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Entrepreneurship education scholarship in the 1990s and early 2000s: a historical analysis of the internationalizing entrepreneurship education and training - conference

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we contribute to research on the history of entrepreneurship education scholarship in the 1990s and early 2000s by focusing on the Internationalizing Entrepreneurship Education and Training Conference (IntEnt conference). Acknowledging the pioneering initiative of the IntEnt conference in a formative phase of the development of entrepreneurship as a teaching subject, our study delves into the scholarly field's early collaborative endeavors and knowledge expansion. We collected descriptive data on the conference's evolution by reaching out to conference hosts and key delegates. Additionally, we identified edited proceedings for content and bibliometric analyses of annual conference papers. The findings illuminate the role of the IntEnt conference in fostering an emerging academic infrastructure for international collaborations and knowledge exchange on entrepreneurship education. In this regard, the study provides a deeper understanding of the field's evolutionary trajectory.

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1. Introduction

In this study, we elaborate on the early development of entrepreneurship education scholarship during the 1990s and early 2000s, focusing on the Internationalizing Entrepreneurship Education and Training Conference (IntEnt conference). Putting entrepreneurship education and the IntEnt conference in its historical context, the late 20th century was a turbulent period with significant political changes across many parts of the world, including the breakdown of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the spread of democracy in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa. These changes were accompanied by accelerated globalization, technological advancements, and easier access to international markets, facilitating the flow of goods, capital, and information across borders. Consequently, structural changes and industrial dynamism came to the forefront of

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the political agenda, and entrepreneurship was seen as a solution to many societal challenges (Audretsch and Thurik 2000; Carlsson et al. 2013; Landström 2020).

In this context, entrepreneurship began to grow significantly as an academic field. Entrepreneurship was at the time introduced as a teaching subject at many universities around the world (Katz 2008; Klandt 2004; Kuratko 2005), and a scholarly conversation began to emerge focused on what entrepreneurship means when implemented in educational settings (e.g. Gibb 1987; Johannisson 1986) and how to implement pedagogies that support a learning environment that fosters entrepreneurship (e.g. Garavan and O'Conneide 1994; Gibb 1993; Sexton and Bowman-Upton 1987; Solomon, Weaver, and Fernald 1994). The 1990s were characterized mainly by a small and fragmented but enthusiastic group of teachers and researchers who introduced and ran entrepreneurship courses and programs at various universities – pioneers who often took an 'experimental and action-oriented' teaching approach based on their vision of what and how to teach entrepreneurship (Cooper 2003; Gabrielsson et al. 2023).

Our study focuses on the 1990s and early 2000s – a period considered a 'formative phase' in a developing conversation on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship (Gabrielsson et al. 2023), characterized by an expanding scholarly community interested in building a research domain and teaching subject (Landström 2020). Consequently, there was a growing demand for exchanging knowledge and experience and a need to create a social context of like-minded people (Gabrielsson et al. 2018). Often, the expansion was driven by individuals or small groups who needed to legitimize the subject in their home universities, and it was vital for them to find valid arguments for the relevance of entrepreneurship education, to get knowledge and social support, and to exchange ideas about how to best run entrepreneurship courses and programs.

In this context, several individual initiatives were taken to create an academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship teaching and research (Landström 2020; Landström, Gabrielsson, Politis & Sørheim 2023). For example, Josef Mugler at the School of Economics and Business Administration in Vienna took the initiative to establish the European Council for Small Business in 1988, José Veciana at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona developed a European PhD program on entrepreneurship and small business management in 1989, and several academic journals focusing on entrepreneurship were launched, such as *European Small Business Journal* (today *International Small Business Journal*) in 1982, *Journal of Business Venturing* in 1985, and *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* and *Small Business Economics* in 1989. Together with a growing number of seminars and conferences where scholars could meet to discuss and exchange experiences, these initiatives played a significant role in creating the academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship during the 1990s (Landström 2020).

Although the development and evolution of entrepreneurship education as a scholarly field have been addressed in previous studies (e.g. Gabrielsson et al. 2023), few historical studies focus on the significance of conferences for establishing structured channels for the communication of academic intellectual production. From this starting point, we focus this paper on the IntEnt Conference as one of the early and most relevant conferences in the history of entrepreneurship education. Initiated by Heinz Klandt at EBS Business School in Germany in the early 1990s, the conference was organized annually for over two decades. Spanning organizational and national boundaries, the conference

alternated between different geographical locations and was held 12 times in Europe and three times in the United States.

Acknowledging the pioneering effort of the IntEnt conference in contributing to an emerging global scholarly conversation on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship, our objectives are threefold: (i) to delineate the early development of entrepreneurship education research, (ii) to explicate the role of the conference as a key initiative fostering the advancement of entrepreneurship education scholarship in this period, and (iii) to analyze and evaluate the influence of this conference on the evolution of the academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship education scholarship. By meeting these objectives, our study offers unique insights into the emergence of entrepreneurship education as a scholarly field over the 1990s and early 2000s, firmly grounded in the intellectual exchange that has shaped its trajectory.

Our study makes three significant contributions. First, we advance the literature by focusing on the early trajectory of entrepreneurship education in the 1990s and early 2000s, recognizing the era's significance as a formative phase for collaborative scholarly endeavors. Second, our historical analysis provides insights into the role and importance of the IntEnt conference to the aspiring informal community of entrepreneurship education scholars through its involvement in building legitimacy, developing relationships, providing basic empirical knowledge, and exchanging ideas. Third, our findings trace the evolutionary trajectory of entrepreneurship as an academic field and teaching subject, where early initiatives and efforts have had a lasting impact, connecting with present-day entrepreneurship education scholarship.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we delineate the early development of entrepreneurship education research. In [section 3](#), the methodological considerations will be described and discussed. [Section 4](#) will present our empirical findings, divided into sections focusing on the role of the IntEnt conference as a key initiative fostering the advancement of the field's academic infrastructure. Finally, in [section 5](#), we will discuss our findings by reflecting on the broader impact of the conference on entrepreneurship education scholarship and make some concluding remarks.

2. The early development of entrepreneurship education research

Entrepreneurship education research has evolved rapidly over the past decade, emerging as one of the largest subfields within the broader field of entrepreneurship (Hägg and Kurczewska 2021). The field is characterized by a pragmatic approach to knowledge creation with a strong practice-oriented agenda (Fayolle, Verzat, and Wapshott 2016; Hägg and Gabrielsson 2020) and a preference for connecting research efforts to authentic situations associated with high societal relevance (e.g. Pittaway & Cope 2007; Kassean et al. 2015; Henry 2020). In this regard, entrepreneurship education scholarship often shows a bias toward research focusing on novelty and challenging present-day issues (Landström, Gabrielsson, Politis, and Sørheim 2022a).

Appreciating novelty is essential for a progressive and forward-looking research field, but a deeper understanding of its past is equally vital (Passant 2023; Wadhvani and Viebig 2021). In this regard, it is crucial to balance the field's pragmatic approach to knowledge creation with an appreciation for the historical connections between the past and the

present (e.g. Gabrielsson et al. 2020). Such understanding enables researchers to comprehend and evaluate the current state of entrepreneurship education scholarship and appreciate how the social and cognitive aspects of research are shaped within specific historical contexts (e.g. Lawrence 1984). In the following sections, we will elaborate on the emergence of entrepreneurship education as a research field – initially, the pioneering achievements in the US and Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, followed by the formation of the field in the 1990s when the IntEnt conference was created.

2.1. The emergence of an academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship education

The academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship education emerged due to significant societal changes in the 1970s, for example, characterized by economic recessions, technological advancements in DNA research and the microprocessor revolution, the growing internationalization of economies (e.g. from the Asian Tiger economies), and political shifts toward market-oriented ideologies – represented by Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK (Audretsch and Thurik 2000; Landström 2020). These transformative circumstances generated a climate of uncertainty and industrial dynamics in society, leading to a surge in entrepreneurship courses and programs, particularly in the US but also in Europe. The initiatives received substantial support from national sponsorship programs, not least in the US, to foster entrepreneurship education and contributions from external donors and various foundations (Brush 2021; Cooper 2003; Katz 2003; Pittaway 2021). The rapid expansion of entrepreneurship education was primarily driven by rising demand among students for entrepreneurship and small business courses, particularly among students at the leading business schools in the United States, which thus constituted role models for many other universities (Cooper 2003; Solomon and Fernald 1991).

The US experienced rapid growth in the number of entrepreneurship courses and programs. While merely a handful of universities offered entrepreneurship education during the 1970s, the subsequent decade of the 1980s became a transformative era in the country. According to Vesper (1986, 1993), the number of business schools offering entrepreneurship courses increased from 16 in the 1970s to 253 schools in 1985 and expanded to 370 schools by 1993. Similarly, using a different metric, Solomon, Weaver, and Fernald (1994) observed substantial growth, with the number of entrepreneurship courses rising from 263 in 1979 to 1,400 in 1992. By the mid-1990s, over 120,000 students in the U.S.A. were enrolled in entrepreneurship or small business courses (Katz 1995).

Compared to the US, developing the academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship education came with a couple of years delay in Europe (Pittaway et al. 2023). In contrast with the intense focus on entrepreneurship and start-ups in the US, European countries focused more on small businesses due to their industrial structure and business cultures (Dana 1992). However, it should also be noted that Europe is a heterogeneous continent, and the development has emerged very differently in the various European countries depending on their institutional context.

Some European universities offered entrepreneurship and small business courses as far back as the 1970s (Landström, Frank, and Veciana 1997). For example, in the UK, the Small Business Centre at Durham University Business School introduced a training program for managers of small and medium-sized businesses in 1971, Växjö University

in Sweden offered its first course on small business in 1973, and the University of Navarra in Spain offered a course in entrepreneurship 1974. More courses in small business and entrepreneurship were developed throughout Europe in the 1980s, and not least, entrepreneurship education advanced to the master's level – the first master's program in entrepreneurship was offered by the University of Stirling, Scotland, in 1985.

In 1989, José Veciana at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain made a significant contribution by spearheading the development of a European PhD program focused on '*Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management*.' The program was organized by the European Council for Small Business (ECSB) in collaboration with the universities Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Durham University. Admitting an initial cohort of 12 students in its inaugural launch, the program over time inspired numerous PhD students in entrepreneurship, fostering a network of entrepreneurship scholars who shared experiences and knowledge regarding entrepreneurship research and teaching (Urbano et al. 2008).

2.2. The creation of the internationalizing entrepreneurship education and training conference

A seminal initiative for developing the academic infrastructure in the early 1990s was the creation of the IntEnt conference, organized and led by Professor Heinz Klandt in cooperation with Foerderkreis Gruendungs-Forschung e.V. (Society for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Research; FGF).¹ After earning a degree as a Doctor of Economics and Social Sciences from the University of Cologne in 1984 and working there as a lecturer from 1985 to 1990, Professor Klandt became the executive director of the Business Institute for Empirical Start-up and Organizational Research (bifego) in 1990, and from 1992 he was honorary president of FGF.

In this period, there was a rising public interest in entrepreneurship and small business research (Landström, Frank, and Veciana 1997), and the number of entrepreneurship courses and programs was increasing significantly across Europe (Gorman, Hanlon, and King 1997) as well as in the US (Katz 2003). However, despite a growing demand, the scholarly community remained fragmented (Landström 2005). The lack of formalized communication structures created a strong need to develop social ties for exchanging experiences and ideas about the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship.

In contrast to general entrepreneurship and small business conferences such as Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference (BCERC) and Workshop on Recent Research in Entrepreneurship (RENT), the IntEnt conference offered a specialized meeting place for presenting research and exchanging experiences in the field of entrepreneurship education (Landström, Frank, and Veciana 1997). The idea behind the conference was built on two fundamental assumptions: that entrepreneurship can be learned, thus not only defined by genetic code, and that entrepreneurship can be taught, therefore not only a product of pure practical experience. As such, the conference focused on educational and pedagogical aspects of entrepreneurship (Klandt and Müller-Böling 1993), such as research and experiences of useful teaching methods and formats, effective organizational frameworks for teaching, relevant teaching content, relevant teacher/instructor profiles, and how to measure education performance.

Another distinguishing feature of the IntEnt conference was being the first international gathering for scholars dedicated to entrepreneurship education. In the economic and societal turbulence of the 1990s (see [Section 1](#)), entrepreneurship and small businesses were increasingly seen as engines of innovation and job creation amidst structural and economic change, paving the way for new international relationships and challenges (e.g. Audretsch et al. [2002](#)). As emphasized in the Preface of the proceedings from the IntEnt92 Conference, '*...borders and walls only exist – if they do at all – in the minds of the people. We believe and hope that this conference-track is going to help to remove some of these imaginary boundaries for the whole world.*' (Klandt and Müller-Böling [1993](#), vii).

After a preparatory gathering in Cambridge in 1991, the first IntEnt conference was organized at the University of Dortmund in 1992. A primary target group was academics – especially scholars involved in teaching entrepreneurship, which at the time primarily consisted of individual scholars working at different universities (Gabrielsson et al. [2023](#)). The format was open for various methodological approaches, including case studies, hypotheses testing research, conceptual papers, and reports about practical experiences. In this regard, IntEnt could be considered an early call for qualified empirical research on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship.

As implied by its name, IntEnt was expressly dedicated to the internationalization of entrepreneurship education scholarship. From its inception, a primary objective was to establish a network between people from all over the world and, in that way, support the global transfer of ideas and experiences (e.g. Klandt, Mugler, and Müller-Böling [1994](#)). In this regard, IntEnt offered an annual platform to showcase research findings and engage in discussions with experts worldwide. Coordinated collaboratively across continents by partners in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and Australia, these annual gatherings enabled delegates from many different countries to forge connections, expand their networks, and cultivate initiatives to advance entrepreneurship education within their respective countries and academic institutions.

Moreover, IntEnt was driven by a research agenda emphasizing practical application. This focus was evident in the conference's deliberate intent to engage and foster dialogs with stakeholders beyond the academic sphere. Noteworthy participants included high-ranking officials involved in economic policymaking and administration, representatives from trade associations, providers of educational and training services, as well as publishers specializing in teaching materials. Consequently, it is plausible to assert that the conference established a tradition of bridging research endeavors from academia with real-world contexts across diverse societal sectors, a characteristic that has continued to define entrepreneurship education scholarship (e.g. Hägg and Gabrielsson [2020](#); Landström, Gabrielsson, Politis, and Sørheim [2022](#)).

In the opening speech at the IntEnt2010 in Arnhem Nijmegen – the only location that served two times as the conference host – the founder and conference director, Professor Heinz Klandt, presented an overview of the development of the conference over the past two decades (Klandt [2010](#)). At the time, the conference had traveled to fourteen countries and five continents with delegates from almost all corners of the world, a total of more than 700 papers presented, and an average of 110 delegates per meeting. [Table 1](#) provides an overview of the development of the conference over its years of operation.

Table 1. An overview of IntEnt.

Year	Conference location	Conference host/s	No of home-countries	No of delegates	No of papers, keynotes and workshops
IntEnt91	Pembroke College Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK (preconference)	N/A	17	54	42
IntEnt92	Universität Dortmund, Fachgebiet Empirie, Fak. WiSo, Dortmund, Germany	Heinz Klandt, Detlef Mueller-Boeling	24	90	51
IntEnt93	Institut für Klein- und Mittelbetriebe, Wirtschafts-Universität Wien, Wien, Austria	Josef Mugler	38	227	42
IntEnt94	Scottish Enterprise Foundation, University of Stirling, Stirling, UK	Michael Scott	28	133	40
IntEnt95	Edith Cowan University, Bunbury Campus, Bunbury, Australia	Dianne Wingham	16	71	51
IntEnt96	Gelderse Hogescholen, Catholic University in Nijmegen, Arnheim and Nijmegen, Netherlands	A. Rima	26	90	41
IntEnt97	Monterey, California, USA	Harold P. Welsch, Robert H. Brockhaus, Gerald E. Hills	24	110	48
IntEnt98	Oestrich-Winkel, Germany	Heinz Klandt	20	87	40
IntEnt99	Sofia, Bulgaria	Kiril Todorov	14	64	34
IntEnt00	Tampere, Finland	Asko Miettinen	18	81	31
IntEnt01	Technikon SA, Kruger National Park, South Africa	Cecile Nieuwenhuizen	27	138	65
IntEnt02	Johore Bahru, Malaysia	Ahmad Zaki Abu Baker	13	154	48
IntEnt03	Grenoble, France	Alain Fayolle	24	106	74
IntEnt04	University of Naples Federico II, Italy	Dr Mario Raffa	26	115	71
IntEnt05	University of Guildford, UK	Prof. David Kirby	26	178	114
IntEnt06	São Paulo, Brazil	Prof. Tales Andreassi	24	140	75
IntEnt07	Gdansk, Poland	Krzysztof Zieba	35	109	67
IntEnt08	Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, USA	Jill Kickul	17	80	48
IntEnt09	Monterrey/Mexico	Rosa Nelly Trevinyo-Rodriguez	14	225	40
IntEnt10	HAN University of Applied Sciences, Arnhem/Nijmegen, the Netherlands	Sharda S. Nandram	28	N/A	82

The data presented in the table has been compiled from various sources, including the introductory keynote presentation by Heinz Klandt at IntEnt10, available information in conference proceedings, and pers. comm. with hosts and delegates.

3. Methods

3.1. Data collection

The data for this study include descriptive accounts of the IntEnt conference's development over its years of operation, together with the acquisition of papers from edited conference proceedings. Descriptive data about the trajectory of the conference were gathered through a multifaceted approach. Data acquisition involved correspondence and direct engagement with conference hosts and other key delegates to obtain insights into the annual conferences. This involved collating an array of materials such as conference flyers, calls for papers, press releases, news articles, detailed programs, and visual documentation like photographs. By collecting and synthesizing the diverse sources of information, we assembled a descriptive corpus of data that enabled us to make an account of the IntEnt conference's development across successive years.

Our primary analyses rest on the papers published in the edited volumes from the annual IntEnt conferences. The volumes were identified by combining different search

strategies, such as consulting the WorldCat international library database, reading online information about the conference, and asking scholars in our networks. After an intensive search, we identified 133 edited volumes (1992–2004) that together collected 359 papers from the conference, as depicted in Table 3. When reviewing the volumes, we found that the IntEnt04 proceedings only included extended abstracts without any bibliographic information, which led us to exclude them from the analysis due to missing data. In this regard, our database encompasses 290 papers from 12 edited volumes.

To analyze the role of the IntEnt conference in contributing to an emerging global scholarly conversation on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship, we selected three distinct periods from 1992 to 2003. The division aimed to obtain theoretically meaningful periods as a basis for comparisons while also considering the distribution of papers between periods for pragmatic reasons. The result consists of 89 papers from IntEnt 92–93 in the first period (30.7%), 95 papers from IntEnt 95–98 (32.8%) in the second period, and 77 papers from IntEnt 00–03 in the third period (26.6%).

3.2. Coding

We developed a coding structure to standardize information about each paper. The author team reviewed and discussed the coding structure, resulting in a couple of iterations before being put to use. The finalized coding structure contained information about the conference year, number of authors, author names and affiliations, co-authorship, title, type, and subject of the paper, and bibliographic information such as the number and type of references. The data was put in a spreadsheet to aggregate and depict distribution patterns over the three periods.

3.3. Analyses

The papers published in the edited volumes from the selected IntEnt conferences were subject to content and bibliographic analyses. The content was analyzed by categorizing the type of paper and key topics. The type of paper was deductively coded. We used categories from Gabrielsson et al. (2020) to identify baseline categories, but they were adapted to acknowledge the broader range of paper formats that often characterize conference settings. Key topics were inductively coded by categorizing the description of the focal papers without any a-priori theory-based expectations. This inductive coding was made independently by two of the authors and then compared. Disagreements between the coders were discussed until consensus was achieved. In addition, we aggregate and examine bibliographic data to quantify the state and development of the research field. The patterns that emerge from our analyses provide an overview of the collaborative networks and emerging trends within entrepreneurship education research in the 1990s and early 2000s, facilitating a deeper understanding of the field's intellectual exchange and development over time.

4. The academic infrastructure of entrepreneurship education scholarship over the 1990s and early 2000s

The academic infrastructure of research fields encompasses both social and cognitive elements. The social element acknowledges that research fields are bound together

by social communities in which members share ideas, consult and reference common literature, and collaborate on joint projects (Becher and Towler 2001; Whitley 2000). In this context, the social structure holds the field together by fostering effective communication channels, nurturing collaborative networks, and encouraging collective scholarly endeavors (Landström, Gabriëlsson, Politis, Sørheim, and Djupdal 2022). Conversely, the cognitive element revolves around conceptual platforms of theories and methodologies that direct knowledge creation in research (Cornelius, Landström, and Persson 2006), thus emphasizing the systematic advancement of scientific knowledge (Kuhn 1970; Pfeffer 1993). Together, these social and cognitive elements form the academic infrastructure that shapes the trajectory of a research field.

4.1. The social element of entrepreneurship education research at IntEnt

Our comprehensive sample enables us to analyze the social element of entrepreneurship education research at the IntEnt conference. The sample consists of 290 papers written by 486 independent authors, indicating the research field's high transitional character. A systematic review of author by-lines suggests that many authors seem to come and go, while only a few are more regularly attending the conference. This may partly be dependent on the conference being organized in different parts of the world, where budget constraints may limit habitual participation while at the same time offering opportunities for occasional visits by local scholars who may not otherwise attend the conference.

Authorship patterns reflect collaborative dynamics and social interactions within a particular research field, for example, how researchers are working together and sharing expertise across different institutions or geographical regions. The average number of authors across the entire sample is 1.7, but it varies over the selected periods. There were 1.5 authors on average in the first period, which rose to 1.7 in the second period and reached 1.9 in the third period.

The gradual increase in the size of author teams indicates a growing inclination among entrepreneurship education scholars to collaborate, establish professional relationships, and tap into collective expertise. However, co-authorships are still low compared to published research in academic journals in the 1990s. During that time, there was a significant rise in the average number of coauthors, particularly around 1990, when coauthored articles became the prevailing norm in entrepreneurship (e.g. Liu, Olivola, and Kovács 2017). Nevertheless, the shift in the average number of authors underscores the social dynamics that shaped the entrepreneurship education research landscape during the 1990s and early 2000s.

A review of co-authorship patterns over the periods corroborates our impression of a developing research field when it comes to collaboration and networks within the research community. There is a slight overweight of single-authored papers across the entire sample. The share of single-authored papers dominates in the first 1992–1993 period with 68,5%, and this continues in the second 1995–1998 period with 64,2%. However, the share of single-authored papers was significantly reduced in the third 2000–2003 period, and instead, coauthored papers started to dominate with 59,7%. The co-authorship patterns are depicted in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Identified edited volumes from the IntEnt conference.

Volume	Type of volume	Publisher	Editors	No of papers
IntEnt92	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt, Detlef Müller-Böling	50
IntEnt93	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt, Josef Mugler, Detlef Müller-Böling	39
IntEnt94a	Edited book ⁵	Ashgate	Michael G. Scott, Peter Rosa, Heinz Klandt	15
IntEnt94b	Edited book ⁶	Aldershot	Peter Rosa, Michael G. Scott, Heinz Klandt	14
IntEnt95	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt, Diane Wingham	23
IntEnt96	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt	21
IntEnt97	Edited book ⁷	Ashgate	Robert H Brockhaus, Gerald E. Hills, Heinz Klandt, Harold P. Welsch	25
IntEnt98	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt	26
IntEnt00	Proceedings	FGF	Asko Miettinen, Heinz Klandt	18
IntEnt01	Proceedings	FGF	Cecile Nieuwenhuizen, Heinz Klandt	25
IntEnt02	Proceedings	FGF	Heinz Klandt, Ahmad Zaki Abu Bakar	19
IntEnt03	Edited book ⁸	Edward Elgar	Alain Fayolle, Heinz Klandt	15
IntEnt04	Proceedings	Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane	Luca Iandoli, Mario Raffa	69*

*Includes only extended abstracts without references and bibliography, thus not included in the analysis.

On closer examination, it becomes evident that co-authorship in entrepreneurship education research is primarily a local activity, with collaborators predominantly originating from the same affiliation. Interestingly, the local nature of co-authorship strengthens over time, but the development pattern exhibits non-linearity across the three studied periods. During the initial 1992–1993 period, there were a relatively high percentage of single affiliation coauthored papers at 39.3%, decreasing to 29.4% in the second 1995–1998 period. This suggests a tendency to expand networks and collaborate with scholars outside the home university. However, in the third 1999–2003 period, we observe a reversal, with the resurgence of the local character in co-authorship.

Overall, the study period suggests two distinct development waves within the research field regarding its social dimension. The first wave in the early 1990s involves a couple of entrepreneurship education scholars reaching out and establishing national and international networks to contribute to impactful research with broader scholarly community engagement. Subsequently, there was a second wave in the early 2000s, characterized by a stronger inward focus, mobilizing and nurturing local environments for entrepreneurship teaching and research.

4.2. The cognitive element of entrepreneurship education research at IntEnt

Our sample also enables us to analyze the cognitive element of entrepreneurship education research at the IntEnt conference. A systematic review of reference lists suggests a growing cognitive maturity of the research field during the 1990s and early 2000s, with a growing number of references being used. The papers from the first 1992–1993 period have, on average, 19.4 references, while those from the 2000–2003 period have an average of 27.1 references, corresponding to an increase of 100.2% between the first and the third period. We can also identify a significant change in the relative importance of scientific journals for knowledge accumulation in the field at the beginning of the 2000s, both in their share of total references as well as the number of different journals that are used. An overview of the reference lists is depicted in Table 3.

Gray literature produced outside of traditional publishing and distribution channels often plays a significant role as references in the early stages of a research field.² Table 3 indicates that entrepreneurship education research is no exception. Over the first period, gray literature appeared dominant, and at the beginning of the 2000s, it still constituted 1/3 of all references. Interestingly, the share of books used in the reference lists increased in the second 1995–1998 period, which probably reflects the general importance of relying on state-of-the-art books for accumulating knowledge on entrepreneurship during the 1990s (Landström 2020), not least the ‘handbooks’ published by Donald Sexton and colleagues in which core researchers were invited to describe the current knowledge within the field (e.g. Landström, Harirchi & Åström 2012).

To dig deeper into the cognitive development of entrepreneurship education research, we thoroughly screened the entire sample to classify the papers based on their type. Our analysis revealed that most papers during the study period fell into the category of explorative papers (46.6%). These papers encompassed a wide range of studies, including broad discussions of phenomena or ideas, pilot studies without explicit method sections, and largely descriptive presentations of entrepreneurship education curricula implemented at various universities. The second most prevalent type of papers (28.6%) consisted of quantitative empirical studies that investigated observable phenomena using statistical techniques.³ The third most common type of papers comprised theoretical and conceptual (non-empirical) studies (14.5%). These studies aimed to expand the boundaries of knowledge by providing multi-level insights, bridging concepts and theories, and establishing connections across different fields. A breakdown of the paper types is presented in Table 5.

An interesting developmental trend emerges when reviewing the pattern of papers across the three analysis periods compared to the average over the entire period. In the initial 1992–1993 period, explorative, quantitative, and theoretical/conceptual papers dominate, collectively comprising 96.6% of the total volume. However, the share of explorative papers experienced a significant increase in the second 1995–1998 period, while the number of quantitative empirical papers and theoretical/conceptual papers declined notably. Concurrently, there is a gradual rise in qualitative and mixed method

Table 3. Co-authorship patterns.

	Full period		First period		Second period		Third period	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Single authored papers	156	53,8%	61	68,5%	61	64,2%	31	40,3%
Co-authored papers	134	46,2%	28	31,5%	34	35,8%	46	59,7%
co-authored single affiliation papers	66	49,3%	11	39,3%	10	29,4%	27	58,7%
co-authored multiple affiliation papers	47	35,1%	9	32,1%	16	47,1%	16	34,8%
co-authored multiple country papers	21	15,7%	8	28,6%	8	23,5%	3	6,5%

Table 4. Reference lists in papers.

	Full period	First period	Second period	Third period
References per article (mean)	19.4	13.4	18.9	27.1
Share of gray literature	33.20%	38.70%	28.20%	32.50%
Share of books in referende list	32.60%	33.10%	39.50%	28.30%
Share of scientific journals in reference list	34.20%	28.20%	32.30%	39.20%
No of different scientific journals (mean)	2.5	2.4	3.6	6.7

Table 5. Type of papers.

Type	Full period		First period		Second period		Third period	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Explorative papers (e.g. idea papers, pilot studies etc.)	135	46,6%	39	43,8%	54	56,8%	26	33,8%
Empirical quantitative research papers	83	28,6%	24	27,0%	17	17,9%	36	46,8%
Theoretical or conceptual papers	42	14,5%	23	25,8%	9	9,5%	7	9,1%
Empirical qualitative research papers	13	4,5%	2	2,2%	5	5,3%	4	5,2%
Empirical mixed method papers	10	3,4%	1	1,1%	7	7,4%	2	2,6%
Review papers	4	1,4%	0	0,0%	3	3,2%	1	1,3%
Editorial introductions	3	1,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	1,3%
Total	290	100,0%	89	100,0%	95	100,0%	77	100,0%

papers, albeit from a lower baseline. This observed trend may reflect an influx of scholars to the research field during the 1990s, particularly management scholars with a vested interest in entrepreneurship (e.g. Landström 2020), drawn to the conference in its role as a hub for sharing ideas on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. In the third 2000–2003 period, the proportion of explorative papers decreased to approximately one-third of the total volume, while theoretical/conceptual papers remained stable. Conversely, quantitative empirical papers surge to nearly half of the total volume, reflecting the increasing methodological sophistication of entrepreneurship research in the early 2000s (Cornelius, Landström, and Persson 2006).

We also classified papers based on the primary topics addressed in each study. Our analysis reveals a notable shift in the relative emphasis on topical areas over the entire period. In the initial period of 1992–1993, the most prevalent topic is ‘Regional and cultural aspects of entrepreneurship education.’ This category encompasses context-sensitive studies that explore norms, values, and entrepreneurial opportunities within specific cultures, regions, or countries. The political and post-socialist context of the early 1990s heavily influences the emphasis on this topic. In this respect, many conference papers authored by individuals from Eastern European countries delve into the role of entrepreneurial development in the transition from planned to market economies.

However, it is worth noting that this topic diminished in significance during the second and third periods, coinciding with the conference’s expansion beyond Europe (refer to Table 5), as well as the growing participation of management scholars in entrepreneurship research over the 1990s (Landström 2020). Instead, ‘Curriculum development’ experienced a substantial increase in prominence and became the most common topic in the later periods, encompassing descriptions of the design, structure, and content of courses and programs (i.e. ‘what’ to teach). Overall, the observed shift in key topics is in line with the growing interest over the 1990s in the implementation of action-oriented pedagogies where students are engaged in practical activities such as crafting business plans, developing innovative business models, and launching real-life ventures (Hägg and Gabrielsson 2020). A comprehensive overview of the top five key topics per period is presented in Table 6.

The analysis also indicates a notable shift in entrepreneurship education research in the third 2000–2003 period. During this period, we observe the disappearance of ‘Characteristics and Behaviours of Entrepreneurs’ as a primary topic, along with ‘Entrepreneurial Competence Development’, the first focusing on leadership styles, attitudes, motivations, practices, and their implications for teaching and learning

Table 6. Key topics over different periods.

No	First period		Second period		Third period	
	Topic	Percent	Topic	Percent	Topic	Percent
1	Regional and cultural aspects of entrepreneurship education	18,0%	Curriculum development	25,3%	Curriculum development	14,3%
2	University support and infrastructure	16,9%	Methods and approaches for teaching entrepreneurship	15,8%	Methods and approaches for teaching entrepreneurship	14,3%
3	Methods and approaches for teaching entrepreneurship	15,7%	University support and infrastructure	15,8%	University support and infrastructure	13,0%
4	Characteristics and behaviors of entrepreneurs	11,2%	Entrepreneurial competence development	11,6%	Assessment and impact	11,7%
5	Entrepreneurial competence development	10,1%	Characteristics and behaviors of entrepreneurs	9,5%	Attitudes to entrepreneurship education and the entrepreneurial career	11,7%
	Total:	71,9%	Total:	77,9%	Total:	64,9%

entrepreneurship, and the latter more specifically on discussing entrepreneurs' and managers' competencies and learning needs. Instead, there is a noticeable increase in emphasis on 'Assessment and Impact,' which is a topic that continues to attract significant attention in published entrepreneurship education research throughout the 2000s (e.g. Nabi et al. 2017, Gabrielsson et al. 2020). Furthermore, there is a growing interest in 'Attitudes to Entrepreneurship Education and the Entrepreneurial Career.'

Overall, the development over the study period shows a shift in terms of a reduced focus on capturing and understanding the entrepreneur as an individual in favor of connecting educational efforts with tangible outcomes and implications for society. Another shift in focus during the study period relates to an increased interest in the curricular design of entrepreneurship courses and programs. At the same time, the analysis reveals some degree of topical consistency over time. For instance, 'University support and infrastructure,' which encompasses issues such as the scope and direction of entrepreneurship courses, approaches to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within educational institutions, and university-industry collaborations, emerges as a prominent topic across all three periods, representing a share ranging from 13.0% to 16.9% throughout the studied time-frame. Similarly, 'Methods and approaches for teaching entrepreneurship,' which involves papers discussing pedagogy and instructional tools related to teaching entrepreneurship, maintains its significance as a key topic across all three periods, comprising a share between 14.3% and 15.8% over the period. In this regard, their consistent presence across all three periods underscores their enduring importance in the cognitive development of entrepreneurship education research during the 1990s and early 2000s.

5. Discussion

Entrepreneurship education has proliferated over the past decade, solidifying its significance and impact as a scholarly field. Today, universities worldwide actively allocate faculty positions and resources to develop and expand entrepreneurship courses and

programs (Corbett, Marino, and Alsos 2023) – a movement accompanied by a vibrant and flourishing body of literature that explores innovative teaching and assessment practices (e.g. Neck, Brush, and Greene 2021; Penaluna, Jones, and Penaluna 2021). Additionally, the academic infrastructure of entrepreneurship education research has, in recent years, undergone significant advancements (Gabrielsson et al. 2023), with several conferences and journals focusing on matters relevant to the scholarship of teaching and learning entrepreneurship. In light of these developments, it becomes imperative to delineate the history of entrepreneurship education and its emergence as a scholarly field to better understand the connection between the past and the present.

We focus this study on the IntEnt Conference as one of the early and most relevant conferences in the history of entrepreneurship education. Specifically, our study situates IntEnt within a broader historical framework, aiming to elucidate its genesis and significance for advancing and internationalizing entrepreneurship education scholarship. The scholarly interest in developing an academic infrastructure for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship dates back to the 1970s and 1980s when entrepreneurship research grew as a response to structural changes in the world economy (Landström 2005). The growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a teaching subject sparked scholarly conversations about curriculum development, pedagogical methods, and program design (e.g. Hägg and Gabrielsson 2020). However, most organized forums for communication emerging at the time, such as conferences, professional networks, and scientific journals, were emphasizing entrepreneurship research more broadly (e.g. Landström, Frank, and Veciana 1997). Entrepreneurship education was thus marked by a limited and localized knowledge base and a strong dependence on the initiatives of individual scholars (Landström 2020).

Our analysis highlights the IntEnt conference as a pioneering initiative that fostered the advancement of entrepreneurship education scholarship in the 1990s and early 2000s. This period was an expansive phase characterized by a strong resource mobilization on entrepreneurship research Landström (2005). In addition, the field suffered from unclear boundaries and fuzzy definitions, and a large number of scholars moved in and out of the field (Landström 2020). The growing fragmentation of the field necessitated the establishment of specialized platforms tailored for scholars focused on developing university-level entrepreneurship education at their respective home institutions. Accordingly, the 1990s witnessed a migration of entrepreneurship education scholarship from mainstream entrepreneurship conferences and journals and a move toward education-oriented journals (Hägg and Gabrielsson 2020). However, except for some special issues,⁴ there was a general lack of academic outlets for entrepreneurship education research, and the number of research articles remained limited during the period (Gabrielsson et al. 2020). In this context, IntEnt met an underserved need in a small but growing academic community where scholars could exchange ideas and experience to develop teaching practices and fill courses and programs with relevant content.

Without neglecting the personal ambitions and individual endeavors surrounding IntEnt, it is crucial to emphasize the institutional support provided by FGF, with its ability to attract resources and connect the conference to the broader efforts of building an infrastructure for entrepreneurship research and teaching in Europe at the time. Throughout the years, FGF consistently supported the annual meetings, and they published several of the proceedings in their publication series of entrepreneurship

monographs between 1992 and 2004 (see [Table 5](#)). The close connection between the IntEnt conference and FGF was, in this regard, instrumental in legitimizing the conference and providing ample conditions for its continuity in the expansive landscape of entrepreneurship research during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Our analysis of papers published in edited volumes from the IntEnt conference over the 1990s and early 2000s explicates its role in fostering the advancement of entrepreneurship education scholarship in this period. Examining the study period reveals the emergence of two distinct developmental phases concerning its social dimension. During the early 1990s, an initial wave with a select group of entrepreneurship education scholars actively initiated outreach efforts, laying the groundwork for establishing national and international networks. Consequently, this period marked the genesis of collaborative endeavors that contributed to internationalizing the academic infrastructure. Following this, a second wave characterized by a noticeable shift in focus emerged in the early 2000s. This phase emphasized the mobilization and nurturing of local ecosystems conducive to entrepreneurship teaching and research. The latter concentration thus shifted inward, emphasizing the cultivation of local and regional networks that supported and enriched the pedagogical and research landscape of entrepreneurship education.

Concerning the cognitive dimension, the dynamic evolution of topical trends throughout the study period underscores the fluid and adaptable nature inherent in entrepreneurship education research (e.g. [Landström, Gabrielsson, Politis, and Sørheim 2022](#)). Notably, a discernible trend emerges, reflecting an increasing focus on the outcomes derived from entrepreneurship teaching and the contextualization of educational efforts to cater specifically to distinct target demographics. This trend mirrors the heightened demand for specialized courses and comprehensive programs within the specified timeframe ([Landström 2005](#)). Simultaneously, an enduring interest prevails across the study period concerning critical facets such as institutional backing and infrastructural support for entrepreneurship education within university settings. Furthermore, sustained attention remains directed toward exploring diverse methodologies and innovative approaches in teaching entrepreneurship, signifying the long-standing interest and ongoing quest among entrepreneurship education scholars for pedagogical advancement and effectiveness (e.g. [Hägg and Gabrielsson 2020](#)).

Our analysis and results prompt reflection on the broader impact of the IntEnt conference on entrepreneurship education scholarship. The developing academic infrastructure signifies a progression from early expansive network-building efforts in the early 1990s to a more concentrated emphasis on local development initiatives in the early 2000s. Moreover, rather than becoming a breeding ground for well-crafted cornerstone papers contributing to the field's intellectual development, our study suggests that the conference primarily developed into a platform for sharing new and bold ideas. Most research papers presented at the conference were exploratory, mainly descriptive, and often sacrificed academic rigor in favor of high practical relevance. This approach paved the way for the development of the field with a strong emphasis on novelty ([Landström, Gabrielsson, Politis, and Sørheim 2022](#)). Additionally, the conference facilitated the emergence of independent research themes and loosely connected sub-communities, each with distinct profiles ([Fellnhöfer 2019](#); [Loi, Castriotta, and di Guardo 2016](#)).

After two decades of yearly meetings, the IntEnt conference paused its operations. At this time, the conference delegates had seen entrepreneurship education scholarship

develop throughout the 2000s and into the 2010s with an increasing number of publications (Hägg and Kurczewska 2021) and a developing fragmentation in terms of scholarly inspirations, conferences, and journals (Gabrielsson et al. 2023). Since then, two conferences with a distinct profile toward entrepreneurship education scholarship have emerged – the ECSB Entrepreneurship Education (3E) Conference and the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) annual meeting. Created in 2013, the 3E conference has developed into a central European platform for exchanging and accumulating knowledge about entrepreneurship education, bringing together scholars and educators from various educational institutions and disciplinary backgrounds. A couple of years later, USASBE refocused its annual conferences, aligning with its renewed mission to be an inclusive community advancing entrepreneurship education through bold teaching, scholarship, and practice (e.g. Dickson 2018).

Compared to IntEnt, the 3E and USASBE conferences are different breeds. The explicit focus of IntEnt to support the global transfer of ideas and experiences by establishing a network between people from all over the world was marked by the time of significant political change and integration in which the conference was created. In contrast, 3E and USASBE have their own specific culture and profiles, with connections to teaching practices and educational approaches in Central Europe and the Anglo-American context, respectively. However, there is a historical link between the conferences, rooted in the explicit interest of connecting entrepreneurship teaching to authentic learning environments (e.g. Gibb and Ritchie 1982, Ronstadt 1985; Sexton and Bowman-Upton 1987; Solomon, Weaver, and Fernald 1994) and, from this stance, to advance research that will improve teaching practices related to venture creation, self-employment, small business, and developing enterprising behaviors.

Our study provides a sharper lens to more comprehensively grasp the early collaborative endeavors and knowledge expansion of entrepreneurship education scholarship, shedding light on how the field's historical foundations have informed and continue to influence contemporary scholarly conversations and understandings. In this regard, the emerging intellectual exchange witnessed at the IntEnt conference provides evidence of enduring themes that still captivate researchers' interest (e.g. Landström et al. 2022). In the subsequent section, we will conclude our study by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of our findings while presenting avenues for future research.

6. Conclusions and implications

Theoretically, our study advances the understanding of entrepreneurship education as an aspiring informal community emerging toward a scholarly field. Emerging informal communities of like-minded scholars face an array of possible fates, where some quickly fade out, some are reabsorbed into existing fields, and others continue to evolve (e.g. Hambrick and Chen 2008). Our analyses suggest that the early trajectory of the field was not so much a contest for intellectual progress, but rather a contemporary process influenced by social and political factors. The IntEnt conference thus reflects, to a great extent, the spirit of the times both in society and in the development of the scholarly field. Conference presentations were much occupied with economic and social changes in society and entrepreneurship in general while only gradually gaining a stronger focus on teaching and learning entrepreneurship.

The early development contributed to scholarly practices strongly characterized by local initiatives and idiosyncratic research interests. This field-level imprint (e.g. Marquis and Tilcsik 2013) appears to have influenced entrepreneurship education scholarship for a long time to come, with a strong practical orientation, a focus on novelty, and a fragmented academic infrastructure that, in the coming decades, came to characterize the scholarly field.

Our study also provides practical implications regarding the role and importance of conferences for mobilizing energy and promoting scholarly exchange. The IntEnt conference played a key role in channeling attention and resources in the 1990s and early 2000s when scholars in the field had no shared history. Since this time, entrepreneurship education scholarship has developed into a vibrant field of study specializing in the systematic inquiry of the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship (Neck and Corbett 2018). The local embeddedness of entrepreneurship education has proven to be a particular strength in remaining relevant and connected to stakeholders who can provide ongoing support and resources (Achtenhagen and Johannisson 2013; Mwasalwiba 2010). While struggling with the non-cumulative character of research efforts (Fayolle 2013), the past decade has seen a growing number of scholars attracted to developing research and teaching practices in the field (Fayolle 2018; Gabrielsson et al. 2020). At the same time, the recent development of the scholarly field is taking place in a global technology-driven publishing ecosystem that is experiencing growing fragmentation and disruption. In such turmoil, dedicated entrepreneurship education conferences can be a stabilizing force connecting global publishing systems with local educational environments (Weaver et al. 2022), thus fostering face-to-face interactions, showcasing research advancements, and promoting knowledge exchange and collaboration beyond digital platforms.

Finally, our analysis and findings point to further questions about how the academic infrastructure for entrepreneurship education scholarship evolve from the turn of the millennium onwards. For example, the mid and late 2000s are marked by a continued expansion and internationalization of entrepreneurship research and teaching (Landström 2020) and a growing number of conferences actively encouraging entrepreneurship educators to interact and build ties within the scholarly community (Gabrielsson et al. 2023). Studying the interdependency between local scholarly communities, academic conferences, and the publishing ecosystem has much to tell us about the emergence of distinct research themes and sub-communities within the entrepreneurship education field. However, historical analyses of these issues are still in their infancy. Future studies may also benefit from a closer examination of the emergence and development of the annual 3E conference in the early 2010s. While the historical trajectory of meeting places for entrepreneurship education scholars such as USASBE (Dickson 2018) and the Academy of Management Entrepreneurship (ENT) division (Landström and Lindhe 2016) has been documented, there has been little attention to gain insights and understanding of past events, trends, and phenomena related to 3E. Overall, we hope this study encourages additional research to examine the role of conferences in the field's evolutionary trajectory as an important yet neglected aspect of entrepreneurship education history.

Notes

1. Founded in 1987, the FGF was instrumental in establishing an infrastructure for academic entrepreneurship research in Germany during the late 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Klandt 2004; see also: <https://www.fgf-ev.de/en/organization-of-the-fgf/history-of-the-fgf/>). In addition to IntEnt, elements of this included the establishment of a first chair for entrepreneurship at the European Business School/International University Schloß Reichartshausen, creating an entrepreneurship literature database (ELIDA) and a publication series of entrepreneurship monographs (FGF Entrepreneurship-Research Monografien), and supporting the German-speaking yearly conference Gründungs-Forschungs Forum (G-Forum).
2. This is what makes the use of citation databases less relevant when analyzing new and evolving fields of research within the social sciences as they consist primarily of data from scholarly journals with less of a focus on books and conference proceedings (e.g. Landström, Harirchi & Åström, 2012).
3. It should be noted that most of these studies rely on descriptive statistics, and to some extent t-tests, chi-square tests and correlation analysis, while multivariate statistical techniques are rare.
4. For example, there were three special issues on entrepreneurship education in *Simulation & Gaming* in 1994 to 1996, while *Industry & Higher Education* organized two special issues in 1997 and 1999.
5. Published as Scott, Rosa, and Klandt (1998).
6. Published as Rosa, Scott, and Klandt (1996).
7. Published as Brockhaus et al. (2001).
8. Published as Fayolle and Klandt (2006).

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