two or three startups or something, and had just such a fascinating background. Another student, she worked for some kind of makeup company and sold makeup on the side. Everyone had such an interesting and diverse background.

		I get a job in the fashion industry. I still have my startup as a side hustle, and I learn these new tools, and I apply them to my own startup.
	New Venture Path 5	it's my technical experience in addition to the work environment that I was working around the kind of projects I was exposed to.
		I studied the IT-Business Management program, which is basically an information technology- at the time, it was an Information Technology and Business hybrid program, so you do all the- the core- core curriculum and education that you would do as Bachelor of Commerce students, with also some technical courses as well, like- like Database Design, Software Development, Information Architecture, Project Management, those sorts of courses. It's kind of a hybrid program marrying Information Technology and Business.
		An entrepreneur, to me, really, it's somebody who has a view on- they probably see the world a little bit differently in the sense that- they either see blind spots or gaps in the marketplace for products or services that either don't exist or- or can be vastly improved upon. That motivates them to go and create products and solutions that have economic opportunity and create economic yields for themselves and for their organizations. If you're an entrepreneur like me, it's- it's probably mostly value-based and aligned to what they want to do in the sense that they're facilitating a way to create economic yield and value for themselves or- or in a more broader sense or more traditional sense, entrepreneurs really- they really see the world in a different way in which they can go create those- those economic opportunities and create sustainable businesses and organizations that can really- they really truly believe that they can shape and change the world based on- based on their view of how they can impact change.
		I do see the world in a slightly different lens. In my life, in my day-to-day, I'm constantly looking at business models, I'm looking at products and for whatever reason, my mindset, I'm always thinking about, "Is this product or service that I'm looking at, is it good enough or can it be improved?" I think naturally a lot of people do because naturally, as consumers, you- you buy and interact with products, and you're always looking at the degree to which that product or service solves your personal needs. I think where I'm different is- people are always looking at things or evaluating how- how good they are.
		I love music. I've always loved music and people, and when you put them together, what do you get? You get an event usually, so- so that's- that was my process

		It was through the game side and that experience that led to some inbound clientele.
Driving Energy	Balancing	It's a balancing act is what I'm saying. It's a balancing act. Some companies don't need any help. They just- some just need free cheap labor, like interns. Some need legal advice, it depends. It depends, really. Everybody has unique needs.
		Managing the demand of being in 100 places and making choices as to where you're going or what you're going to do is the hardest part I have found about running any startup. My weekends are not- right now, I don't have a work-life balance, if that's the question. My work is my life, but I'm passionate about it, so it doesn't- it doesn't feel like a job. It feels like I'm doing something, and I feel like I need to do this. It's not like- like when I'm doing the Boys and Girls Clubs on Saturday morning versus sleeping in, I know that I did something that I wanted to do.
		I think that entrepreneurship can fall into a spectrum of types of people that- that might only use components of it or might be overtly entrepreneurial in the way that they think and then trying to figure out what that's- balance is.
		I think a lot of people think that it's "cool" to be an entrepreneur. It is, but not in the way that I find people make it out to be. There's this whole thing, like if you go on Instagram, people are like, "Hustle and grind," and "Never stop working," all of this is crazy 80-hour weeks. I don't subscribe to that. Balance is key I think, at least for me. That's what makes me happy. Yes, you have to work a little more when you're- I know that. I am working way too much, but I always make sure to have time, from a people perspective, to unwind and take some time for yourself. I don't think it always has to be this crazy amount of work, just when lots of times are- I just did things by mistake or had an idea, and I tried it and it worked out.
		I started realizing, "Okay, I need to meet my- I need to meet everything in the middle, so this is how I do it. This is how they do it. I need to be right in the middle because there are- the way I do things is good and the way they do things is good, and then like you said, when you put them together, there's a better way of doing things."
		I have to do the finances for the startup. I have my own personal life and side business where I have to set the website up and do all that. And then for ENT 78, we're at a site company that I have to work on and CEO management tool for that. I'm doing these three things, where if I picked a different major, I would just have to work on the project that's coming. I wouldn't have to think about it outside of school.

	Destructive	When I was in high school and middle school, I was- I have- I was diagnosed with ADHD, and that really- I didn't understand what it was at first, and then I started realizing it really has an influence on my studies and my character and everything. The fact that teachers would say, “Oh, you have to work 10 times harder because you have this disability,” made me be like, “Oh, yeah? Okay, screw you.
		it's about taking control of my future, basically, not really- not- not letting society or- or the norms really put you in your place, and I'm always being the one to- as a kid, yes, I would rebel against authorities school, or my- my family, and I think that really gave me the entrepreneurial mindset in- in the sense that I look at where most people are going and I'm like, “No, that's not where I want to go. I want to do this.”
		I've never been one to appreciate academics. I don't know. I've always been pushed aside from academics in high school. I'm not saying that Ryerson or- or universities in general do this to their students. It’s just that it's a feeling you have from a young age that my teachers always expected me to be the one that's doing bad things. I was always in trouble for some things that I didn't even do, so I have always had a not-so-good perspective about school
		He's gone through a lot of mistakes through his life and a lot of different things, which I had no idea about. I watched the documentary and I really- that really connected me to him, because no matter all the things that happened to him: car accidents, cheating on his wife, a bunch of different things, losing this, losing that, he was always learning from his mistakes. Always- the whole documentary is about him telling how you messed up and then talking about how he learned from it, and how he turned it into a positive, and how he pretty much built his empire which he has now.
		I'm saying I'm a rebel and everything. Yes, when I was younger I was- I would barely listen and I wasn't getting the best grades first- sec- second year university, I was on probation.
	Executive	The whole thing is in investment banking, the key skills that you'll learn, you'll learn in your first three years. Anybody that stays in investment banking after six years tops, they're basically trapped. They're trapped by golden handcuffs where there is no other job that they will find that pays them seven figures to manage relationships, present technical analysis done by somebody else, and close deals in a very structured and boxed method. An investment banker really only has maybe 40 different products they can offer. So really, on every single conversation, it's like a mental checklist of, “Oh, which different product can I offer this client?”

		I'm a sales associate. I'm on the sales floor, and I greet customers as they enter the store. I help- I ask them questions to try and help them narrow down what they're looking for: color, size, brand, style, all that stuff. I can assist them. I can grab the stuff that's too high up to reach. I can grab that down for them. I can get them change rooms, process them through the cash register. For me, this is- this is just a job. It's not something that I want to do for the rest of my life. like my manager. I think that this is what she really wants to do. to her, if you told her that she would be the manager of a Lululemon or the manager of a Sport Check, it would probably have a bigger impact on her enjoyment of the position and her willingness to stay there.
		there's an expectation of getting your main duties done as well. There's a certain type of professionalism that needs to be met, and if there are other ideas and suggestions that we want to bring to the table, let's do it. There's a reason why we have bi-weekly meetings or monthly meetings.
		You tell me to do something, you'll get that. The problem is that that can annoy people in a corporate setting where you have division between departments and roles and responsibilities and seniority and all these things. It doesn't go over very well.
		I incorporate aspects of entrepreneurship in the job that I do. I do data analytics and analyze opportunities and trends in the marketplace and fixate on different things that I'm working on. I would say that practicing, even in the current role that I have within a larger company, that I would be- what do you call those- intrapreneurs? I still use the mindset. I just wouldn't consider myself an active one right now.
		I get every person in the staff and I told them that team work is valuable. You're cleaning the floor doesn't mean that you have a menial work, no you have an important work and role in this place because if this place is dirty, we have germs, we have diseases, we have infection and all this. So, when you get each person and make him feel he is valuable and his work is valuable even if it's very few or little work, it will work better actually and he will feel he wants to be better.
		I didn't care when I was working in the corporate world. I just did what I did, and I would have fans and people didn't like me and that was it.
	Knowledge	I still didn't feel like I was ready to keep work- to enter the workforce. I didn't really have any business experience, and I have a passion for learning, so I decided to continue that at McMasters in their MBA program.

		One thing I would be curious about, which might not be Included in your study or a part or even important to your study, but something that I think I would be interested in learning more about is what kind of backgrounds entrepreneurial people come from. Do they tend to be wealthier, or poor, or middle class or- just I guess households, and how they're- how they come to be entrepreneurial. I think that's something that could be interesting
		They thought that entrepreneurship is something easy, anyone can be an entrepreneur, anyone can learn what Entrepreneurship is. But as soon as they were faced with the fact that it's really hard work and you need to be motivated and dedicated and passionate to build something like that, they were- they turned away.
		As you can see, I like to talk. I'm happy to talk about entrepreneurship. It's really what I'm passionate about. I'm excited to see what I- what happens in life, and where I go, and all that kind of stuff. See, this is why I want to be a professor of Entrepreneurship, so I can talk students' ears off about these things.
		I think my three top goals, I'd say, number one is to do a post-graduation program, Masters probably, maybe something in entrepreneurship and innovation, management, something around there.
		I'd love to read it. That's what I'm interested in. That's why I want to do a Masters in Management, and a thesis on what makes Entrepreneurship students successful, or that kind of stuff. Is that where you're- what's your thesis if you don't- are you allowed to tell me?
	Potential	What I do have is the desire or the drive, ambition, whatever any of these words- type of words you want to fill in the blank with, to do the learning even though I may not have time. I have other commitments, I'm exhausted, whatever.
		I asked people sometimes this question, "How would you describe me?" I've had a variety of answers. Some people tell me I'm reliable. Some people like no- intelligent. I feel like a narcissist talking about myself.
		I just remind myself should hard situations like that come to me, I've just got to be mentally, physically, spiritually strong, so I can be tough in those situations and hopefully react better or- yeah, better.
		I'm not reaching my full potential as an entrepreneur, because if I believe I need more and more and more and more education, more experience, before I unleash this full-time hungry entrepreneur.

		Currently, I plan to do some scien- some sort of administration-coordinated work at a social impact space. While I do that, I plan to continue doing a bunch of my own projects, and then hopefully either making a side income with those or eventually be able to just stop working and work on my own stuff.
		I recently went to the AP Bootcamp in Germany, which is an entrepreneurship program that they do at the Strascheg Center in Munich. People are asked to think about problems in Germany, in terms of retail. The type of entrepreneurship ideas were- which are not bad, were not bad ideas at all, are like how to make hangers more efficient, how to make more efficient softwares, how to decrease wait times, and how to move people from online to offline, and which are great ideas and are necessary for countries like Canada. But if you go back to countries like Argentina or Peru, there are other type of problems. Like in Peru, they don't have drinkable water. Everyone that goes there has to have bottled water. So the type of problems that are being seen in these types of countries, even Indonesia, for example, are how to make clean water, about- or how to go about having a better lifestyle, rather than the commodities that might appear or that occur to people in these other First World countries.
		I'm still deciding. I have some potential scenarios. One of them is to just travel for a bit and then figure it out, while still running my business. Another one is- don't get a job, just run my business, live the typical entrepreneur life, be poor for a while until things work out. Another option is to get a job in design thinking or some kind of design field, run my business part-time until that picks up, quit that, and run it full-time. All in all, all the scenarios always result in me having my own business and working for myself. How I get there, if there's options, I'm going to see what happens.
		I'm interested in, potentially, academia and being a professor. I could see myself managing a pre-existing charity that's already been established. I could also see myself starting new ventures and trying. I just don't know exactly where we'll go, but those would be the main things.
		I did put myself in a bit of a hole here, because there are people who have ideas; they still have potential. It's not quite successful because they're still figuring it out, but it's still building. There's some momentum behind it.

		You- you have an idea, and then you think about it very vastly. You think about multiple different ideas and you think about multiple different solutions and problems that go with it, and then you think about one solution, and you narrow down your pros and cons of that solution. And then you think of this solution, and you narrow down your pros and cons of that. I don't know if other people do this. I don't know. This is just how I do it.