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THE POTENTIAL INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE MODELS IN THE TEACHING OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING: I WANT TO BE LIKE ?

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the role of particular entrepreneurial role models in the influencing of a sample of Indonesian undergraduate business students in considering becoming engaged in entrepreneurial activity upon graduation. It argues this within a traditional defining of the marketing entrepreneurship interface as the intersection of the two disciplines. It contributes by adding to our knowledge of the entrepreneurial dimension of this interface. The reader is invited to consider to what extent our findings might be applicable to their students.

INTRODUCTION

To understand entrepreneurial marketing we need to understand the behaviour and practice of entrepreneurs. To understand the behaviour of young aspiring undergraduate nascent entrepreneurs, we need to understand many things. However, one interesting aspect of their behaviour to understand, and thus capitalise on in our teaching, would be whether they pay attention to role models, and, if they do, who are those role models?

One of the authors, along with his colleague Paul L Reynolds, has taught an entrepreneurial marketing course in the UK since the late 1990s. It is underpinned by the common notion of entrepreneurial marketing being the intersection of entrepreneurship and marketing. The course seeks to drive entrepreneurship ideas and behaviour into the teaching of small business marketing and to encourage students to reflect upon entrepreneurial small businesses rather than small businesses per se. Students are assessed by being required to 'get under the skin' of a real SME (of their choosing) and understanding its marketing behaviour.

Although our module is not a 'start-your-own' business course, it is a short step from drawing lectures from the entrepreneurial marketing domain to considering how we are influencing our students in respect of entrepreneurship. A very small number will have been attracted to the module because they are running small businesses but the majority will be there because they have an interest in the marketing function in the small business and may perhaps, one day, start their own small business, or perhaps, join an existing family business. Given the sheer number of SMEs in the world, they are most certainly likely to end up working alongside, or within, one. Harris and Deacon (2008), at a recent Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship workshop, considered the impact of television as a role model. We are sure that people in the USA are surrounded by many TV programmes that have the potential to act as role models. In the UK, Dragons' Den and The Apprentice are high amongst the usual suspects. Equally, we all bring role model entrepreneurs into the classroom in the flesh, as case studies, as visual recordings, and often, entrepreneurship modules are taught by actual entrepreneurs.

However, in this paper we have a more limited perspective concerning a sample of undergraduates on a business programme in Indonesia. We invite the reader to consider whether cultural moirés influence our results, whether our results mirror their students' situation; and, to what extent they find one of our interim conclusions puzzling! Whilst we are happy to accept this as a statistical aberration ... but it does raise an interesting point for debate.

More formally we have two research questions, which are then set in the context of the marketing entrepreneurship interface.

How do role models influence aspirant undergraduate entrepreneurs to create new

ventures and choose an 'entrepreneurial career'?

What is the comparative influence of role models on undergraduate students to become an entrepreneur? (From several constructs of role model: parents, sibling, uncles/aunties, teachers, other relatives and successful entrepreneurs).

The broad preliminary findings of this paper are:

Parents, particularly the father, and entrepreneurs are the most important role models in influencing students to become an entrepreneur. The result of this study is similar to Gibson and Cordova (1999) who mentioned that the early role models for individuals are normally their parents and then later usually one(s) who come from a 'wider arena', who need not be known by the individuals. This can be the entrepreneur.

Not unsurprisingly, students are mainly choosing their role models based on charisma or reputation, or a combination of the two. But importantly each represents adopting a role model from a different part of their social network. Findings so far show an interesting result, where students think that their friends' influence as a role model is negatively correlated to their motivation to become an entrepreneur. Whilst the statistical result is not significant, it is the negative signing that even if a statistical aberration - has aroused our particular interest as a point of debate. This needs further investigation to find out why students think that their friends are not suitable people to motivate them to become an entrepreneur. Is this a sign that friends cannot be treated as role models? Or, is it that someone at a 'horizontal' level in the social network hierarchy is not perceived as a role model. Is it only those in a 'vertical' relationship that function as role models.

ROLE MODELS

In general terms, role models can be seen as anybody who can influence attitude, decisions, behaviour etc. of the individuals to become an entrepreneur. Role models can be one of the members in the aspirant entrepreneur's very close social network or sometimes individuals with whom there is no relationship and simply represent a 'weak tie'. This research investigates the existence of role models and their influence on undergraduate students to become entrepreneurs from a sample of business students at Andalas University, an Indonesian state-funded university.

The framework for this paper adopts the definition of role models by Gibson (2004) as this distinguishes between more general 'behavioural relationships', mentors and our particular interest - role models. We also adopt Gibson's dimensional schema for placing the student and the mentor within the student's (personal contact) network. Finally, in considering past literature on entrepreneurial motivation, and the contribution of this paper, we are heavily influenced by Shane, Locke and Collins (2003).

Role model theories originate from Bandura and Social Learning Theory in 1977, which can be used to explain how role models can influence other individuals to act, to imitate and follow, to think and to have personal characteristics, behaviours, styles and attributes. Bandura (1977) found that individuals tend to adopt and learn within their social network by observing the behaviour of others and what outcomes others get from their behaviours. If one who is observed has had positive results and outcomes from their particular behaviour and attitude, then they (successful individuals within the social network) tend to be used as a pattern for forming other behaviour and attitudes. The processes of using such individual patterns of behaviour and attitudes will lead to the creation of role models. Since the role models tend to be found in various ways, they can be found either in the environment nearer or further away from their social network.

According to Gibson and Cordova (1999), the early role models for individuals are normally their parents and the latter usually one(s) who comes from a 'wider arena', meaning one who sometimes is not known by the individuals. This makes sense considering that people as children live in a family before they know people and the environment outside of their family. Once children know the people and environment

outside their family, then they will find people from multiple and different backgrounds and professions. In the case of the children who find their role models outside of their family members, specifically their parents, they will find someone who is successful in their career, wealth achieving, and, has good position or status. Gibson and Cordova (1999) found such normally coming from corporate, entrepreneur and professional worlds. Career success and the accumulation of wealth will have convinced others to choose the same career. Thus the role models are in good position to influence behaviour and attitude of other people. Gibson (2004) defines the role model as:

... a cognitive construction based on the attributes of people in social roles an individual perceives to be similar to him or herself to some extent and desires to increase perceived similarity by emulating those attributes.

The main difference between role models and the other two constructs lies in terms of underlying processes that define them. Gibson (2004) defines a mentor as:

...a person who provides an active advice and support to a protégé through an interactive relationship.

The behavioural model focuses on matching specific actions and attitudes between an individual and a (role) model.

The concept and characteristics of the role model are different to those of the behavioural model and the mentor. This can be seen by reflecting upon the process, the attributes sought by the targets and flexibility to select. In respect to the process, the role model characteristic is based on the perceived similarity, or intention to increase similarity, between the targets and their role model, whereas for the other two an action leading to personal development is paramount. In respect to the concept element of the role model, initiative is demanded of the individual, whilst the other two can be based on the tasks. Role models can be targeted and selected in a very flexible way, whereas individuals are assumed to have less choice, and voice, in the behavioural model but rather more in respect of choosing a mentor.

Gibson (2004) proposed also that there should be a two-dimension schema to clarify the characteristics of the role model. Cognitive dimensions relate to those attributes of role models which are observed by individuals, whilst structural dimensions relate to the existence of role models in an individual's life. This is shown in Table 1 below. For the cognitive dimensions, targets are free to behave, or not to behave, like their role model. This decision can be taken by the individuals after they have observed the qualification/competency and the achievement of that person. For the structural dimensions, it can be seen that role model can be either close with the 'targets' or further away from them. The role model can be in a close social linkage with the 'targets' so that they can interact actively or oppositely not be in the social linkage of the target, in which case they cannot actively interact. In respect of social status, role model can have higher status, the same or lower status than the 'target'.

Table 1: The Dimensional Approach for Role Models (Gibson, 2004)

Cognitive Dimensions	
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Refers to a role model having attributes which are perceived by the individual as similar, are admired and sought out for possible emulation	Refers to a role model having attributes which are primarily observed by the individual as examples of how not to behave in a particular context
Structural Dimensions	
<i>Close</i>	<i>Distant</i>
Refers to a role model who is in the same work group or department, and/or with whom the individual interacts with frequently	Refers to a role model who is outside the individual's work group or department, and with whom the individual interacts frequently or not at all
<i>Up</i>	<i>Across/down</i>
Refers to a role model who is higher in hierarchical status than the individual	Refers to a role model who, in relation to the individual, is a peer, a subordinate, or who is ambiguous in status (e.g. a client)

THE MARKETING ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTERFACE: THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Given the argument that the Symposium focuses on the marketing / entrepreneurship interface, we should at least define both marketing and entrepreneurship, however, we are going to assume that marketing is well-defined and we would all be comfortable with the, albeit rather wide, AMA definition. Defining entrepreneurship always has been, and always will be more contentious but working on the principle that unless we understand how our student sample understands entrepreneurship, then we have a problem. Thus we asked students to define what they understood by the term entrepreneur. In the following section we have loosely clustered the definitions and driven some theoretical discussion around that. At the heart of entrepreneurial marketing is the synergistic outcome of the interaction of the two domains, albeit this is of less concern in this paper given that we are focusing predominantly on the entrepreneurial component, and these are business still to be formed and operated.

Students were asked through an open-ended question their perception of entrepreneurship. In total, 275 students out of the 291 responded to this question. Apart from twelve 'outliers', one of the authors believed that the answers could be sorted out into ten broad categories. Given that an entrepreneurship component is core for all these business students, and, there is also a specialist degree routing in entrepreneurship available, all participants had some prior knowledge in this area. The ten categories fit broadly into one of three wide definitions - as a person who takes risks in innovation, as a person who can use his/her abilities and resources and as a person who has personal traits and the personality to become new venture creator.

The Entrepreneur as a person who is willing to take risks through innovation to get returns.

Answering entrepreneur from this perspective means that entrepreneur is defined from an innovation perspective. This corresponds to Cantillon in the 18th century who (allegedly based on his own behaviour) defined the entrepreneur as a risk taker. In the 20th century, the seminal citation would be Schumpeter (1934) describing the entrepreneur as a person who introduces innovation and change. At a national or regional level, many authors see one important role of the entrepreneur as an agent of innovation (see, for example: Acs and Yeung, 1999; Urata, 2000). Clearly, this can result in improvement and maintain competitiveness of a country/region (see, for example: Schramm, 2004).

The Entrepreneur as a person who has an idea, can scan opportunities, allocating-using his/her abilities and resources to establish new ventures through the creation of new products to achieve personal wealth.

This perception of entrepreneur can be related with an economic and management perspectives. Hebert and Link (1989) argued that entrepreneurs from an economics perspective are ... *individuals who specialize in taking responsibility for and making judgmental decisions that affect the location, form and the use of goods, resources or institutions.* From the management perspective, Sahlman and Stevenson, (1991) mentioned that an entrepreneur is *an individual who identifies opportunities, assembled required resources, implement a practical action plan and harvest the reward in a timely, flexible way.*

Results of viewing entrepreneurs from an economic and management perspectives can be seen in the roles of entrepreneurs in the economic performance of a country reflected by GDP, personal and family incomes, structural economic transformation etc. (see, for example: Acs and Yeung, 1999; Wennekers and Thurik, 1999; Fornahl, 2006; Lafuente et. al., 2007; Thurik, 2008).

Table 2: Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

The ten broad categories of response ... an entrepreneur is a person who ..

- 1 has ability to produce new products
- 2 has an idea, can scan opportunities and make them possible to start their own business
- 3 can run and manage their own business given their own ability and resources
- 4 has ability to achieve wealth through certain motivations
- 5 can use resources and manage themselves to achieve wealth
- 6 is willing to take risks in innovation in order to get returns
- 7 has personal attributes to change opportunities into realities
- 8 can create employment from their business and contribute positively to society
- 9 can earn money in his/her own way
- 10 is independent, creative and has self-confidence to run their own business

Outliers: Students whose answers are categorized as 'Others/Un-Categorized' provided answers such as: an entrepreneur is a person who is a non-government employee; an entrepreneur is a trader; an entrepreneur is a person who runs his/her family business, etc.

The Entrepreneur as a person who is independent, creative, 'brave', highly responsible, has self-esteem/self-confidence and has certain motivations to success.

This perception is closely related with the traits, personality and characters of entrepreneurs and the success factors of new ventures. As has been well known, business start up success factors can be influenced by internal and external environment factors, psychological factors and sociological factors (see Rotter, 1966; Gibb & Ritchie, 1985; McClelland, 1987; Dyer, 1994; Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Grant, 1996; Dobbins and Pettman, 1997; Watson, et. al., 1998; Henderson & Robertson, 1999; Pena, 2002; Bridge et. al., 2003).

Table 3: Findings of Shane et al.**Quantitative**

$$EM = f(N\text{-Ach}, RT, TfA, LoC, SE, GS)$$

- EM = Entrepreneurial motivation
- N-Ach = Need for Achievement (McClelland 1961) People are motivated to become an entrepreneur because they want and need to achieve a higher/greater degree of taking responsibility for outcomes, using their own skills and efforts, facing moderate degree of risk and need to have clear feedback for their performance.
- RT = Risk-taking
Alongside his N-Ach concept, McClelland argued that a risk taking propensity was another motivation for people to become an entrepreneur. People choose an entrepreneurial career because they are able to face moderate risks that arise from their activities in business.
- TfA = Tolerance for ambiguity (Schere, 1982; Budner, 1982)
Given that the very nature of an entrepreneurial career is unpredictable, this may well motivate people to choose this career. Those who enter into this career consider that a situation without clear outcomes is an attractive one, rather than threatening proposition.
- LoC = Locus of control (Rotter, 1966)
Locus of control is an individual's belief that their actions will affect an outcome. This can be divided into an external and an internal locus of control. Individuals who have an external locus of control believe that the outcome of one activity is out of their control. Whilst one who has an internal locus of control believes that their personal actions will directly affect outcomes of an event. According to Rotter (1966), people who have an internal locus of control will seek entrepreneurial roles because they desire positions in which their actions have a direct impact on results.
- SE = Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977)
Self-efficacy is closely related with one's self-confidence in doing a specific task. People are motivated to enter into an entrepreneurial career because they have a high degree of self-confidence that they can carry out entrepreneurial tasks and use negative feedback of their actions to improve their performance.
- GS = Goal-setting (Baum, et al., 2001)
Another motivation factor for people to choose an entrepreneurial career is the existence of goals and how they can set themselves to achieve those goals. Such a goal will be closely related to individual or corporate performance, this could be measured by financial performance, growth of the firm and/or the ability to innovate

Qualitative

$$EM = f(I, D, EP)$$

- EM = Entrepreneurial motivation
The qualitative point of view in the research on entrepreneurial motivation is based on the work of Locke (2000) in which he found that the entrepreneurial motivation is the function of *independence, drive and egoistic passion*.
- I = Independence
Independence is closely related with individual responsibility to every consequence that occurs as the result of their activities and decision. This is one of the motivational factors for people choosing an entrepreneurial career. People with a higher sense of responsibility tend to choose to be an entrepreneur because they can take responsibility of their own life and decisions rather than living off the efforts of others.
- D = Drive
Drive means efforts that are taken by individuals to put their ideas into reality. Drive is closely related with the N-Ach for entrepreneurs. We know that people with great ideas will have an ambition to achieve and implement their ideas and they will expend their best efforts to achieve their objectives. Shane et al., (2003) concluded that there are several aspects of drive: ambition, goals, energy and stamina, and persistence, which can be seen in the individuals who choose an entrepreneurial career
- EP = Egoistic passion
Shane, et al. (2003) argued that individuals who have *rational egoistic passion* normally love their work, love the process of building an organization and making that organization profitable. Entrepreneurs are motivated to conduct something based on their own interest and do everything necessary to achieve it.

Shane, et al. (2003) argued that most research in entrepreneurship focused only on macro level environmental forces and the characteristics of entrepreneurial opportunities as the main motivations for individual to become an entrepreneur. However, research did not incorporate the fact that human motivation should also be considered as one of the resources for entrepreneurial motivation. Given that the main actor in the entrepreneurial process is an individual, consideration of human motivation in entrepreneurial process should not, and cannot, be neglected. As a convenience, Shane et al. categorise previous research into quantitative and qualitative. A convenient summary of these views can be found in Table 3 above.

Based on the existing studies on entrepreneurial motivation and role models, the significant contribution this paper offers is another determining factor for entrepreneurial motivation, that is '*social influence in the form of the successful entrepreneurial role model(s)*', which in our case is undergraduate students.

Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative approach attributes sufficient weight to this factor.

$EM = f(\dots, RM)$, where: EM = Entrepreneurial motivation and RM = Role Models

THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

On the one hand, the reason for encouraging entrepreneurial activities in Indonesia comes from the condition of Indonesian economy. The rate of unemployment which grows every year, a huge potential market and demand, cheap labour and natural resources, together with the easy entry and exit into/out of the businesses/markets have made entrepreneurial opportunities in all economic sectors (informal, formal small and medium as well as large enterprises) more available.

On the other hand, the other driving force for entrepreneurial activities in Indonesia comes out of the socio-cultural background of the Indonesian people. People want to break out of the past socio-cultural condition which has mostly hindered entrepreneurship. The feudal culture and collective society have encouraged people, in the past, to work as workers rather than choosing an entrepreneurial career. The existence of figures in Indonesian society is very important. The cultural dimension of Indonesian people measured by Hofstede (1991) as less masculine, having big power distance and uncertainty avoidance also supports the notion that the existence of figures is important to people in the society. These figures are mostly people who are successful in their life, either as politicians, athletes, government officers, leaders of the society (formal or informal leaders), lecturers/researchers, businessmen/women, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected during May-September 2009 at the Andalas University in Padang, West Sumatra-Indonesia. Students were in their third year (out of four). A two-part questionnaire was distributed to 412 students in the Department of Management with 291 responses. In addition, 52 students from within that sample who were majoring in entrepreneurship in the Department of Management were invited to attend an interview and 38 of them did so. The first part of the two-part questionnaire concerned the identification of their role models; types of influence brought to bear by their role models; their motivation to become an entrepreneur; the process by which their role models can influence them; and their future career plan. Whilst the second part sought to understand their perception about how they defined an entrepreneur.

The Questionnaires: In the first part, students were asked to identify their role models, types of influence that they got from their role models, their motivation to become an entrepreneur, the process on how their role models can influence them and their future career plan. Open-ended and Likert-scaled questions were used. The second questionnaire concerned the students'

perception concerning their definition of the entrepreneur. This will be used as a baseline study to understand the perception of the students about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. Students varied in the complexity with which they perceived the term.

Population and Samples: The sample frame for the research was undergraduate students in the third year of a four year programme in the bachelor program (this equates to being in semester five of the eight semester programme) of the Faculty of Economics of Andalas University in Padang, West Sumatra-Indonesia. Students had to be within some form, and this could be very loose, of an entrepreneurial network. Being an entrepreneur, knowing (of) a local entrepreneur; having parents or relatives who were entrepreneurs, being on course majoring in entrepreneurship, would all qualify in this respect. The authors wanted to be as inclusive as possible. Gender played no part in selection. These criteria drew 421 eligible students from an overall population of 2000. Of these, 291 responded to the questionnaire ($n=71\%$). From that sample, 52 students were invited to attend the interview, of which 38 attended. The questionnaire was distributed to all the students in the Department of Management whilst the interview was specifically targeted at those students majoring in entrepreneurship in the Department of Management. This paper does not consider the interview transcripts.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The Sample Profile

Table 4: Respondents - Age and Gender

Age	female	male	TOTAL
20	19.2	10.3	30
21	21.0	16.8	38
22	11.3	9.3	21
23	2.7	5.2	8
24	0.3	2.1	2
25	0.3	0.7	1
26	0.3	0.0	0
28	0.3	0.3	1
percentage	55.3	44.7	100
actual	162	129	291

Percentages are rounded; $n = 291$; 0.3% is one person

Table 5: Respondents' Age and Year of Study Cross tabulation

Age	Respondent's Year of Study			Total
	3	4	5	
20	85	1	0	86
21	100	10	0	110
22	13	46	1	60
23	0	19	4	23
24-28	1	2	9	12
Total	199	78	14	291

Identification of Role Models

Table 6: Who Is/Are Your Role Model/s?

	percentage	frequency
Father	43.6	127
Entrepreneur	32.3	94
Mother	7.9	23
Teachers	5.2	15
Uncles-Aunties	3.8	11
Friends	1.7	05
Sibling	1.7	05
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	0.3	01
Missing	3.4	10
Total	100.0	291

Respondents chose the following as their most important role models with parents, especially their father as the most important. Parents and siblings are positioned as the role models who are very close to the students. The daily life of the students will normally happen within a family environment. Students interact with them in their daily life, getting close, and being used to sharing and knowing what is happening with others. Aunts/uncles, friends and boyfriend/girlfriend are role models who live in the close social network of the students. Students know them well but do not interact intensively and share everything with them. The last construct of role model is entrepreneurs, who are not known by the students personally. They come from other environments, other family and 'other world', but they might impress students with their performance, quality and qualifications. If the construct of the role models above is related to their proximity to the students, then the position of each role model for the students can be seen in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Role Models in Social Networks

Role Models		
Role models in very close social network	Role models in close social network	Role models who are not known personally
	Aunts and uncles	Inspiring Entrepreneurs
	Friends	
Siblings (brothers and sisters)	Boyfriends and girlfriends	

Role Model Impression

Students were asked about the most important impression that leads them to consider treating someone as their role model. Most thought that that charisma and reputation were the most important reasons that would lead them to consider someone as their role model. The following table illustrates.

Table 8: Type of Role Model Impression

	percentage	frequency
Missing	3.1	9
Charisma	55	160
Reputation	28.5	83
Peer Pressure	8.6	25
Media Exposure	4.8	14
Total	100	291

Influence of Role Model on Entrepreneurial Career

In this part, students were asked to choose the most important influence that has been given by their role model to their life, in terms of their future life to become an entrepreneur. Around 40% think that their role models give them an overview for their future life to become an entrepreneur. The role models can also guide them for choosing an entrepreneurial career (24.7%) and change their beliefs about an entrepreneurial career (14.1%).

Table 9: The Form of Influence Given by Role Models in Relation to Student Entrepreneurial Career

	percentage	frequency
Missing	3.1	09
Overview of the future life	39.9	116
Guidance for the future life	24.7	72
Changing perspectives and attitudes toward entrepreneurial career	11.0	32
Realize that entrepreneurial career is a fit with personality & character	3.1	09
Changing beliefs about an entrepreneurial career	14.1	41
No change regarding entrepreneurial career	4.1	12
Total	100	291

At this stage of the research the authors have run some Pearson correlations on the data concerning the existence of role models and their influence on students' future ambition and intention to become an entrepreneur. To measure the degree of motivation given by each role model, students were asked to use a 1- 5 Likert Scale. The scale ranged from 1 as the 'most influence' to 5 as 'no-influence' at all. Parents exhibit a statistically significant (but weak) influence (0.01 significance level, 0.246); entrepreneurial stories also (0.01 significance level; 0.216). Friends as role models is the curiosity given that it is negatively signed.

IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION**General**

There are several role model constructs for students, with parents, (particularly their fathers) and entrepreneurs being the most important role models in influencing them to become an entrepreneur. Thus it is important to involve them in nourishing student entrepreneurial motivation. The result of this

study is similar to Gibson and Cordova (1999) who mentioned that the early role models for individuals are normally their parents and the later role model is usually one who comes from '*wider arena*'.

The study also found that students mostly choose their role models based on charisma and reputation. Charisma comes from students' impression of someone and this arises from someone who is living very close to them where they can have daily interaction. Their impression for reputation comes from either someone who is living close, or far away from them, and this can be their relatives and/or non-relatives. This finding relates to the most chosen role models by the students (parents and entrepreneurs) where charisma is represented by parents as the role models with entrepreneurs, (albeit parents as well), representing the reputation dimension of role models.

The form of influence by role models also strengthens the above summary. Students thought that their role models can 'overview' their future life to become entrepreneurs, and the most suitable person to do this is their parents, who for them exhibit charisma. Students also believed that their role models can guide them and change their beliefs about becoming an entrepreneur. The possible role model to do this would be entrepreneurs, who have experience and success in the business.

The findings of this study also show an interesting result, where the students think that their friends are 'negatively correlated' to their motivation to become an entrepreneur. It would be interesting to find out why students think that their friends are not a suitable person to motivate them to become an entrepreneur. Is this a sign that friends cannot in general be treated as role models? Or, is it that the horizontal hierarchy in the social network does not allow someone to be treated as a role model because of a low awareness from other individuals?

This study also suggests further research areas in differentiating role models and their influence for students as potential nascent entrepreneurs compared to appropriate role models for early stage young entrepreneurs (who have already started their business).

In relation to entrepreneurship education in universities, this study implies that there should be continued action to link 'university' and student role models to motivate students to choose an entrepreneurial career. Parents as well as entrepreneurs are the most suitable persons for this, and a university should be both aware and consider their particular influence to motivate students to become an entrepreneur. Universities should facilitate this by designing and focusing particular entrepreneurship education, either formally or informally, in which the role model roles and participation should be actively involved.

For the Interface

Are appropriate marketing and entrepreneurial roles models the same?

How does a rigorous and not very embracing definition of entrepreneurship (for example, Schumpeter) affect our choice of appropriate role models compared to a more encompassing definition of entrepreneurship that just focuses on the act of creating the business (Gartner)?

What is the balance between drawing upon, and exploiting, existing role models and encouraging students to develop new role model relationships?

If role models are embedded and drawn from the past – then should, and how, do we engage and manage these? Charisma and reputation are not seen as the same whilst the comparative strength of entrepreneur role models seems to reside in the latter.

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