

STVARANJE BOLJE BUDUĆNOSTI KROZ UČENJE ZA PODUZETNIŠTVO U OSNOVNIM I SREDNJIM ŠKOLAMA

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Sažetak

Svrha učenja za poduzetništvo je osigurati sudjelovanje djece od najranije dobi, kako bi vidjeli svoje okruženje drugačije i o njemu promišljali te utjecali na situacije s kojima se susreću. Škole imaju važnu ulogu u pružanju takvog okruženja. Pojednostavljeno, škole su mjesta u kojima djeca stječu obrazovanje u različitim područjima uz utjecaj i uključenost velikog broja čimbenika. To su školska uprava, nastavnici, učenici, kreatori kurikuluma, stvaraoči nastavnih materijala, a neposredno poslodavci i roditelji. U zemljama EU, a i u ostalim zemljama, postoji jako uvjerenje kako jednom kada je pripremljen odgovarajući kurikulum te nastavni materijali koji uključuju poduzetnička obilježja, započinje izobrazba školske uprave i nastavnika u skladu s tim i na taj način ih se povezuje s poslovnim svijetom. Na taj način doprinose osobnom i društvenom razvitku svakog pojedinca uključenog u proces kao i gospodarskom rastu zemlje u cjelini. Imajući na umu prethodno navedeno, predstaviti ću Vam školski model u kojem se učenje za poduzetništvo promovira na najvišoj školskoj razini, baveći se pri tome pitanjima važnosti učenja za poduzetništvo, u ranijoj dobi posebno, stvarajući tako konceptualni okvir i način provedbe učenja za poduzetništvo na institucionalnoj razini, odnosno u školi.

CREATING BETTER FUTURES THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to ensure that children, from a very young age, participate in entrepreneurship education and begin to see and read their surroundings differently, think differently and make changes in any situations they encounter. Schools play an important role in providing such an environment. Schools, in simple terms, are the places where education is provided to children in different fields. However there are a number of agents involved in school education. These are school administrations, teachers, learners, curriculum designers, developers of teaching materials and indirectly employers and parents. There is a strong belief in EU countries as well as other countries nowadays that once all these staff prepare appropriate curricula and teaching materials including characteristics of an entrepreneur, train their administration and teachers accordingly and relate themselves to the business world. This will contribute to the personal and social development of learners and economic growth of the country. With all this in mind in this paper I will present a school model where entrepreneurship education is promoted at the highest level of the school, dealing with the issues of the importance of entrepreneurship education, at early ages in particular, creating a conceptual framework and how this can be done at institutional level to promote entrepreneurship education.

Key words: Entrepreneurship education, innovation, experiential learning, communication, cooperation, characteristics of an entrepreneur, self-employment and organizational effectiveness

Introduction

In 2000s, globalization, climate changes, the rise in the percentage of old people in the population and the arising economic crisis wave in Europe have led many world countries, in Europe in particular, to determine new goals, to prepare new work schedules and to develop different working methods in order to enhance competition, revive the economy, create employment and ensure social integration. In this sense, Education and Training 2010 Lisbon Work Programme, the 2007 Oslo Agenda aimed at entrepreneurship training in Europe, 2006 European Reference Framework for Key Competences, within the scope of Lifelong Learning, 2008 Small Business Act, European Union 2020 Strategy and Action Plan, 2012 Building Entrepreneurial Mindsets and Skills in the EU, 2012 Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe: National Strategies, Curricula and Learning Outcomes, 2012 Charter for Entrepreneurial Learning: The keystone for growth and jobs are of great significance in Europe.

In line with changing expectations, the demands of the business world, especially from the education sector have become differentiated. The entrepreneurship, innovativeness and creativity of individuals in education and research settings have come into prominence. In this sense, within the rules of morality, besides developing individuals' skills like being enthusiastic about learning, open to innovation and change, being communicative, solving problems or converting challenges into opportunities-improving features such as thinking, evaluating, planning, programming, managing, producing and competing under appropriate conditions have also become crucial.

Thus, authorities emphasize that entrepreneurship should be looked at from a different perspective, a new suitable model should be developed and put into practice right away. Developing individuals' entrepreneurship characteristics starting from a young age at each level of education and taking into consideration their needs is being envisioned in the newly formed model of approaching entrepreneurship education.

It has also been envisioned that an approach like this will enable individuals to have different visions, to get into the habit of producing and sharing and to prepare a future for themselves besides being claimed to make an important contribution to social and economic development and envisaged again to take the necessary measures in the education system.

These results are significant in human life or in a society in terms of notifying the place, the meaning and importance of entrepreneurship. However, it is much more important to make the individuals attain these characteristics through education. Therefore, in this study, the features of entrepreneurship are introduced within a conceptual framework and how, under which circumstances, with whose help they can be adopted is discussed. The matter is evaluated in respect of school factors and the probable reflection and impact of a collective study in the field of entrepreneurship on pupils' achievement and social culture is emphasized.

Conceptual framework

In order to read and understand the recent developments, mental change and expectations in the field of entrepreneurship and present a much more suitable model in education, several concepts need to be examined.

In the classical model, entrepreneur or entrepreneurship reminds us of investment, business planning, site provision, employment, management, product, customer, profit and these concepts only interest the adult group doing these jobs. However, nowadays, a reality in which employment opportunities are narrowed down, competition is increasing, social balance is destroyed and human satisfaction has gained importance is encountered in many world countries. In other words, a dynamic and changeable process is being experienced and expectations may vary at any moment. For this reason, in order to achieve a sustained success, the necessity and importance of examining the issue from a broader perspective and developing a different model of approach is perceived extensively day by day.

In this regard, within the present education policy and strategy of the European Union, *entrepreneurship* is evaluated within the scope of life-long learning and is considered in a knowledge based society as a necessary condition for the *personal satisfaction, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment* of the citizens. For example; it has been especially emphasized in the EU 2020 Strategy that it is necessary for the active teenagers to develop their *creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship* skills in order to achieve the capability required for new jobs. While evaluating entrepreneurship within the scope of this strategy, a long process which includes the whole life is mentioned. It appears that the individual entrepreneur in this process has not only economic objectives but also a social mission. It is believed that the economic values gained after many phases on the way to entrepreneurship will turn into social values and therefore the individual will obtain social prosperity and happiness at the end. In this respect, it is argued in some studies that there is a close relationship between the entrepreneurial potential of a society and the development of the country they are living in. In one of them for instance, it is claimed that Reading, writing and mathematical skills are required for individuals but not enough condition for a successful adult life. That means individuals also need some social skills to sustain their lives successfully. In another study, a comparison is made between the achievements of people in International PISA Test and their perceived entrepreneurial competence. Our attention is drawn in this study to the reality that Singapore and Republic of Korea achieved a rank in the top of PISA Mathematic Test but their perceived entrepreneurial proficiency level is very low. Whereas, the case in Spain and The United Arab Emirates is the other way round. These examples clearly illustrate that entrepreneurship, as a social skill, has a significant impact on the development of a country. David Bornstein extensively discusses this issue in his book titled "How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas" and argues that *a social entrepreneur has the ability to make changes in a systematic way starting from the behaviours and perceptions of the people in a country.* (p:2)

In European Reference Framework for Key Competences, entrepreneurship is defined as “*an individual's ability to turn ideas into action.*” and claimed that it includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace. Here, the individual's talent and craft in converting his/her thoughts into action comes forefront; however, it is explained that in order for the individual to perform in this sense at a certain level, he/she also needs abilities in planning and managing a business besides having characteristics such as a positive attitude towards innovations, the ability to make a difference and willingness to take risks. It is understood that such characteristics the individual has gained can be used in daily life, in society and in the workplace.

Within the scope of South East European Countries Entrepreneurship Learning Project carried out since 2009, *a more systematic, comprehensive and sustainable* structure is trying to be formed compatible with European Union Policy. In this structure, there are *teachers, schools and businesses* including the private sector. It is also important to develop a substructure including teacher education, programmes and other teaching materials and fostering a mechanism in which good practice examples (local, regional, national and international) can be shared

In the Project activities and educational instruments improved for this purpose, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is defined as: *‘converting individual's thoughts into action, and entrepreneurship education as; ‘an education process in which children can gain the thought of entrepreneurship from the very beginning of their education, can comprehend its meaning, can experience and share these experiences.’* Here, it is mentioned that entrepreneurship is not only business, management, product, marketing, and money, but there exist some other elements directly affecting the running of the process and its efficiency.

Apart from these developments, another reason that makes an entrepreneur or entrepreneurship important and increases interest in this field are the features attributed to a successful entrepreneur in many studies. For example; a successful entrepreneur is;

- willing and eager to learn; likes research
- sensitive to criticism as well as open to innovations and change
- able to overcome difficulties and dares and strives to be different. Competes well
- not assuming a helpless state in case of uncertainties. Sees what the others cannot and thinks differently from what is available. Knows that there are multiple ways of solving problems and produces innovative solutions for the problems and puts them into practice bravely
- uses his/her imagination well, relates intuitively with what is possible
- has self-discipline. Controls his/her feeling and desires
- Makes right calculations as to what to do or what not to do
- Have managerial and leading skills as well as language and communication skills
- Has goal and success-oriented approach. Cares about efficiency of his/her work and quality of his products.
- Optimistic about events. Responsibility, determination, coherence, reliability and sustainability are basic characteristics of an entrepreneur.

There is a general belief that these characteristics will increase people's interest and desires to do new and different things. It is also believed that they will develop different thinking skills, have a planned and programmed studying habit and finally, they will certainly lead them to success.

In summary, entrepreneurship is now perceived very differently. It concerns almost all aspects of human life, includes different concepts within itself and is associated with many factors. It is also very clear that the above mentioned good traits will carry the individual forward in terms of attitude, behavior, economic and social values. For this reason, it is important and necessary to evaluate the subject comprehensively and holistically in order to prepare a happy and successful future for human beings through entrepreneurship education. It is also important to look at entrepreneur and entrepreneurship from a different point of view and developing different policy and application methods in order to make the individuals attain the above mentioned entrepreneurship characteristics.

The need for a different organisational and educational approach (school based)

Entrepreneurship has been conceptually evaluated above in order to understand it better and see ahead of us. It is important to know what entrepreneurship is, what kind of characteristics an entrepreneur should have and how they can be reflected to both their lives and the society. However, as highlighted above to create a more systematic, comprehensive and sustainable structure in a society is more important.

In this sense, there is no doubt that the first place that comes in mind is a school (primary and secondary) setting which is mostly defined as *a place where children are taught*. A lot of people remember the school with this lexical meaning.

However, in recent years the concept of the school has been discussed with its multiple functions in a broader context. In this regard;

- Schools are a hub of learning which reveal and develop the potential of children through various programmes or teaching materials. They are open to innovations and invest in new ideas or projects. Successful schools help develop good virtues in children and then help them spread around society. They also develop social responsibilities in children, prepare them for difficulties, help them gain awareness of citizenship and profession, and finally, help protect, develop and transfer the current valuable culture of societies to future generations.

All these specifications clearly indicate that the school is no longer just a place for teaching and learning and it is at the same time a place where school children put their gains into practice and share the outcomes with the people around them in an innovative manner. When these meanings are perceived correctly and presented in a right way it will be more likely to serve the general education goals of the children as well as the development of their entrepreneurship skills.

In terms of the context covered, the school is more meaningful and functional with its internal and external components. That is to say, there are communities within the school (students, teachers and principals) and outside the school (families, local people and business world).

Within the scope of entrepreneurship education, one of the important duties of the school administration is to ensure that all these people work together in a coherent manner. The more communication and cooperation we establish between these people the better results we get in terms of entrepreneurship education. However, before we go further with the formation of communication and cooperation between these different communities it is worth looking at how each is currently perceived within the general framework and get the idea of how the system works first.

When there is a need for a change or innovation in the education system of a country, the case together with the advantages and disadvantages on the part of learners is discussed at the political and policy levels and agreed on first. That means they introduce the ideas behind and the frame of the change. Then they may set out a number of strategic objectives and principles. They may have some suggestions for working plans, programmes and methodology. Apart from these tasks policy makers may sometimes be interested in the results of the applications and ask the relevant people for information. When it comes to the question of 'what policy-makers can do in the scope of entrepreneurship?', first, as this change concerns the different segments of a society, a consensus should be established between these communities. Then a working programme including comprehensive content and an appropriate methodology should be adopted and implemented together. It is also expected from such people to establish the legal basis for the implementation and provide financial support.

School principals are generally thought of as the most effective, competent and responsible persons in schools. They feel themselves responsible for all activities inside and outside school. Their first task is to provide a warm and protective environment for all members of the school including pupils and teachers. The second task of a principal is to get the school ready for education and training. The third task of a principal is to monitor all activities within the school, evaluate and take measures if necessary. The fourth task of a principal may be to participate in the official meetings. In fact these are all the routine activities of a principal. Therefore school principals often appear to be passive. However, a school principal has the position and power to lead everybody in the school and make them active, innovative, creative, productive and eventually entrepreneurs. A school principal can also arrange some activities with other institutions such as schools or workplaces.

Teachers and pupils are the most prominent agents in an education system. Pupils are generally the focal point of all agents such as policy makers, curriculum designers, material writers, school administration, teachers, local education authorities and so on. All these agents feel themselves responsible for the children in their schools. The single purpose of them all is to respond to their children's educational expectations. Therefore, students mostly find everything they need ready in front of them. Providing much more comfortable and fearless learning environments, appropriate curriculum, teaching materials and qualified and competent teachers in the field of entrepreneurship, the job of students gets easier. In this case there should not be any excuse from pupils to learn new information and turn it into new ideas or actions which is the requirement of entrepreneurship education.

As for the teacher, on the one hand he/she has the strongest impact on students either positively or negatively. On the other hand, students mostly believe and rely on their teacher even sometimes take him/her as an example. Therefore, the teacher is able to shape his/her students from one aspect but at the same time has a moral responsibility in this respect.

From the professional point of view, the teachers expect their administrations to provide a more comfortable atmosphere in which they can act freely in making differences and innovations for them. In this sense a teacher is primarily expected to be qualified and competent in his/her field. From the methodological point of view, the duty of the teacher is only to create a warm, protective, innovative, creative and productive environment for his/her students.

Curriculum developers and material writers, if not from the school staff, appear to be outside of the application. However, these people, in order to be responsive to almost all people from policy makers to practitioners, should be engaged in other people's activities. Reforms or innovations appear in minds first, are then placed in policy documents and finally are embedded in curricula and teaching materials to be implemented. Since entrepreneurship is considered to be a competence, the curriculum that will contribute to entrepreneurship education should be competence based or learning outcomes based rather than content based. Therefore the characteristics of an entrepreneur mentioned earlier should be embedded in all suitable curricula and teaching materials.

Finally, there are two groups outside the school who have a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial skills. These are parents and employers. It is natural for these people to deal with educational issues. When it is the issue of entrepreneurship they want to be engaged in the case even more. I am sure most parents will enjoy hearing or learning that their children have gained such entrepreneurial skills. In this regard, by providing sufficient information and guidance it will not be hard to get parents' support. As to the employers, entrepreneurship is already of great interest to them. Such features improve the efficiency of the employees in the workplace which pleases the owners. Business-related work on the other hand is important for children. Children gain work experience in such places. Where and whom children encounter in the workplace can be inspirational for them. Therefore, it is essential to promote entrepreneurship, communication and cooperation between the business sector and the education sector.

It is clear from the above brief introduction of the various agents that each is engaged in entrepreneurship education in a society and has some responsibilities to be fulfilled.

Another important challenge is now to ensure that all these people work together and head in the same direction for the same purpose which is to develop the culture of entrepreneurship in a country. Schools, I believe, play the most important role here which is the focal point in this paper.

A school in this respect should;

- take as a goal with their team as a whole to be an entrepreneur or to bring up a generation of entrepreneurs,
- build communication bridges between groups and organize informative, awareness raising activities,
- provide all the groups, children in particular, with entrepreneurship education,
- determine one or a few study fields (language, art, technology) and prepare appropriate learning materials,
- provide field-specific learning materials and the other entrepreneurship features in the programmes,

- reflect the programmes in the teaching materials,
- provide connections for the children and teachers with the business world,
- prepare and implement programmes in which teachers can improve their own entrepreneurial abilities or abilities to help bring up entrepreneur generations,
- Lastly, ensure that examples of good practice are shared and pioneer its generalization.

To sum up, it can be understood from the above, that the school is the institution that prepares and applies a holistic and systematic approach including the internal and external factors within the scope of goal- and success-focused entrepreneurship programmes. Although officially the school principal is the superior authority who is responsible for the decision making process, he/she is expected to lead and guide the members of the team. In this sense, it seems quite important for all the school members, including the principal to frequently ask themselves the question *'What else can we do for our school and our children?'*

Concluding remarks

This study is presented under a few headings. First, in order to form a relevant intellectual basis on the subject there is a general evaluation part and, second, the introduction of the concepts related to entrepreneurship. The purpose of the conceptual part is to help the readers to recognize and understand correctly the more recently introduced concepts of entrepreneurship. It is now clear that we should look at and evaluate the issue of entrepreneurship from a broader perspective and take into account that the characteristics of an entrepreneur can be used in a wide range of different contexts. It is also important that children attain the characteristics of an entrepreneur in their early school education and use them throughout their lives. In the following part, I focus on a school based structure together with its associated values. In this context the role of a school in entrepreneurial learning is presented and the components of a school with their functions are highlighted and collective activity is emphasised.

As a result, the following points are worth keeping in mind:

- Over the last 10 years the activities carried out at EU level in the entrepreneurial field indicate that there have been economic and social problems in many EU countries as well as some other countries in the world. In this context, it is apparent that such countries have needed new policies and new implementation plans and programmes in the field of entrepreneurship education. It is also apparent that many people who are interested and effective in education and business sector have a strong belief that it is possible to overcome such problems in those countries through entrepreneurship education and provide a better world for children.

- This paper, in this sense, helps us to understand and make a general evaluation of the activities and studies carried out on entrepreneurship education so far and makes contribution to the policies and strategies to be developed for the future of specific countries and school-based practices in particular.
- We see in this paper that the school, including school children, teachers, administrators, curriculum designers, material writers as well as parents, has a central role with the ability to influence a large part of society in the field of entrepreneurship. Considering the relationship with the business community the importance of a school even becomes two-fold.
- There is no need to say that the main target group is the school children although we expect other parties to be engaged in the case or at least play a supportive role in entrepreneurship education in a country. It is emphasized in this paper that the children's gains in terms of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competences at early ages are very important. However it is even more important to put their gains into practice, make them sustainable and take advantages of their entrepreneurial learning. Considering that all the agents inside or outside of the school show great interest in children's education and spend most of their time with children or for children then the school setting is the best place to provide such conditions.
- It also seems to be vital for children, in building their future, to develop some characteristics through entrepreneurship education from very young age. These characteristics: include eagerness to learn and willingness to search; thinking differently, innovation, creation and change; experience and sharing; bravery and self-confidence; success, social inclusion and self-satisfaction. Within the framework of these new concepts, it is more likely that students will learn different ways of thinking, approach the events encountered differently and achieve different results. I am sure all these variations will expand the horizons of the children and allow them to make decisions on their future planning easily that will affect the whole course of their lives. Another reason for the values gained through entrepreneurship education to be meaningful and important is that an individual can use them for different purposes in broader contexts and throughout their lives. For instance, he/she can use them in schools as well as social and work environments.
- The statements made so far clearly indicate that if a collective approach is introduced and successfully applied, the school setting is a fertile environment for creating new ideas and converting them into action. In this sense the role of a school is not only to teach pupils but also enable them to go further than where they are by becoming active in the fields of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. I feel certain that such a situation will increase the success of the school as a whole and will be followed by other successes. Even beyond that, the success of one school will spread in waves to other schools.

- This is what we want to achieve at this stage through entrepreneurship education. We should not forget, however, that besides the personal and institutional development, the values gained at early ages will contribute to economic growth and social, cultural and political developments in the following stages of the process in a country.

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On-line Resources

- <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/why-is-education-so-important.html>
- www.creativitycultureeducation.org
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