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The Improvement of Entrepreneurship Education Management in Latvia

Veronika Bikse^{1*}, Inga Riemere², Baiba Rivza³

¹University of Liepaja, Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Akadēmijas laukums 1, Rīga, LV-1050

²Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Akadēmijas laukums 1, Rīga, LV-1050

³Latvian Academy of Sciences, Latvia, Akadēmijas laukums 1, Rīga, LV-1050

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to create and evaluate a theoretical framework for entrepreneurship education management, and on the basis of this, to work out propositions for the development of entrepreneurship education management. In the first part of the paper there is a historic overview and analysis of the changes that have taken place in the entrepreneur's role and functions over time until the present day, the essence of entrepreneurship education is examined, and a theoretical framework for entrepreneurship education management is elaborated. This is evaluated in the second part of the paper, using the expert panel method and the SWOT method. The results of the research indicate that implementation of the created theoretical entrepreneurship education framework demands a review of subject standards and an increased understanding of entrepreneurship education by teachers and school management, as well as the necessity of managerial, financial and legal support.

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1. Introduction

2.

Modern day challenges to the entrepreneur and the paradigm shift in education are essentially changing also the curriculum of entrepreneurship education. Nowadays it has a much wider significance, as it includes not only acquiring theoretical knowledge, but it also aims at fostering creativity, innovation and self-employment. (EK, 2012) In addition to knowledge, an opportunity should be given to young people for developing new skills and competences. These skills should be developed in a person from childhood by implementing various entrepreneurship education programmes at all levels of education, and through lifelong learning. The task of

*Corresponding Author: Veronika Bikse. Tel.: (+371) 29152582
e-mail address: vbikse@lu.lv

entrepreneurship education is not only building new businesses, but most important of all is the development of entrepreneurial competencies that would help young people to be creative and to act in a socially responsible way in any life situation. Therefore, nowadays the role of the education system and policy makers in the training of the younger generation for entrepreneurship has increased significantly as “an efficient mechanism for increasing entrepreneurial activity...” (Martinez et al., 2010) The OECD (2011) report on skills for innovation and research suggests that government policy needs to pay more attention to skill development and the flexibility of those in academic careers. The OECD report also argues that entrepreneurial skills and capabilities are an essential element for an innovative system, but acknowledges that there is no strong evidence that correlates entrepreneurship education with any subsequent performance.

In order to address the issues of entrepreneurship education and its management, it is important to maintain an effective government management policy. In terms of implementing entrepreneurship in education at all levels in the local community, the government can promote entrepreneurship education by developing a strategy that will target educational institutions, by helping local businesses to adapt to the curriculum and by supporting the development of programmes.

The most important problem of entrepreneurship education in Latvia is insufficient government policy commitment; a unified strategy has not been developed for entrepreneurship education management. (EC, 2012) Without adopting such an approach, one cannot expect the formation of new companies, the commercialization of scientific results, innovation and technology transfer.

The purpose of the study is to create and evaluate a theoretical framework for entrepreneurship education management, and on the basis of this to work out propositions for the elaboration of entrepreneurship education management.

Nowadays the essence and the theoretical explanations of the contents of the concepts entrepreneur, entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurship education are undergoing change, assigning to them a much broader meaning in the context of developing entrepreneurial competences in the education system. This makes us look for answers to the questions of how to explain these notions from a theoretical point of view, and how entrepreneurship education management should be implemented.

3. 2. The entrepreneur's new role and entrepreneurship education

The objectives and content of entrepreneurship education change in correlation with the entrepreneur's role in society. Consequently an understanding of the essence of entrepreneurship education management should start with clarifying the concept of entrepreneur, showing its relationship to the concepts of entrepreneurial ability and entrepreneurial competence.

Until the second half of the 19th century the concept entrepreneur was associated with risk-taking and the employment of the factors of production, but since the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century this concept has been understood in a greatly broader sense - an entrepreneur is a business manager with special abilities (Marshall, 1953); a creative personality and an initiator of innovation (Schumpeter, 1983); the driving force of production, who takes the initiative and receives profit or loss for the used time, involved efforts and entrepreneurial ability (McConnell and Brue, 1999).

Historically the concept of entrepreneur has essentially grown, and alongside the development of this concept we observe how the concept of entrepreneurial ability has been defined and developed. According to Marshall, such ability initially was an individual's special ability to run a business, which was either inherited or had been taken over from his (or her) parents. From the second half of the 20th century onwards, economic theory mentions a fourth factor of production: the entrepreneur with advanced entrepreneurial ability.

Up to end of the 20th century an economic approach to human capital had the dominant role, accordingly the functions of an entrepreneur and the development of his ability were associated with satisfying market requirements. The role of the entrepreneur was related to the performance of an economic function in order to ensure successful activity of the enterprise, and to satisfy market demand. The manager's role was highlighted as the most important from among the various roles of an entrepreneur.

But at the end of the 20th century, information technologies were rapidly developing and the production structure was changing. There was an ever-growing demand for different types of services, and the proportion of

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