

EFFICIENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH INITIAL EDUCATION AND LIFELONG TRAINING AMONG EMPLOYEES OF AN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: *The entrepreneurship does not imply a specific subject to be studied as part of both initial education and lifelong training. With reference to entrepreneurship as a key skill, this may be seen as a teaching method, in which the main role is played by experiential learning and activities specific to projects. In practical terms, the teacher, the one who lays the foundations of all and any type of learning, does not provide students with answers, but helps them to learn, research and identify the correct questions and the best solutions to solve the given situations. The data obtained are the result of a questionnaire applied on a representative sample of teaching staff in the pre-university education in Dâmbovița County, teachers who carry out their activity in academic, technology and vocational high schools. They were used to outline an overview on developing an entrepreneurship education of the employees of an organization through efficient initial education and lifelong training.*

Keywords: *entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, human resource management, education and professional growth.*

JEL Classification: *M53, J24.*

1. Introduction

An incursion in the philosophical world reveals us the fact that man is present in all and any discourse, every philosophical system, trying therefore to picture the human miracle. For example, Aristotle or Kant had a romantic – philosophical outlook on the human being, whereas Marx, Keynes or Galbraith have a realist approach on the extent to which the force of such human being should be administered and distributed in order to generate progress. Consequently, man is the source of the competitive advantage within all organization and this is what all later management researches are to demonstrate.

As dimension of general management, human resource management is expected to ensure that the organization obtains and maintains the workforce employed well trained. The cultivation and the development of employees' skills should constitute a priority even more so in the context of the universalization of the workforce. This means that actions are required in order to identify, assess and meet people's needs, consolidating and developing their skills, their potential, the contributions that they make towards achieving the objectives planned, the capacity to integrate professionally etc. (Armstrong, 2006).

Consequently, we refer to orientation and integration of new employees as well as to inclusion of different types of training in organizational policies. The orientation is the first step to help a new employee to adapt at their workplace. This is a method to help the new employees to get acquainted to the particular aspects of their workplace, issues regarding remuneration, work hours, norms and expectations of the organization. The assessment and the improvement of the set of knowledge and skills of each employee lead to increase of the value of the organization and improvement of one's individual career prospects. The programs intended to form and train employees ensure both update and upgrade of skills and offer employees and organization the guarantee that they can

successfully comply with the requirements of their position and not only that. These arguments support the idea that all organizations should put the spotlight on professional growth, should provide training towards acquiring new skills by employees, skills which are necessary so as to adapt to the new challenges of the future society, on the one hand, and as a method to monitor the performance of human resources, on the other hand.

By particularizing, the school is par excellence a teaching organization. It is required to operate significant mutations at the education level, as education becomes *a process by which the human being is universalized, is brought together on the coordinates of the multiplicity and the value variety* (Cucoş and Bălan, 2008). In the current multidimensional context, marked by challenges of socio-economic, demographic, environmental, technological nature, training one's own personnel represents the key to maintaining and developing educational institutions, and the society, as a whole, through the results materialized in students' skills and performances.

Given the long-term strategic objectives of the EU policies, of which we mention here the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the education and professional training as well as enhanced creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, it is necessary to harmonize projection and reality in the system of pre-university education, at all levels of education and professional training.

Formation and professional growth of the teaching, managing, counseling and control staff involve some particularities and specific finalities of which we will take into consideration throughout this empirical research only the acquisition of some complementary skills by which the category of the activities which may be provided in the current activity is extended, i.e. entrepreneurship education, development and expansion of transversal competences regarding interaction and communication with the economic environment, assuming responsibility on development of entrepreneurial skills among future employees.

2. Entrepreneurship education in pre-university education in EU

Education plays an essential role in acquiring knowledge and in forming skills and attitudes by each and every future employee. The European Parliament and the Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning includes sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. According to the document abovementioned, this key competence refers to the capacity of a person to turn ideas into action. Furthermore, it includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects with a view to meeting goals. It supports the persons in their everyday life, at home and in society and also at work. It helps them to become aware of the context of their activity and to find themselves in the situation so as to take advantages of the opportunities when they present themselves. This represents a foundation for the specific skills and knowledge necessary to those who start or contribute to a social or trading activity. This key competence should encompass the awareness of the ethical values and the promotion of good governance. The goal of the entrepreneurship education is to develop general skills (adaptability to given situations, self-confidence, creativity etc.), and business-specific skills. Therefore, the sense of initiative and the entrepreneurial spirit combine creativity, experiential learning, formation of skills and trigger a change of mentality. The more intense the exposure of students to experiences of entrepreneurial learning is, the more inclined they are to take into consideration entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities at a given time in the future. The consolidation of the entrepreneurship education in schools will have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial dynamism of modern economies. In addition to the fact that the entrepreneurship education contributes to the creation of some new businesses, it turns the young into persons who are more involved and more

enterprising in what they do within the organizations existing in the public or the private sector or at social level.

In this respect, the educational policy on innovation and entrepreneurship has to be implemented in relation to each subject taught in schools and to be included in the teaching methods approached and activities carried out by the teacher, on the one hand, and with regard to the abilities created for students, 21st-century-specific abilities necessary for the adaptation to our ever changing world.

In addition to the positive effects declared (enhanced school involvement, creation of jobs, economic growth, increase in the resilience of the society), the implementation of this idea entails significant challenges (insufficient education of teaching staff, lack of time and resources, lack of a strong leadership and of good governance at the level of educational institutions, unclear national policies in this sector etc.). Some approaches consider appreciative that teachers are intrinsically entrepreneurs as they empathize in order to understand the needs of their “clients”. They show constant interest in improving “services” provided and persevere on a daily basis in order to overcome obstacles and face up to challenges concerned. Nevertheless, the capacity to enterprise quantified by identifying and exploiting opportunities, by planning and managing creative processes, by possessing creative abilities (imagination, critical thinking, capacity to solve problems), the capacity to communicate in an efficient manner, to mobilize resources, to assess the ideas of other people, to manage uncertainty and knowledge behaviors of one’s own aptitudes, motivation, perseverance, are attributes that are absolutely necessary for every teacher to have in order to be able to conduct a coherent process of entrepreneurship education. It is difficult to state the extent to which these are inborn and the proportion to which they are educated. This is the exact reason why the teachers need both efficient education and a lifelong training which should support understanding of conceptions and approaches in the matter of entrepreneurship education, provide them with instruments that are useful to the exchange of good practices within the framework of some efficient training networks. It is training that models, transforms, values teachers and equips them with the capacity to use a project-based approach, to carry out project-based activities, beyond the mere use of textbooks, to apply an interdisciplinary approach, to manage group processes and the interaction within groups, to act as a learning facilitator.

As far as the European Union is concerned, these competences are provided in official documents as part of teachers’ initial education. Therefore, Spain and Malta consider the five competences. Denmark, Estonia, Spain, France, Malta, Poland, United Kingdom, Montenegro and Norway focus on four of these competences in relation to initial education in several cases, for all teachers who teach in primary and secondary schools. Achievement of such competences in relation to initial education is not provided for Romania. They are to be achieved through the offer for lifelong training of teaching staff. We also note that the involvement of the factors concerned with the sector of entrepreneurship (in the economic and social environment as well as NGOs), either through contribution to initial education or by organizing, as part of the curriculum, visits to enterprises, social enterprises, and NGOs, is mentioned in the central recommendations or orientations in five countries: Finland, Latvia, France, Romania and Norway.

While the initial education of teachers will develop a group of newly-trained trainers in the sector of entrepreneurship, a suitable lifelong professional growth is essential for forming skills that all teachers need and for further supporting professional growth of such teachers who were in the position to benefit from initial education (European Commission, 2011a, p. 51).

At the European Union level, the lifelong training in the sector of entrepreneurship is supported by contributions to the development of some general

orientations in this sector, teaching materials, centers of expertise and/or networks of teachers intended to support teachers involved in the teaching – learning – assessment activities. At present, Romania has official orientations included in the entrepreneurship education curriculum for general upper secondary education as well as manuals in this sector.

As a result, the factors contributing and supporting entrepreneurship education for teachers are represented by good initial training of such teachers, lifelong learning programs for entrepreneurship education, involvement of the educational actors in this sector, the community partners, and, last but not least, the educational institutions with entrepreneurial strategy and vision, with strong and supportive leaders. In order to optimize the entrepreneurial training in relation to development of teaching staff's skills, the capacity of the schools to create learning environments which support and stimulate this type of activity is as important as the teachers' personal skills and motivation.

The role of the management in implementing entrepreneurship education is obvious from the perspective of both teachers and students. The innovative teachers are developed in innovative, flexible and efficient environments.

3. Relevance and Importance of Research

Entrepreneurial teachers have a passion for teaching. They are inspirational, open-minded and confident, flexible and responsible — but also, from time to time, rule-breakers. They listen well, can harness and sell ideas and can work student- and action-oriented. They are team players and have a good network (European Union, 2014).

The empirical research begins with the following questions: What skills should be developed throughout initial education so as to ensure the teachers' expertise, regardless of the subject they teach in class?, What would the method for lifelong professional growth and update of teachers' skills be in relation to the evolution of the business environment?, Who should be in charge of an efficient entrepreneurial culture among future employees?, How efficient and effective are acquisitions made throughout training courses on the level of teachers'/students' entrepreneurial training?

The European Commission adopted the "Entrepreneurship 2020" Action Plan and the Communication on "Rethinking Education" in order to emphasize the need to integrate learning into entrepreneurship, in all sectors of education.

Within the framework of the education system, the entrepreneurship education stands at present for an accessory to the curriculum, starting with lower secondary education, and for an optional element as part of a separate subject, such as business or economics, starting with upper secondary education and going upwards.

4. Materials and Methods

The investigative approach on initial education and lifelong training for an efficient entrepreneurship education used a complex research strategy which combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods. We enumerate below the set of methods and techniques used in order to collect information and the goal in relation to which they were used.

4.1. The objectives of the research are:

The main objectives of the empirical research were:

Objective 1: Identification of the perception of the persons interviewed on development of an efficient entrepreneurship education among employees through lifelong learning

Objective 2: Increase of the motivation of teachers working in pre-university education for lifelong training in the sector of Entrepreneurship Education

Objective 3: Identification of the responsibility of lifelong training with a view to developing entrepreneurial skills at organizational level

4.2. The qualitative research regarding the efficient entrepreneurship education among future employees through initial education and lifelong training is based on the following hypotheses:

H1 – Participation to initial education and lifelong training on entrepreneurship is low and varies according to personal criteria (gender, age, curricular area, residence area, seniority, status, type of educational establishment, teacher certification degree).

H2 – The motivation for lifelong training in the sector of Entrepreneurship Education is rather extrinsic than intrinsic.

H3 – The responsibility of lifelong training with a view to developing entrepreneurial skills is seen as falling under the employer’s and not the employee’s responsibilities.

4.3. Documentary Analysis

Reports, policies and studies on entrepreneurial culture in Europe, country reports on entrepreneurship, recommendations of the European Parliament, European Council, National research, development and innovation strategies as well as Need Analysis on education and training in Romania, guides on entrepreneurship education in European countries were studied.

4.4. Selecting the Sample

The sample of teachers from the pre-university education, high school, from Dâmbovița County, involved in the quantitative research, is made of 303 persons of 1,403 in total. The distribution of the questionnaires applied on the teaching staff from the high schools in Dâmbovița County is:

Table 1. Distribution of questionnaire by types of high schools

Total	No of questionnaires	Academic high schools	Technology high schools	National high schools	Vocational high schools
1,403	303	62	131	87	23

Source: authors’ contribution

The questionnaires according to types of high schools were distributed by keeping the proportions of the teachers who teach in these organisations.

The analysis of the research sample shows a majority of female teachers (75.91%), compared to male teachers (24.09%).

The distribution of the sample in line with the age criterion, seniority in education and years served within the organization for the teachers interviewed is presented: below 30 (7.92%), between 31-40 (40.92%), between 41 – 50 (33.33%), between 51 – 50 (14.85%), over 60 (2.97%).

The analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers interviewed indicates respondents between 31 and 40 (40.92% of total); by contrast, the teachers below 30 (2.97%) are represented to the lowest extent; this tendency is the same for all types of high schools under analysis.

Table 2. Sample distribution by seniority in education

	Years	Percent
1	below 5	8.58%
2	6-10	13.53%
3	11-20	46.20%
4	over 20	31.68%

Source: authors' contribution

In terms of seniority in education, the analysis of the sample researched indicates teaching staff with a seniority ranging from 11 to 20 years, to the detriment of the teaching staff with seniority below 5 years (8.58%).

With regard to the seniority within the organisation where teachers conduct their main activities, one may see that the seniority of most respondents (30.36%) is below 5, compared to the teachers whose seniority within the organisation exceeds 20 years. We may identify the fluctuation of the teaching staff towards organisations which should ensure their personal and professional growth.

A higher weight is represented by the teachers in the urban areas (75.25%), who carry out their activity compared with the teacher's in the rural areas (24.75%).

Most teachers interviewed have reached a high degree of didactic maturity (first level of qualification – 53.14%, second level of qualification – 21.45%, PhD – 2.97%).

In addition, the selection of the teaching staff took account of the teachers' curricular area, as indicated in the Table below:

Table 3. Distribution of teachers by curricular area

	Curricular area	Percent
1	Language and Communication	25.74%
2	Mathematics and Sciences	25.74%
3	Human and Society	19.80%
4	Arts and Sports	8.91%
5	Technologies	19.80%

Source: authors' contribution

The respondents' analysis in terms of their curricular area proves that the Mathematics and Sciences teachers (25.74%) as well as the Language and Communication teachers (25.74%) are best represented, to the detriment of the arts and sports teachers (8.91%). This is easy to understand if one takes into consideration the high school curriculum, the number of hours allocated by types of high schools, lines of study, qualifications, year of studies.

In relation to the status of the teachers interviewed, tenure teachers have the precedence (83.50%) over the unskilled substitute teachers (0.66%).

5. Discussions:

The empirical research conducted between December 2019 and February 2020, on the basis of the questionnaire applied on the sample presented above, mainly focused on the extent to which the personal criteria (gender, age, curricular area, residence area, seniority and didactic maturity) influences the participation to initial education and lifelong training towards developing an efficient entrepreneurship education among employees. This correlation is presented in the table below:

Table 4. Correlation between participation to initial education and lifelong training and personal characteristics of employees

Teachers' participation to initial education and lifelong training		Development of an efficient entrepreneurship education	Type of educational establishment	Seniority in education	Teacher certification degree	Curricular area	Age	Gender	Status	Residence area
Development of an efficient entrepreneurship education	Pearson correlation	1	-.153(**)	-.121(*)	-.128(*)	-0.020	-.122(*)	0.036	0.063	0.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.008	0.036	0.026	0.731	0.033	0.531	0.274	0.279
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303

Source: authors' contribution

The threshold of signification – below 0.005 is reached in case of the connection between teachers' participation to initial education and lifelong training for development of an efficient entrepreneurship among teachers, type of educational establishment, seniority in education, teacher certification degree and age of the teachers interviewed. The effect of the development of entrepreneurship education in the context of teachers' participation to initial education and lifelong training is not influenced by the curricular area to which teachers belong, gender of the respondents, their status and residence area.

In relation to the correlation between the development of an efficient entrepreneurship education among teachers and the type of educational establishment, Pearson coefficient is - .153, inverse connection. This result indicates the fact that the type of educational establishment influences the respondents' opinion on development of an efficient entrepreneurship education among teachers through participation to initial education and lifelong training courses. The number of respondents by association is 303 while Sig's value is 0.008. This fact partially validates **H1** – Participation to initial education and lifelong training on entrepreneurship is low and varies according to personal criteria (gender, age, curricular area, residence area, seniority, status, type of educational establishment, teacher certification degree).

The teachers interviewed showed interest in attending lifelong training programs completed by accumulation of credits. This is firstly due to the fact that it complies with legal requirements (obtaining 90 credits every five years) and secondly because it places the teacher much better in the further selection grid (merit award, transfer, membership to some commissions and control body of the minister etc.). A little over 58% of the persons interviewed agree with the aspects mentioned above. Nonetheless, a percentage of 41.3% suggest the contrary, i.e. they link their participation to training programs to causes which are highly more important than the credit granting system. When analyzing the teachers' motivation for lifelong training in the sector of Entrepreneurship education, in terms of internal factors, we only focused on their desire to grow personally and professionally, a desire integrated as a lifelong learning principle, as shown in the table below:

Table 5. Teachers' motivation for lifelong training in the sector of Entrepreneurship education

Type of high school	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not important	Total
Technology high school	38	36	47	10	131
	29.0%	26.7%	35.9%	7.6%	100.0%
Academic high school	19	28	14	0	61
	31.1%	45.9%	23.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Vocational high school	5	11	4	3	23
	21.7%	47.8%	17.4%	13.0%	100.0%

National high school	19	35	26	7	87
	21.8%	39.1%	29.9%	8.0%	100.0%
Total	81	110	91	20	302
	26.8%	36.8%	30.1%	6.6%	100.0%

Source: authors' contribution

63.6% of the persons interviewed consider that participation to lifelong training programs in the sector of Entrepreneurship education represents an important stage in their career evolution, in particular in the current economic context, while 30.1% of the teachers see this as not very important. The teachers have many career advancement opportunities; they may run for administrative positions (principals, inspectors) and access specialty management positions (head of commission, person in charge of curricular area etc.). The advancement possibilities are correlated with their performances; however, there is no standardized career advancement system. Many times people go up the career ladder on an ad hoc basis.

With reference to external factors which may determine teachers' participation to training courses on entrepreneurship, we present the motivations of the teaching staff in the table below:

Table 6. External factors which motivate teaching staff to participate to lifelong training programs in the sector of Entrepreneurship education

External factors	Score
Current requirements of the national lifelong training system	1.17
Policies of school organizations	1.01
Course characteristics (themes, utility, credits granted, methods, provider, duration, scholarships/awards)	1.14
Conjectural factors (e.g. school involvement in a programs with a training component)	0.90
Exchange of good practices/experiences in this sector	0.27
Material benefits	0.34

Source: authors' contribution

It is gratifying that the people interviewed are willing to grow professionally by attending lifelong training programs intended for the sector of entrepreneurship. The motivation of their attendance of such courses is secondly linked to the characteristics of the program.

The aspects presented above (Table 5, Table 6) validate hypothesis **H2** – The motivation for lifelong training in the sector of Entrepreneurship Education is rather extrinsic than intrinsic.

With regard to the responsibility of an employee's lifelong training in general, their adaptation to new technologies and development of skills in the sector of Entrepreneurship education, the responses of the teaching staff in pre-university education, high school are presented in the table below:

Table 7. Responsibility of lifelong training with a view to developing entrepreneurial skills

Responsibility of lifelong training	Score
It is the responsibility of the employer	1.24
It is the responsibility of the employee	1.51
It is a right regulated by the Statute of the Teacher	1.35
I do not know	1.23

Source: authors' contribution

For the teaching staff interviewed, we may summarize that the responsibility of the lifelong training falls under the employer's responsibilities. A genuine analysis of the teacher's activity, analysis which goes beyond the formalism of the annual self-assessment on didactic performance, may lead to the identification of teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Failure to get to know the aspects requiring improvement may not lead to designing a realistic plan of professional growth for the teacher concerned. This fact validates hypothesis **H3** – The responsibility of lifelong training with a view to developing entrepreneurial skills is seen as falling under the employer and not the employee.

6. Conclusion:

Shifting the entrepreneurship education from the status of extracurricular instrument of business practice to the status of intrinsic element of the curriculum which includes a large range of entrepreneurial capacities and skills will entail significant changes in the educational system.

The empirical research conducted has pursued to highlight the role of the organization towards developing entrepreneurial skills for an efficient lifelong training among future employees. Through the teaching staff interviewed, the empirical research shows that once you manage to go beyond the formalism of the employees' annual assessment you may design an authentic professional growth plan for any sector requiring improvements within the organization. The quality of the educational act is a priority to all and any teacher involved in the complex endeavor of permanent education. Following the correlation between the performance of the teachers and some results of their students (graduation rate in the system, results in national examinations, graduation averages, results in Olympics and competitions), we are not inaccurate when stating that students begin to have good and very good results in relation to all indicators to which the teachers' assessment is also connected. Therefore, the development of entrepreneurial skills among teachers through Lifelong training will also have an impact on the results of the students and their manner to adapt to the new requirements of the economy nowadays.

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