

Postgraduate entrepreneurship education: can entrepreneurial passion be developed?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to examine postgraduate students' reflexive narratives about their entrepreneurial passion (EP) experience as a result of their direct participation in a series of hand-selected experiential learning events within the curated identity workspace (IW) of a cross-disciplinary postgraduate entrepreneurship education programme.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses a qualitative exploratory design using interpretative phenomenological analysis with a group of graduate students from a cross-disciplinary postgraduate entrepreneurship education program at an entrepreneurial university.

Findings – This study discovers that students' EP experience is developed through the internalisation of an entrepreneurship learning activity into their personal identity through the harmonisation and reorganisation of their competing micro-identities of professional and entrepreneurial identity, prompting them to create a new identity that enables them to act entrepreneurially without relinquishing their existing professional identity.

Originality/value – This study demonstrates how entrepreneurial education programmes function as an IW and posits a theoretical model illustrating the hidden connections between entrepreneurial activity, personal identity and entrepreneurial learning experience that collectively influence individuals' entrepreneurial behaviour.

Keywords Entrepreneurship education, Entrepreneurial identity, Professional identity, Interpretative phenomenological analysis, Entrepreneurial passion

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Considerable progress has been made in the delivery and assessment of entrepreneurship education programmes (EEPs) (Hägg and Kurczewska, 2020). While the traditional “smart on stage” approach is losing attractiveness, the “guide on the side” approach is emerging as a viable pedagogical choice for entrepreneurship educators (Bell and Bell, 2020). While this progress brings practice-based EEPs closer to academic legitimacy (Warhuus *et al.*, 2018), it also opens new opportunities by raising the possibility of investigating and discovering what happens in real entrepreneurship classrooms (Brush *et al.*, 2015; Donnellon *et al.*, 2014). Given this prospect, scholars in entrepreneurship education may be able to refocus their attention on a core feature of entrepreneurship education: the significant connections between people and their entrepreneurial learning activities (Vanevenhoven, 2013).

In the meantime, the concept of “identity workspace (IW)” is gaining favourable acceptance in the field of EEPs, particularly among institutions of higher learning



(Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010). The IW perspective emphasises the critical role of identity work within a particular environment (Frederiksen, 2016; Beech, 2008), thereby fostering a social framework for embryonic entrepreneurs that enables them to develop a sense of stability while honing their entrepreneurial abilities. Despite its realistic approach to delving into entrepreneurs' psychological and social identities, IW research is deficient in demonstrating how individuals may be influenced by their active engagement in the IW. While the activities in IW are portrayed as continuous processes that can be facilitated throughout life stages and transitions (Ibarra and Petriglieri, 2016), a narrative account of how individuals develop, alter and reconstruct their identities in the IW (Frederiksen and Berglund, 2020; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Harmeling, 2011) may be missing from explanations of what occurs inside IW. In the case of EEPs, these strenuous activities can be better understood by evaluating the manifestations of entrepreneurial behaviour brought about by the impact of entrepreneurship education on individuals who directly participate in the IW experience (Metzger, 2017).

Therefore, this research is critical in addressing what occurs within a particular IW by examining the *in situ* impact on a group of postgraduate students who had directly participated in a series of hand-selected experiential learning activities as part of a cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship education programme (CPEEP). They have chosen to temporarily postpone their future job pursuits to investigate options inside CPEEP. Not only that, they are willing to relocate to a new country, tentatively leaving their native countries in search of new learning opportunities. Such activity can be thought of as the germ of entrepreneurial passion (EP), as it is favourably associated with a strong entrepreneurial ambition (Neneh, 2020). Given that passion and identity are mutually reinforcing (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016) and are two critical components of developing a passion for an activity (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003), this research aims to examine how EP can be developed through the entrepreneurial learning experience that these postgraduate students directly participated in. If this is the case, how did postgraduate students' EP develop, and what is the cognitive structure of EP that explains it?

Therefore, we examine postgraduate students' reflexive narratives about their EP experience by investigating the link between EP and students' personal identity through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). We build a model based on the grounded theory that depicts how EP developed in the IW of CPEEP. We begin by reviewing the literature on the development of an activity passion and EP. Then, we conduct a literature review on identities and entrepreneurship. Following a discussion of the methodology, we turn to the findings of the interpretative phenomenological interviews. The discussion section, conclusions, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are included.

2. Literature review

2.1 Development of passion for an activity

Several theories explore the development of passion in a particular situated context. However, this paper is guided mainly by Vallerand's (2008) passion development, which focuses on three synchronous processes that have been shown to influence the development of a passion for an activity: activity selection, activity valuation and the type of internalisation that the activity represents in one's identity. Each stage builds upon the preceding one until the individual develops a passion for one particular activity. To begin, activity selection refers to the initial step in which individuals choose an activity (in this case, enrolling in an informal entrepreneurial education programme) over alternative activities such as working or vacationing. This behaviour displays cognitive readiness and openness to new experiences because of activity selection (Zainuddin *et al.*,

2019), as individuals take the initiative to become a part of the future activity and identity they seek.

Following that, a subjective assessment begins with the appraisal of the activity; individuals place subjective worth on the activity they pick. This stage represents individuals' efforts to incorporate their current activity into their existing identity, namely, their entrepreneurship activity as postgraduate students enrolled in an EEP. In general, the stronger the emotion, the greater the value, which results in a greater attempt to internalise the activity into one's existing identity. Given that, the more positive emotional feedback individuals receive from their entrepreneurial learning endeavours, the more drawn they become to entrepreneurship and the more entrepreneurial behaviour they will exhibit. As a result of the second stage, several indicators suggest that individuals are acquiring a passion for a particular activity:

- individuals expressed a greater desire to constantly conduct their current task;
- to be in a state of flow;
- to gain emotional release from participation; and
- to incorporate the action into their current identity (Fredricks *et al.*, 2010).

Once they develop a passion for an exciting activity, the third stage influences the internalisation path, which in turn determines how the individual responds to the social context to which they belong (in this case, the entrepreneurship classroom setting). The internalisation of controlled passion results in obsessive passion, in which the individual feels internal pressure to perform the action. On the other side, autonomous internalisation of passion results in the formation of a harmonious passion, in which the individual experiences an intense yet manageable urge to engage in an activity. Accordingly, the degree to which the social context encourages the individual's autonomy, and the orientation of the individual's personality will determine which path is their preferred choice. Stroe *et al.* (2020) argue that when individuals engage in typical entrepreneurial activities and choose autonomous internalisation, they experience harmonious passion, which has the potential to dampen the development of negative affect associated with adverse events, such as fear of failure, allowing individuals to maintain an optimistic outlook throughout the entrepreneurial journey. On the other hand, those who choose controlled internalisation develop obsessive passion, which amplifies the negative effect linked with adverse events to the point they contemplate that the entrepreneurial journey is unpleasant. Because of their harmonious passion, many individuals believe that entrepreneurial activity may become so defining that it becomes an intrinsic part of their personality and contributes to their identity, as in "I am an entrepreneur; therefore, I will behave entrepreneurially."

2.2 Experience of entrepreneurial passion

The psychological idea of "passion" for an activity is described as an encounter with a meaningful activity congruent with one's identity (Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand *et al.*, 2003). The thrill and pleasure connected with that activity motivate the individual to invest resources in it. It also fosters motivation, well-being and enthusiastic work by providing a balanced and purposeful view of life (Vallerand, 2015). Because passion refers to an individual's intense attachment to his or her interests, researchers associate it with domain-specific themes (Vallerand, 2015). EP was characterised in entrepreneurship as excitement for venture-related activities, a passion for the venture and a consciously accessible, intensely positive sense of entrepreneurial activity associated with meaningful and substantial roles in the self-identity of the entrepreneur (Cardon *et al.*, 2009). EP is a

universal emotion that pervades all facets of life but is specifically directed towards one action, namely, entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, EP is seen as a determining element in whether individuals take advantage of an opportunity (Carsrud *et al.*, 2017). Perhaps the same logic could be extended to the decision of an individual to enrol in a formal EEP. Enrolling in the EEP may result from regular exposure to the entrepreneurial curriculum during their college years, growing up in an entrepreneurial family or acting on an entrepreneurial opportunity identified during their previous professional career. While most postgraduate students enrolled in academic programmes that enhance their current professional abilities (Edwards and Nicoll, 2006), the motivation for some postgraduate students to enrol in a formal entrepreneurship education programme is quite obvious: they wish to become entrepreneurs because they are more mature and have more work experience (Singh Sandhu *et al.*, 2011).

Additionally, EP is subject to social circumstances as an intense emotion experienced during participation in the activity. While EP has been proven to promote good entrepreneurial behaviour (Murnieks *et al.*, 2014), it also can function in the other way via the forms of emotional feedback received following entrepreneurial action. They are much more engaged in entrepreneurship if they are optimistic about the outcome. On the other hand, the more disillusioned they are with the results, the less excited about entrepreneurship they become. As a result, the social setting also influences the numerous EP routes. A social environment that fosters autonomy may contribute to the EP's development.

In comparison, a social situation that devalues autonomy would impede the EP's growth, especially during the activity valuation phase (Vallerand, 2008). Additionally, an individual's emotional input affects his or her orientation; an individual with an autonomous personality orientation will have a favourable attitude about the outcome of their entrepreneurial activity regardless of the outcome. Even a negative conclusion might serve as an incentive for future improvement. On the other hand, individuals with a regulated personality orientation display the opposite reaction. As a result, an autonomous personality is more adaptive to any situation. A person with a rigid personality will lose their adaptability and become less likely to adopt. Individuals eventually validate their identities through relevant entrepreneurial activity within a specific entrepreneurial context (Murnieks *et al.*, 2014). According to Cardon *et al.* (2009), when people experience EP, they should sense a full-blown emotional experience accompanied by a combination of brain and body responses. According to Fredricks *et al.* (2010), individuals who are passionate about a particular activity, such as entrepreneurship, will believe the activity is worthwhile, will devote significant time and energy to it, will establish mastery objectives for the activity, will choose to engage in complex tasks and will experience positive outcomes while engaged in the task.

2.3 Identities and entrepreneurship

While the literature discusses a variety of identities (for example, personal identity and role), this paper will focus on three distinct types of identities. These are anchor identities, which include personal identity, and micro-identities, which include professional and entrepreneurial identities.

2.3.1 Personal identity. Personal identity is intrinsically tied to self-image, which represents an individual's personal value of self-criticism (Hogg, 2016). This self-image is produced internally, based on one's unique background and experiences, rather than about another group (social identity) or by a certain function (role identity). Individual identities are developed over time and constitute a constellation of micro-identities organised hierarchically. Higher-ranking identities are more prominent and essential to one's self-identity (Ramarajan, 2014). As a result, activities that require central identity verification are likely to be more vital to individuals than those that do not require central identity

verification (Husin *et al.*, 2020). As a “super identity,” personal identity is an anchor identity that embodies the individual in a particular context of involvement and social function (Hogg, 2016). On the other hand, individuals will decide which identity to use in a specific situation. They can modify and organise these micro-identities and link them to their identity to reflect the significance of the action.

2.3.2 Professional identity. Many discussions about professional identity (PI) take place in the educational literature (Trede *et al.*, 2012), as it is inextricably linked to the interaction of pedagogy and ongoing identity development. Cruess *et al.* (2014) define PI as a staged internalisation of a certain profession’s features, values and conventions, resulting in persons thinking, acting and feeling like that particular professional position. This identity is one of a person’s multiple qualities and is influenced by their place in society, their interactions with others, and their interpretation of their experiences (Trede *et al.*, 2012). Most people value their PI because it reflects the significance of their accomplishments and sometimes dictates their level of candour when confronted with a situation. Their PI is founded on their work experience and defines them as working individuals (Illeris, 2004). As a result, their career choice (PI) and sense of “who they are” (personal self-identification) influence how they perceive their work, their place in life and their motives for interaction in those domains (Watson, 2001).

2.3.3 Entrepreneurial identity. Entrepreneurial identity (EI) is a term that refers to an identical component that engages in entrepreneurial activity when operating a business venture (Donnellon *et al.*, 2014). It is one of several components that operate within a composite referred to as a super identity, “akin to professional identity (Hogg, 2016). Scholars have previously recognised the adaptability of individuals’ cognitive ability to adjust their identity in the context of entrepreneurial engagement, such as adapting to hierarchical order or adapting to role requirements (Murnieks *et al.*, 2014; Hoang and Gimeno, 2010). However, research on how EI adapts to an individual’s identity during the entrepreneurial process is lacking. Warnick (2014) explored the relationship between the two and discovered that musician-entrepreneurs’ EPs were more strongly associated with their professional musician identities than their entrepreneurial identities. Their enthusiasm for musical activities acted as a strong incentive for entrepreneurial activity in addition to (or instead of) a passion for entrepreneurial activities. His research reveals that when someone has a strong passion, such as a desire for music (which symbolises artistic identity), their entrepreneurial identity is unlikely to be the dominant component of their identity. This means that entrepreneurs may also love professional action that is more inextricably linked to their personal identity.

Self-defined identities such as EI are founded on the characteristics, beliefs, values, motivations and entrepreneurial experiences that provide context and meaning for individual goals (Murnieks *et al.*, 2014). Individuals with the EI are positioned in an entrepreneurial role (Cardon *et al.*, 2009), requiring distinct social motives, meaningful self-awareness and sources of self-value in interpersonal connections (Brickson, 2000). From this point forward, the development of the EI appears to be a social and developmental process influenced by the interaction of experience and social processes (Donnellon *et al.*, 2014), which includes an awareness of the historical context and trajectory of industrial development, entrepreneurial discourse and ideology and technological and professional influences. Because the EI is constructed within the context of cultural identity (Benveniste, 1987), which is influenced by social pressures such as parental influence and social norms, it acquires significant labels that confer on the role holder a degree of autonomy and frequently a degree of privilege that they are accustomed to. Individuals are required to use and justify their EI when engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Donnellon *et al.*, 2014),

which requires an assessment and adjustment of the activity's role. Successful negotiation or tension management will probably impact the EP's experience, as the concept of entrepreneurship will be crucial in authenticating their identity within the IW.

While prior research has examined entrepreneurs' cognitive ability to adapt their identity to the context of entrepreneurial engagement (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Murnieks *et al.*, 2014), research on how entrepreneurial identity is adapted to personal identity during the entrepreneurship process has recently gained more traction. For example, Newbery *et al.* (2018) demonstrate how entrepreneurial micro-identity is established among business undergraduates through business simulation games using a quasi-experimental research approach. They discovered that the initial entrepreneurial experience either strengthens or weakens EI. Additionally, they found that having an entrepreneurial role model boosts students' EI salience by providing a clear baseline against which to measure their current EI. Students who place a higher premium on EI are more likely to exhibit the positive observed behaviours linked with entrepreneurship and intend to incorporate EI into their future personal identities.

2.4 Entrepreneurship education programme as identity workspace

Until now, prior research has recognised the critical role of identity in the learning process (Morris *et al.*, 2012; Rae, 2000). Meanwhile, researchers studying EEP are beginning to examine the effect of identification on the experiment's outcome. Using an action-based pedagogical approach, Donnellon *et al.* (2014) conducted a seminal study on the impact of identity in the classroom. They discovered that students adapt to their pre-existing identities during the learning process by developing their EIs. Additionally, they found that students' EI was projected primarily through strategic posture, followed by visual and aural symbols, storytelling and ultimately, sociability and collectivity.

Given this, Donnellon *et al.* (2014)'s work reinforces the argument made by scholars about the role of universities, particularly business schools, as IW, as Harmeling (2011) suggested that EEP can serve as an effective IW for participants to construct, revise and reconstruct their narrative identities in a university setting. Individuals who engage in entrepreneurial learning have the opportunity to experiment with numerous identities and develop a stronger sense of self. EEP appears to be a very promising IW based on the following argument:

[...] its unique ability to connect the individuals, with his or her particular interests, knowledge, experience, and social networks with the marketplace in which he or she seeks to gain acceptance, implement plans, perform commercial transactions, interact with stakeholders and develop a project, business or organization (Harmeling, 2011: 746).

This section identifies several research gaps. First, it stresses the nature of EP as an intense emotion that is unique to an individual's connection with a particular activity and is also context-dependent. However, the mechanism by which EP is discovered and eventually developed in an educational setting has not been detailed. While it is presumed that students have completed the first stage of passion development (activity selection) and are now in the second and third stages of passion development (activity value and kind of internalisation), several key difficulties may arise at either moment. Second, because personal identity is changeable and capable of accepting or rejecting social role expectations via role adjustment processes, we must analyse the organisation of background second-tier identities (e.g. PI, entrepreneurial identity). This can be performed by analysing how individuals make sense of their life experiences, especially when presented with two strong competing micro-identities (i.e. professional vs entrepreneurial identity) while engaged in entrepreneurial

activity. Finally, this part addresses how individuals grow their EI by strategically positioning themselves inside their IW, attempting to display entrepreneurial activity within their immediate social circle. However, how students in EEP define, validate and adopt a strategic stance is unknown. These questions can be answered by assessing students' subsequent engagement in IW experiential learning entrepreneurial education. Completing these gaps may illuminate the possibility of developing EP as part of entrepreneurship education.

3. Methodology

This article examines postgraduate students' reflexive narratives about their EP resulting from participating in hand-selected experiential learning activities within the curated IW of a cross-disciplinary postgraduate entrepreneurial education programme. based on "being and becoming" (Hannon, 2006). IPA (Smith *et al.*, 2009) is relevant in this aspect because it views respondents as beings who are aware of and actively behave in and around the world through the formation of objects of meaning that serve as proxies for their existence in the world. IPA seeks to understand participants' worlds and clarify the concept of "what it is like," which is more concerned with meaning and processes than events and their causes (Larkin and Thompson, 2012). The IPA's central tenet is that people are "self-interpreting beings," that is, they actively interpret events, things and people in their lives. Specifically, IPA emphasises that information exposure is always dependent on participant feedback. As a result, a rich theme of knowledge may emerge. The subject of the IPA study is significant long-term concerns that affect participants continuously or at a pivotal point in their lives, such as investigating new job options. In addition to education (Symeonides and Childs, 2015), coaching (Callary *et al.*, 2015), nursing (Pollock and Biles, 2016) and identity (Symeonides and Childs, 2015), used in entrepreneurship studies to examine entrepreneurial commitment and performance (Tasnim *et al.*, 2014).

3.1 Research design

The paper's research design is straightforward and process oriented. To create a balance between guiding and being directed, the questions were exploratory in nature rather than explanatory and reflected the process rather than the outcome (Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). The paper was prepared to treat each research subject uniquely in terms of data collecting and analysis to gather the most "natural data" possible (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Because this research acquired psychologically sensitive and personal data, it was required to get the relevant authorisations and ethical clearances from the University Research Ethics Committee. As a result, formal ethical approval was sought. Following approval, an invitation to participate was given to all students enrolled in the same programme; participation was entirely voluntary. Students were chosen to provide access to the phenomenon being studied, which is a perspective rather than a population and places a premium on depth over breadth. Eight participants were chosen using a convenience sampling strategy that allowed for a detailed examination of psychological variability within the group and, consequently, an analysis of the subtle pattern of convergence and divergence that emerged (Refer to Table A1). This article establishes sample homogeneity; all participants were postgraduate students enrolled in an academic programme that matched their previous speciality with the CPEEP learning module and had no prior academic exposure to EE. Because of the idiographic nature of the IPA study, it was proposed that it be undertaken with small sample size. Analysing each transcript in detail on a case-by-case basis takes a long time. The purpose of this paper is to provide a complete account of these participants' perceptions and understandings. According to Smith *et al.*

(2009), there is no optimal sample size because the issue is quality, not quantity, given the complexity of an individual's experience. The IPA benefits from a narrow concentration on a few high-profile cases.

This study's interpretive approach focuses on the meaningful terms participants might use to express their personal experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). So, flexible data collection tools are needed (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Interviewing is the most potent and extensively used qualitative research technique (Braun and Clarke, 2013), as it discloses respondents' lived worlds before scientific explanation. A knowledge-building venue where two or more people discuss a "shared interest" is an interview, say (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interview method (Refer to Appendix 2) was designed to enable real-time discussion between the researcher and participants, allowing the researcher to follow up on fascinating, relevant and even unexpected issues during the interview (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Pre-interview readings said that the researcher would preserve the respondents' confidentiality and take all possible precautions to ensure they did not feel excessive stress or worry. Interviews began as soon as they consented.

As part of the IPA research process, participants "expand and revise their ideas" iteratively (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 81). That is why, IPA mandates that the data-gathering event be verbatim recorded (Smith *et al.*, 2009). A semantic record of the interview (transcript) is also necessary. The researcher must reread the transcript to get the substance of what is being said. He or she must also stay within the psychological reduction (e.g. remain neutral towards the issue of interest) while listening for the "meaning" of what is stated. These "meanings" are later changed by participants' free imaginations. Finally, the researcher interprets a participant's behaviour to describe the experience's psychological structure.

4. Findings

This section presents our findings concerning the primary research question: how postgraduate students' EP developed and what cognitive structure of EP best explains it. There are four themes generated from the data analysis.

4.1 Newly found affection and solace

Participants were exposed to a novel concept early on, understanding what the business sector may offer them in their capacity. Participants indicated satisfaction with their new knowledge, enabling them to identify and analyse hidden features of market structures, business strategies and industry players. Initially, they were troubled by this new information and struggled to discern their proper role within the market structure. They recognised the potential value of this new information, motivating them to seek other information that would mould their new behaviour autonomously. CPEEP benefits these participants when they are enthused about their newly acquired knowledge of the marketplace and the opportunity to apply it.

As a result of their newfound knowledge, they were obsessed with the act of writing about company ideas and, to a certain extent, found solace in reading concealed marketplace information. They also began to think about what kind of business endeavour they may start. They also believed that, because of their newfound fixation with reading information about the industry, they were spending excessive amounts of time without even recognising it:

Now I am keeping the notebook, [...] not only I write the idea, but I also write how I will do it [...] But for me, every time I get upset about something, [...], then there is because there is a market gap. (Rachel)

Sometimes I just could stay on the internet, searching for stuff I do not know what I am searching for. I am just checking the market data, just checking business news, or checking stuff just to know. (Ament)

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4.2 Break on through (to the other side)

Accounts from several participants reveal a growing discontent with their inability to integrate themselves into the market system that had been previously given to them. For example, they could wonder what they can provide to the engineering industry as engineers with entrepreneurship experience and understanding. Participants believed that they should endeavour to modify their current selves to remedy this flaw, which was a strong response required for the upcoming entrepreneurial journey. The exhilaration (adrenaline rush) of trying something new and different leads to a positive experience of EP. There is a range of possible explanations for this uneasy feeling. The participants believed that the implementation of the modification had been put off for an extended period of time. They felt stuck and bored in their current setting, and they desired exposure to a new environment that would provide them with something fresh:

Because with biochemistry, it was lab-based [...] I've done my first dissertation in the lab, [...] I enjoyed it for a small time. However, I wasn't sure I want to do this for the rest of my life. To be in the lab. Some people do [...] and I didn't think I want to do that [...] I think I have other skills that I can use outside the lab [...] I also have people's skills. I think I am quite analytical in the other areas, not just scientifically [...] I think my experience for being in the lab, [...] wasn't that inspired [...] I want something that is people-based. (Jardine)

Because of science [...] I thought being in the lab, doing an experiment, that was it. Business like [...] I say handling money; it is a different side. But maybe it is not money [...] the mind-set is different as well. (Daisy)

As an additional point of discussion, some participants expressed the belief that they had moved to the stage at which their current occupations no longer supported their overall vision and interest in life. A way to redefine oneself professionally was something they were on the lookout for. As they immersed themselves in the realm of entrepreneurship, they enabled themselves to "open up" to new ideas and perspectives:

But for some reason, which I don't know why, I called it intuition [...] I thought I'm doing something wrong [...] I am a very environmentally friendly person [...] I used to work in the petroleum industry, but I never believe in petroleum as the energy source [...] we are burning energy, and burning something that very valuable [...] I always believed in renewable resources, but the point is that 10 years ago, no one was talking about that [...] I mean that now I just doing something that I always knew that one will be come up. (Faye)

The trigger point is [...] my role when I was the central director for charity was to reinvent the area and to basically made a profit so that it could operate properly [...] After five years, I run out of challenge [...] of how to make better, what to do. So, there was a choice [...] is to find another project and do that [...] or doing MBA [...] then I will learn something that if I stay in my job or go back to my job, I could do it differently and even better. (Parker)

4.3 Discovering hidden jewels

According to the participants' personal narratives, the new entrepreneurial knowledge showed their current constraints and forced them to make changes to remain relevant in the marketplace. As they began to liberate themselves and open themselves up to new

experiences, they began to uncover new facets of their own personalities. They demonstrated their acceptance of the potential benefits of this newness by exercising it directly in the IW and obtaining immediate emotional input as a result. A diversified environment in which they were expected to manage conflicting connections was perceived by the participants as the most efficient approach for them to contribute to the discovery of newness. To demonstrate their newly acquired abilities and their appropriateness for group work, they were expected to enter foreign terrain in various instances (for example, moving from a passive to a more active state, from an introvert to an extrovert state or from safe play to speak-out). CPEEP was useful for individuals when they discovered hidden abilities, trained them and saw the good improvements that occurred as a result of their efforts:

I feel that I am gaining more skills. I feel like part of my brain that wasn't working before, I'm thinking in a different way [...] but because I mix with the people from another background, [...] it's helped me to understand that there are other ways of doing things and there are other ways of exploring and there are also important ways of communicating, being respectful [...] I actually bit shy, and I didn't use to connect a lot in the network. So, here in the very first, I was learning how to speak to people and how to introduce yourself [...] I feel good about it. I feel like when I see people, I don't panic, and I can speak about whatever [...] (Rachel)

I also feel like I get more flexible, with the way of thinking, the way of doing a thing as well. So, I like meeting people, and also I feel like in business because there is more opinion, I feel like I have more voice. It develops my voice more [...] I think it made me more confident, it made me confident in general life. I can live on my own. I can support myself [...] I'm independent and acts to the feeling of confidence and courage." (Daisy).

Very quickly I realized that I am not a finance person [...] and that was good because I never knew that. I've worked with finance before, you know [...] in the charity, on the money side that I think I could do. I thought maybe I am an accountant, but I'm not. So that is what I've discovered [...] It has equipped me to see there is a better way I can do this. (Parker)

After you are taking entrepreneurship [...] you are the leader [...] it really pushes you to think outside the box, you are not just going to say, I am going to think outside the box here, but you have to think of a combination, so when you start thinking that way, you see all the possibilities all the different perspectives. (Miranda)

4.4 With newfound authority comes newfound responsibility

Following the classroom assignment, the participants' narrative revealed that the emotional feedback they received from practising their newly discovered skills prompted them to realise that they could achieve the same sensation by combining their signature talents with their entrepreneurship knowledge to serve their future personal and professional objectives. Participants felt that they had been called upon to take more substantial action in the context of the new individualised identity that they are creating in this CPEEP (professional entrepreneur). To benefit stakeholders in the market structure, they were required to apply their newfound knowledge of entrepreneurship. As they got a better grasp of sustainable development and entrepreneurship, they felt more motivated to make a difference in the world (for example, by improving the lifestyles of local community). They were overjoyed when they realised that they could fulfil their new responsibilities through entrepreneurship. It was discovered that EP had been positively experienced when they were enthusiastic about how entrepreneurship complements their unique qualities and how this may help both themselves and the stakeholders in their nearby entrepreneurship ecosystem.

While I think [...] is that you to make a change either for yourself or for the others [...] I feel like I have strong commitment be able to make a change [...] and that change it does not mean your personal benefit going to be put aside [...] you can make the change [...] you can improve your own life, and you can improve the lives of others [...] that really motivate me to look further into entrepreneurship as a way of solving and improving the way of life of yourself and the others. (Miranda)

It is also good to improve many people live [...] I can improve people living in my own way [...] what I want to do now is making some benefit to people [...] I mean we are existed to help each other, so by having the knowledge [...] I can make some difference [...] by making a business a sustainable business, I can improve my employees' life, and other people live as well [...] it will make me satisfied with my life. (Suryati)

So, for me as the scientist, I thought that I could be helpful to try to merge or to build the link between the business side and the bioscience side [...] I felt like this need to change because scientists are personally committed to work [...] and they have to work a long day in the laboratory and all this [...] it seems it being wasted if it cannot reach the market or reach something big [...] and there is a way that this can change and that's learning from that experience, and try to be an entrepreneur [...] As an entrepreneur, I will be dealing with some skills and approaches to try to or work on the limitation that you have. (Rachel)

My passion is people. So, anything that involved people, working with people who doesn't have an opportunity in life [...] A good example is the refugees [...] so my passion is how to get the person from zero, to have the opportunity [...] I'm happy to use this sector, to help the people [...] I'm not motivated about me, it is not about money, success, you don't work in charity for money, so I then realized it is passion [...] and that's the driver. Do the passion, and you'll enjoy the other things. (Parker)

I really liked skin care [...] I was very interested in dermatology, [...] my plan is to understand dermatology, understand how skin can works [...] I think I never had perfect skin, and it like skin affects the confidence quite a lot. I like to help other people [...] I want in the future to start my own business in making skincare formulation. (Daniella)

5. Discussion

The purpose of this article is to determine how postgraduate students' EP developed and what cognitive structure of EP best explains it. According to the findings section, EP is theoretically developed through the internalisation of an entrepreneurship learning activity into postgraduate students' personal identities via the act of harmonising and reorganising their competing micro-identities of PI and entrepreneurial identity, thereby prompting them to recreate a new identity that enables them to act entrepreneurially without relinquishing their existing PI.

To explain further, each of the four themes (refer to [Table A2](#)) is found to be parallel with the concept of the development of a passion for an activity ([Vallerand, 2008](#)), whereby ongoing evaluation by the participants has reinforced the depth of connection between entrepreneurship learning activity and personal identity, thus facilitating what has been referred to as "behavioural integration" ([Vallerand et al., 2003](#); [Ryan and Deci, 2000](#)), which is deemed crucial to the experience of passion for an entrepreneurship.

The initial stage of EP development reveals how participants begin to recognise their limitations in dealing with the most recent body of knowledge centred on the hidden element of entrepreneurship by casting doubt on their current personal identity, which is revealed during the second stage of EP development. As a result of their knowledge that they are a

part of the larger economic framework, they are also subjected to external inspection. They must adapt and take on specific duties that can be fulfilled with their newly gained entrepreneurial skills if they are to maintain their relevance in the marketplace. They can use this as a starting point for incorporating business into their regular routines. When people integrate and come to grips with the new circumstance created by a shift, they are in a similar condition to that described by Bridges (2009) as the transition stage of their internal psychological processes. While attempting to instil entrepreneurship as a new habit in their lives, they learned that it was not as straightforward as they had anticipated. They begin to realise that their existing personal identity does not correspond to the entrepreneurship framework in which they operate. A sense of incompleteness, as a result, prompts people to be more open to the potential of change and to contemplate building a genuine personal identity that represents the improvements they wish to see in their lives. As they make the necessary adjustments, they begin to reap the benefits and acquire a fondness for the newly discovered pastime. This is consistent with the notion of passion as a situational reflective activity created by a sense of unfinishedness or inadequacy (Landri, 2007). Also, important is the fact that students are initially unable to comprehend the marketplace but can gain knowledge over time. As a result, the first theme of “newly discovered affection” serves as a catalyst for participants to experience the thrill of entrepreneurship, which directly addresses the question of who they are (in conjunction with their existing PI) in that marketplace.

In the second stage, participants must internalise their new actions and recognise that new entrepreneurial information delivers a pure message of change, necessitating them to adjust cognitively for their future entrepreneurial endeavours. To do so, they must take an innovative approach that can only be achieved by allowing their brains to be liberated, developing new experiences and searching for a new identity that is compatible with their business self. This sensation encourages them to carry on with their experiments. As a separate motivational force that can assist people in dealing with contradictory components in their daily lives, passion serves as a “conditioning agent” that unites numerous players in a social network where this polarised relationship originates, persists and is perpetuated (Hibbert *et al.*, 2016). In today’s dynamic work climate, scholars believe that it takes ten years for individuals to develop into specialists in their field (Piirto, 2004). However, ten years in the same industry can result in a career impasse if the individual stays in the same industry for the entire time period. Individuals may feel that their current job is uninspiring and unfulfilling. They go further into the question of their wide passion and channel it into entrepreneurship to make sense of their circumstances and plan a new direction for the future.

The third stage underlines the importance of this new way of thinking. It instils in them the confidence and ability to learn and practise new skills as they progress through the programme. This allows them to create and cultivate an entirely new personal identity, which we refer to as the “PI of an entrepreneur,” and they are more driven than ever to support this new identity with newly acquired abilities or skills. They build confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities and capacity to approach new projects as they practise and receive instant emotional feedback, as well as with the help of a self-governing personality orientation, as they practise and receive immediate emotional feedback. It is at this stage that they begin to explore their own identity, as well as the identity of others for whom they would act as a proxy, to achieve their own goal in line with an entrepreneurial desire fuelled by entrepreneurial emotional feedback (Gielnik *et al.*, 2015).

The final stage occurs when the learning loop has been successfully completed. In this course, we will explain how participants make meaning of their current unique talent in the context of their professional backgrounds, which will necessitate the development of new

entrepreneurial skills and capacities that will benefit both themselves and the marketplace. It has come to their attention at this time that one approach to achieve the aforementioned goals is through the application of entrepreneurship as a framework for action. In their opinion, the new identity that they are forming will be useful only if it is supported by reciprocal action that supports them in their quest for who they are and who they will become when they have completed the CPEEP programme.

In summary, all four stages contribute to the development of EP, which results in a change in participants' identities, motivating them to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours while maintaining their professional credentials. The students' successful act of harmonisation and reorganisation of their competing micro-identities reveals that they were able to autonomously internalise the harmonic passion, indicating that they fully embrace and value entrepreneurial learning activity volitionally. The full integration of entrepreneurial activity and students' identity illustrates the complementarity of the IW's social environment in fostering the autonomy necessary for EP growth. Entrepreneurship educators should develop a strategy that allows students to internalise a series of entrepreneurial learning experiences while retaining their professional credentials, by illustrating the greater advantages of merging both identities for themselves and their circle of influence for future action. Efforts must be made to help them in reconciling and reorganising their opposing micro-identities, allowing them to function entrepreneurially while maintaining their present PI.

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entrepreneurial
passion be
developed?

6. Conclusion

Experiential learning activities immersed students in a micro-level entrepreneurial ecosystem that mirrored real-world entrepreneurial experiences, allowing them to reflect on who they are, what they are doing and whether their current identity is capable of responding to the new challenges associated with their newly acquired entrepreneurship knowledge, as discovered in this article. They effectively reconciled their competing micro-identities by recasting a new individualised identity (professional entrepreneur identity). EI was elevated to a crucial position to foster an entrepreneurial mindset while PI was downgraded to a support role. They began to dissociate from their old selves and discovered new latent abilities to practice in their first entrepreneurship classroom. This new understanding was paired with their existing signature talents to establish a new framework for reciprocation among their stakeholders (e.g. country, society, professional community). All of these steps support EP development in entrepreneurship education. According to previous studies, while passion is highly individualistic and specific, it is also socially affected, particularly by one's identity (Cardon *et al.*, 2009; Murnieks *et al.*, 2020; Vallerand, 2008). This study successfully depicts a narrative account of how individuals develop, alter and reconstruct their identities in the IW, which is missing in the previous research by supporting the idea that participants can overcome a competing identity by creating a new, individualised identity tailored to the needs of an entrepreneurial learning environment. This is achieved by forcing individuals to think about how they may use their identities to enhance the social and economic components of their lives. Using entrepreneurship as a framework, individuals can channel their personalised passion into committed, dedicated business activities. EP develops when individuals adapt to their new identity and gain emotional feedback through entrepreneurial learning activities.

The findings also expand EP conception. Even though EP is classified as a specific form of passion, it is changeable because it is dependent on an individual's emotional appraisal of the activity they are experiencing. Humans constantly evaluate events from their perspective and react emotionally to them. Individuals typically evaluate their ultimate function in

society, as well as what they may contribute to society through their skills. It shows an inherent human inclination towards social, economic and universal justice values. This paper shows that EP is not just for traditional entrepreneurs like innovators, developers and founders (Murnieks *et al.*, 2020; Warnick, 2014). Our findings highlight the value of personal identification as an anchoring identity for competing micro-identities.

In terms of policy implications, future EEPs teaching should emphasise the relevance of personal identity as a fundamental motivation. Individuals can accept or reject social role expectations and structure their subordinate identities, such as the PI, EI, leader's identity, follower's identity and others, internally. That students can use entrepreneurship to achieve personal and professional goals is demonstrated in this study.

Previous research suggests passion is very idiosyncratic and domain particular. Social context, specifically a person's identity, might influence it (Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand, 2015; Cardon *et al.*, 2009; Murnieks *et al.*, 2014). A new individualised identity that can handle the demands of the entrepreneurial learning context is revealed in this study. This is achieved by asking how people may use their identities to maximise social and economic usefulness for themselves and others. Using entrepreneurship as a personal framework, participants can channel their own passion-based on their key abilities. With the new identity comes emotional feedback, and EP is experienced and grown through that.

As future research suggestions, the findings indicate the necessity for research approaches that help identify emotional processes in entrepreneurship education. In other words, students should be recognised as experts of their own experiences, and their heuristic judgement should be available for both personal and social implications. There is a need for more quantitative or mixed examination of the data, as they provide valuable conceptual and qualitative insights and practices (for lecturers, educators and university management). The findings also highlight the necessity of establishing research approaches that help identify emotional processes in EEPs. recognise students as life experts and analyse their heuristics about the personal and social repercussions of learning engagement. Experimentation and other scientific methods could be used in the future study (for example, neuro-entrepreneurship studies, etc.).

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Respondent	Gender	Academic program	Previous academic background	Previous employment/responsibility	Country of origin
Rachel	Female	MSc Applied Biopharmaceutical Biotechnology and Entrepreneurship	BSc. in Biotechnology and Genomic	Junior Scientist	Mexico
Miranda	Female	MSc Sustainable Energy and Entrepreneurship	B. of Architecture	Junior architect	Colombia
Suryati	Female	MSc Sustainable Energy and Entrepreneurship	B. of Architecture	Junior architect	Indonesia
Ament	Male	MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Entrepreneurship	B. Eng. Electrical	Engineer	Nigeria
Jardine	Male	MSc Applied Biopharmaceutical Biotechnology and Telecommunication Engineer	BSc in Bioscience Nigeria		
Daisy	Female	MSc Applied Biopharmaceutical Biotechnology and Entrepreneurship	BSc Biomedical Science	Fresh Graduate	United Kingdom
Parker	Male	MBA	BBA (Hons), MA Applied Linguistics	Charity organisation Director, Finance Professional,	South Africa
Faye	Female	MSc Sustainable Energy and Entrepreneurship	BEng Civil Engineer, Masters in Rock Mechanic and Masters in Mechanical Engineering	Oil and Gas Engineer	Brazil

Table A1.
Summary of participants background

Appendix 2

Can
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passion be
developed?

Emergent themes	Second-order themes	First-order themes
Newly found affection and solace	Embracing New Challenge; seeing the commercial linkages and values; relishing new challenge; embracing new opportunity; becoming sensitive with the daily activities on how it would impact the marketplace	New knowledge about the market; Know who the players in the market are; understand better the nature of supply and demand; understand the rules of the game; know the mechanism of how the commercial world operates
Break on Through (to the other side)	Liberating mind; feeling intense; mixed feeling between frustration and excitement; staying grounded but remains open to new possibility; feeling of the need to survive and to reinvent the wheel to stay relevant	Discovery of underlying motives; feeling the need to change for the better; get bored with the current undertaking and situation; need some fresh perspective; wanted the human connection; eager to try out something new
Discovering the hidden jewels	Experiencing the flow; trying to make difference; relooking at personal strengths and weaknesses; managing the contradiction; life-learning desire	The mix environment broadens the thinking; discover the other part of the brain functioning; introvert change to extrovert; discover the strengths and weaknesses of actions taken to solve problem
With newfound authority comes newfound responsibility	Complementing background; reciprocation; feeling the sense of belonging; feeling the contentment	Thinking aloud of people; new belief they can be special breed of professional with entrepreneurship knowledge; sustainable development is a key to happiness

Table A2.
Summary of thematic
coding

Interview schedule

Experience in CPEEP

- What and how do you feel during CPEEP?
- Could you describe for me a recent experience you have had in CPEEP? Can you tell a bit more about how the activity influences you?
- What are some of the things that make you enjoy being in this CPEEP?

Identity

- How do you get from the person you were to the person you want to be? Could you describe your role in the experience?
- How do you feel about the changes?
- How your professional background influences you while doing an entrepreneurship-related activity?
- How do you feel about the encounter between your professional background and the entrepreneurial activity that you engaged with?

Passion for entrepreneurship

- What does the entrepreneurship activity feel like?
- What does participate in the activity in CPEEP mean for you as a student? And as a someone with a profession in the future

JEEE

- How do you feel after doing this program?
- What is it like to be doing this course as compared to the course that may be more like a continuation with your degree/background?
- How do you view entrepreneurship now as compared to last time?
- Do you feel that it was something else that make you passionate about entrepreneurship?

Sense-making

-
- How do you make sense of the journey you are making? The shift from what you are now to become an entrepreneur (the person you imagine to be)
 - How the shift of identity taking place?
 - Without knowing/learning entrepreneurship from the programme, do you think that you can become entrepreneur?
 - In what way, you think the experience you have had in CPEEP change your view about entrepreneurship?
 - How do you see yourself in the future? How do you think other people see you?

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