

# No fear of meta-analyses

2016-07-12 PhD workshop about “Methods in Entrepreneurship” at Leuphana University Professor Dr. h.c. Per Erik Lage Davidsson (Queensland University of Technology Brisbane, Australia), a worldwide renowned entrepreneurship researcher who has been awarded with the honorary doctor from the Faculty of Economics in 2013, met 25 PhD students from four different countries at the PhD workshop “Methods in Entrepreneurship” on Thursday (7th July 2016) and Friday (8th July 2016) at Leuphana University. Aim of the workshop was an exchange about trends and research methods in entrepreneurship.



Workshop Entrepreneurship

PhD students identified together with Professor Davidsson current methodological challenges and possible approaches for entrepreneurship research. A major challenge is the heterogeneity of the entrepreneurial phenomenon. Different people start very different entrepreneurial activities with various processes, resources and periods of time. This makes it difficult to detect correlations as they can be overlapped by uncontrolled situational factors. According to Professor Davidsson experimental research is a possible approach, but so far it is underrepresented in entrepreneurship research. Experiments make it possible to control for situational factors. However, a common disadvantage of this approach is that the external validity of the results can be limited.

## **"Opportunities" for Entrepreneurship**

One of Professor Davidsson's special merits is his investigation of new start-ups. He has a particular interest in the question how entrepreneurial “opportunities” and chances can be used and realized. With his research he was able to demonstrate that networks and social support have a positive impact on the probability to found a business as well as on business success.

Further speakers during the workshops have been Vice President (Graduate School, Young Academics & Entrepreneurship) Prof. Dr. Markus Reihlen, who is responsible for Entrepreneurship at Leuphana University since May 2016, Prof. Dr. Michael Frese (National University of Singapore und Leuphana University Lüneburg), Prof. Dr. Andreas Rauch (University of Groningen, Netherlands) and Prof. Dr. Michael Gielnik (Leuphana University Lüneburg).

## **Impulses for entrepreneurship research**

Professor Dr. Andreas Rauch encouraged the PhD students not to shy away from meta-analyses. Meta-analysis is a quantitative approach for systematically combining results of previous research to arrive at conclusions about the body of research, that exceed the conclusions of previous research. Step by step he guided the PhD students through this methodological approach and drew on his extensive experience with meta-analyses. He stressed that for successfully publishing meta-analyses it is important to convince reviewers of one's careful, conscientious and systematic work. An accurate and transparent documentation during the data analysis is inevitable. Professor Dr. Markus Reihlen provided a review of the range of qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes large bodies of unstructured data that cannot be meaningfully analysed by formal, statistical approaches. Professor Reihlen explained how to set up a qualitative research project with particular emphasis on the case study approach. By using various examples from his own research, he explained and discussed how case study research can be used for theory building. In addition, the technique of a qualitative meta-analysis was introduced as a method for synthesizing convergent findings across a large number of published case studies. Professor Dr. Michael Gielnik introduced the PhD students to experimental research. He illustrated different experimental designs by drawing on examples from his own research and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the different designs. Using the research project "STEP" (Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion) as a best practice approach, Professor Gielnik explained how experimental and field research can be combined.

The workshop "Methods in Entrepreneurship" took place for the first time and was organized by the Research Center for Entrepreneurship (RCE). The RCE attempts to provide an excellent, interdisciplinary program for PhD students interested in entrepreneurship research. Besides a bi-weekly research colloquium, the workshop "Methods in Entrepreneurship" was a highlight at the end of the summer semester 2016.

At the end of the workshop Prof. Dr. Michael Frese summarized: "Here we have an example for the importance of the Research Center for Entrepreneurship at Leuphana University. In this workshop, distinguished researchers displayed how entrepreneurship research can be advanced."

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