

# Exploring the Relationship between Self-Leadership and Entrepreneurship

## Background



“The entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield” Jean-Baptiste Say, 18th century. Two centuries later, economists are still struggling to understand this most mysterious part of the wealth-creation process (The economist, 1999).

Current stream of research regards entrepreneurship as fundamentally personal and investigate what personality traits and personal characteristics distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs (Baum et al., 2001).

Scholars call for an in depth investigation of cognitive facets of (nascent) entrepreneurs (Carter et al., 2003)

Literature indicates that self-leadership holds a prominent role in the context of entrepreneurship (Furtner, 2018).

### >> Context and the entrepreneurial university

The Global University Entrepreneurship Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS) is an international research project to assess entrepreneurship and the founders' competences of university students. Entrepreneurial intentions and behavior are thereby key.

A national report was written to highlight perceptions of the students of the University of Liechtenstein (n=324) in an international comparison key.

- 23.4% of students indicate to have chosen the University of Liechtenstein due to its good entrepreneurial reputation.
- The University of Liechtenstein is above the international comparison regarding the perceived entrepreneurial climate.
- One out of ten intend to start an own business directly after the studies.
- Every second student intend to create a business venture five years after graduation.
- The selection of fields of business are congruent with the major fields of study.
- Students of the University of Liechtenstein hold higher entrepreneurial intentions compared to German speaking countries.

(Baldegger et al., 2019)

### >> GRIT, entrepreneurial behavior and the role of self-leadership

The aim is to gain profound insights on how GRIT personality facets affect students' entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial actions, and self-leadership skills. Research is based on superregional FL-A-CH data from GUESSSS 2018, following a process perspective of entrepreneurship.

- The relationship between GRIT (perseverance of effort and consistency of interests) and the current pursuit of self-employment reveals that a high consistency of interest is dysfunctional, when perseverance of efforts is high (n=6'544).
- The GRIT facet of perseverance of effort has a positive effect on communication activities when founding a new business venture. Whereas Self-Leadership positively affects activities regarding the legal registration of new business ventures (n=651).
- The relationship of perseverance of effort to self-leadership is positively moderated by perseverance of effort. However, perseverance of effort has a dysfunctional effect on the level of self-leadership. Self-leadership is known to be a valid predictor of corporate success, which can also be confirmed by the presented data (n=198).

[Paper in preparation]

## Aim



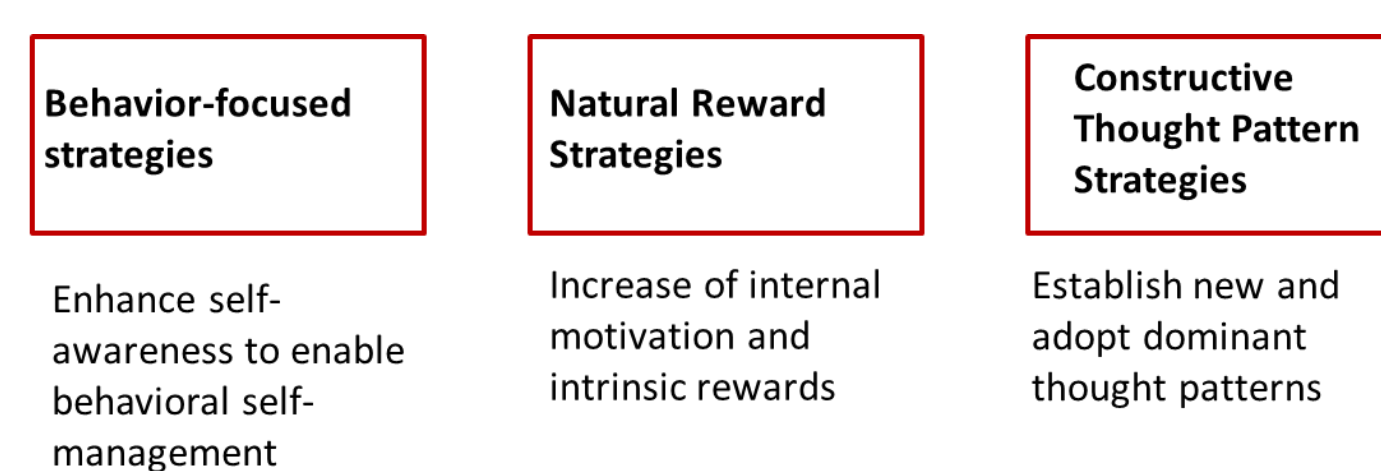
### Gaining new insights about the relationship of self-leadership and entrepreneurship.

- How do self-leadership skills influence entrepreneurial behavior?
- Can self-leadership as method be used to shape the entrepreneurial cognition?

## Results

### >> Shaping entrepreneurial cognition – development of training intervention and evaluation strategy.

Considering Self-Leadership as a guided method in order to achieve behavioral modification provides a powerful tool in order to shape entrepreneurial cognition. In the current project an intervention based self-leadership training has been developed alongside a profound and empirical evaluation strategy. The concept of the intervention was presented at the G-Forum in Vienna. The finalized training has been conducted in three independent courses at the University of Liechtenstein (n=52). Further trainings and evaluations based on intervention design will be conducted.



(Bachmann, 2019)

### >> Priming Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Affecting student's cognition is to become a key element in EE (e.g. Bygrave 1989). Storytelling and case-based learning enable the transfer of theoretical knowledge in a real-world problem-based context, intending to lead to the activation of certain mental concepts (e.g. Henry et al., 2005). Hence, it seems similar to the selective activation of cognitive concepts by priming.

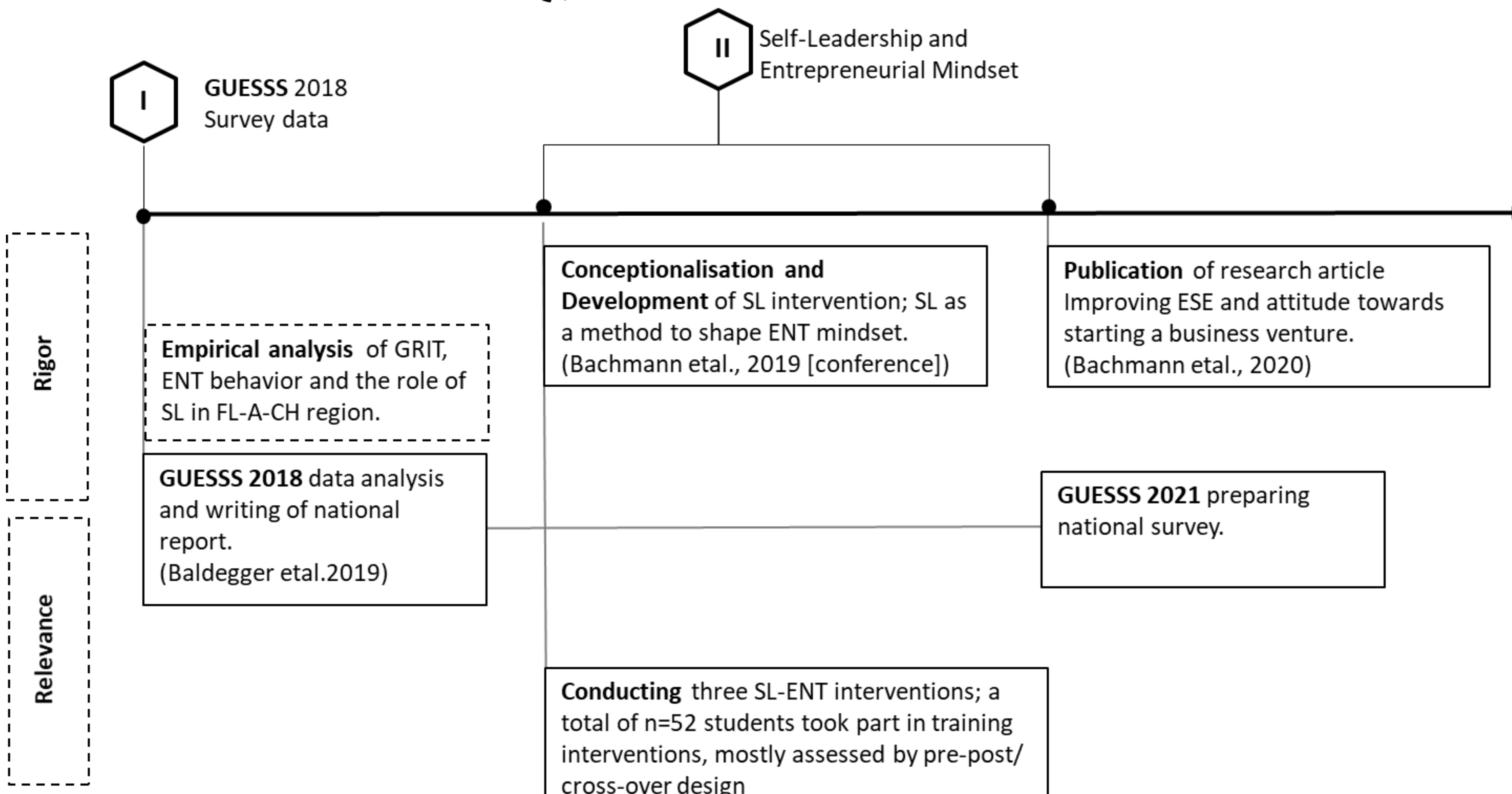
- H1: The priming of entrepreneurship students with entrepreneurial content increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy compared to an active control group.
- H2: The priming of entrepreneurship students with entrepreneurial content increases their positive attitude towards starting a new business venture compared to an active control group.

A randomized controlled trial has been conducted. Therefore, 98 students have been assigned to priming receivers or the active control group. Both hypothesis have been confirmed.

Our findings help to develop a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the widespread practice of storytelling and case-study teaching in entrepreneurial education. Triggering role model specific behavior is possible. Case-based teaching style and the application of entrepreneurial storytelling might act as natural priming in an educational context.

(Bachmann et al., 2020)

## Research Framework



\* Bachmann, A., Maran, T., & Furtner, M. (2019). Developing entrepreneurial minds through self-leadership strategies. Conference contribution Presented at the G-Forum 2019, Vienna, Austria.  
 \* Bachmann, A.K., Maran, T., Furtner, M., Brem, A. and Welte, M. (2020). "Improving entrepreneurial self-efficacy and the attitude towards starting a business venture". Review of Managerial Science, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 18-39, doi: 10.1007/s11846-020-00394-0.  
 \* Baldegger, U., Bachmann, A., Furtner, M. & Maran, T. (2019). Unternehmerische Absichten und Aktivitäten von Studierenden an der Universität Liechtenstein. Ergebnisse für die Universität Liechtenstein aus dem Global University Entrepreneurship Spirit Survey (GUESSS 2018). Vaduz: Universität Liechtenstein.  
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\*Publication as a result of current project.