PhD project title
Entrepreneurs' use of feedback

Supervisors
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Research centre
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Project description
Entrepreneurship is a feedback-driven process (Bhave, 1994) whereby feedback is information about whether goals are achieved or how to achieve them. For entrepreneurs, feedback can relate to personal goals, such as managing employees, developing interpersonal skills or improving personal wellbeing, as well as venture goals, such as improving offerings, becoming operational or reaching new markets. Entrepreneurs receive formal offering-centered feedback from the market in the form of demand or investment, as well as through launching product prototypes, piloting services, and changing business models (Andries et al., 2013; Baum & Bird, 2010). They can also proactively seek feedback through interactions with different individuals, such as co-founders (Gemmell et al., 2012), employees (Volery et al., 2015), experts and community leaders (Katre & Salipante, 2012), prospective and early customers (Corner & Wu, 2012; Fisher, 2012), and other entrepreneurs in the same industry (Kuhn & Galloway, 2015), which can focus on both personal and venture goals. Finally, entrepreneurs receive unsolicited feedback from peers, experts, and individuals at support organisations, which also focuses on venture goals (Seidel et al., 2016).

The aim of this project is to investigate how and when entrepreneurs use the feedback they have access to. Entrepreneurs value feedback because it is evaluative information that helps them to improve their decision making (Haynie et al., 2012), correct errors (Frese, 2007; 2009), develop new products, services, and processes (Gemmell et al., 2012; Katre & Salipante, 2012), balance between incremental and radical innovation (Volery et al., 2015), gain first customers, and turn customers into advocates who promote the offering (Corner & Wu, 2012; Fisher, 2012). While entrepreneurship is a feedback-driven process (Bhave, 1994), feedback processes are poorly understood in the entrepreneurship context (Ashford et al., 2016; Collewaert et al., 2016; Frese, 2007), particularly in relation to how and when entrepreneurs use the feedback they have access to as they sometimes do not seek and even ignore feedback (Katre & Salipante, 2012). Considering the three main ways entrepreneurs receive feedback (i.e. the market, proactively solicited from others, and unsolicited but provided by others) on multiple personal and venture topics from diverse individuals, it is unclear how they make sense of the feedback, especially if it is conflicting or overwhelming, when they decide to use the feedback or ignore it, and how they actually use the feedback. This focus on using or ignoring feedback from different channels and individuals can provide novel insights into feedback processes in entrepreneurship.

Both inductive and deductive approaches, including experimental research designs drawing on insights from psychology and organisational behaviour, can be used to address the aim of this research project.

References


**PhD candidate profile**

The PhD candidate should meet the following requirements:

- Be enthusiastic, well-organised and have good inter-personal skills.
- High motivation and a keen interest in the research area.
- A first degree that is equivalent to a UK classification of upper second class honours or above. In addition, a good masters level qualification of merit or above, with a minimum of 60 per cent in the dissertation, research project element or equivalent experience. We also accept an MBA from an accredited school where the candidate can demonstrate that a significant research
element has been undertaken. For further information on entry requirements, please see: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply

Duration and start dates
Full or part time study for 3 or 6 years is available, and remote location study is also possible. We have two start dates a year for PhD students. Our preferred start date is 1 October, however we do recognise that not everyone will be able to commence studies at that time, so we also offer a second start date of 1 February. If you are unable to start in October or February, it may be also possible to start your PhD at a different time of the year.

Closing date for applications
Applications will be considered until a suitable candidate has been identified. For the 1 October start date, a full application must have been received by 15 July. For 1 February start date, a full application must have been received by 15 November.

How to apply
See http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply for full details of how to apply.

For an informal discussion about this opportunity, please contact Andreana Drencheva at a.drencheva@sheffield.ac.uk.