

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE IN RURAL SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) in SMEs is greatly different than the traditional marketing in large organizations. Higher education institutions generally instruct traditional marketing through orthodox and conventional teaching pedagogies. In consequence, the literature highlights that graduate entrepreneurs are struggling in EM during the start-up phases of their small and medium sized entrepreneurial ventures. Also causing many entrepreneurs to fail and unable to contribute to the economy. To address this contemporary problem, this study has used multiple case studies and triangulated its findings with a focus group discussion. This study has explored the EM challenges during the start-up phase faced by the graduate entrepreneurs who have exposure to both, higher education and practical EM experiences. After the rigorous analysis, four contemporary EM challenges due to the pedagogical gaps in entrepreneurship education are discovered. To overcome these challenges, a practical model of EM pedagogy has been developed that is grounded in, the recent entrepreneurship education literature; and the recommendations from the graduate entrepreneurs as well. The EM pedagogy model is practically implementable at business schools worldwide to produce high quality graduate entrepreneurs in the future, which are well-skilled to overcome EM challenges and survive.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Culture, Entrepreneurship Education, Rural, Kazakhstan, School Students.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the Republic of Kazakhstan has aimed to be among the OECD top-30 developed countries. In this regard, the development of entrepreneurial culture among the population is critically important for the country due to the potential of entrepreneurial activities to contribute to national economic growth and socio-economic development. Entrepreneurship is an economic catalyst that continues to attract the attention of many researchers worldwide, concerning both developed and developing countries. In the latter, the particular issue of promoting rural entrepreneurship has been of great concern due to the relative deprivation of rural areas (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). Even the European Union (2012) has suffered from an economic decline in its rural areas across several countries.

Contributing to economic development, entrepreneurship promotes the progress of communities by stimulating societal values (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). This contribution of entrepreneurial processes is even more amplified in rural areas that already suffer from a lack of resources, infrastructure and economic diversification (Müller, 2016). Theoretical and practical research examining rural entrepreneurship remains lacking, including in terms of how the context affects entrepreneurial practices, and how the latter affect local improvement (Korsgaard et al., 2015; Kasabov, 2016). Studies which have examined rural entrepreneurship have not persuaded governments of the positive influence of entrepreneurial processes on developing rural areas (Korsgaard et al., 2015). The issue of promoting rural entrepreneurship has been the focus of several researchers in developed as well as emerging economies. The Netherlands, Sweden, and France as a part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) have elaborated rural entrepreneurial strategies to promote entrepreneurial activity in their countries. For instance, the European Commission adopted the French National Framework for rural development and granted France a total of € 11.4 billion to develop and implement actions for creating new job opportunities in rural areas. Based on the EAFRD, France promotes the agricultural productive activities, and structures agricultural industry to connect agricultural producers. In the Netherlands, the government has developed special departments to support rural entrepreneurship that aim primarily to promote entrepreneurial activity in villages and rural regions (European Union, 2012).

Contrary to the common belief that ties the entrepreneurial function to certain persons (i.e. individual entrepreneurs and their personal role), Foss & Klein (2012) believe that every actor in the operating environment is actually engaging functionally in the entrepreneurial journey. Therefore, entrepreneurial practice is more than a mere attribution of various resources for the sake of value creation; it is an emphasis on the comprehensive value that entrepreneurs can create (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

According to Baumgartner et al. (2013), entrepreneurial activity in the rural areas manifests a positive impact on the local economy, while changing the quality of rural life and culture (either positively or negatively) and valorizing existing resources. The status quo of rural communities worldwide is characterized by high unemployment due to critical agricultural reforms since the 20th century (Klyver & Foley, 2012; Siemens, 2014). Related negative effects from macroeconomic agricultural policies and reforms can be mitigated by promoting rural entrepreneurship (Rialti et al., 2017; Sá et al., 2018). Despite the limited number of studies on rural entrepreneurship (Eschker et al., 2017), future research is expected to affirm such constructive associations, as the establishment of businesses in rural areas intuitively boosts the creation of new job opportunities as well as decreasing the level of poverty, thus sustaining the rural economy over the long-term (Tweneboah-Koduah & Adusei, 2016). Furthermore, rural entrepreneurship promotes tourism activity in rural areas, especially if entrepreneurial activities involve artistic creativity (Sá et al., 2018). According to Kolehmainen et al. (2016), developing the rural economy is essential to developing a knowledge-based region, despite the existing constraints in terms of public support and availability of resources. Therefore, different SMEs and local governmental institutions are able to enhance the implementation of rural entrepreneurship.

The interest of governments across the globe in supporting SMEs derives from the opportunities that these enterprises create in terms of job prospects, innovativeness, and output growth (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). Therefore, governments formulate policies and reshape the

distribution process of resources to create further incentives in the market for SMEs (Liguori et al., 2018). Such mechanisms stimulate particular entrepreneurial activities, which lead back to the achievement of the expected outcomes of entrepreneurship, leading to the development of the REFLECT Framework by Muñoz & Kimmitt (2019). Governmental support for entrepreneurial activities can be more effective through increasing the rate of engagement and the level of understanding of institutional officials entrusted with functional support for SMEs (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019).

On the particular contextual level, local support offered by municipalities and other local governmental institutions can greatly promote the ratio of rural entrepreneurship, as suggested in the REFLECT Framework. Such support can take the form of local policies, encouragement programmes, designated facilities, and others. Among the various dimensions outlined in the REFLECT Framework, this study focused on the cultural dimension, described as *“an analytical unit by itself which can be observed independently as a distinct factor or in relation to the other dimensions, within or across dimensions”* (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019).

Different obstacles face entrepreneurship in many contexts, and in rural areas they are mainly attributable to cultural issues and poverty (including resources and infrastructure issues). Cultural obstacles can be a great challenge for prospective entrepreneurs themselves, inhibiting them from engaging in entrepreneurial behavior (Sá et al., 2018). Conversely, when surrounded by a supportive culture of entrepreneurship, nascent entrepreneurs are enabled and supported to exchange knowledge and create beneficial networks (Koyana & Mason, 2017; Sá et al., 2018). The criticality of cultural factor for the development of rural entrepreneurship depends on assisting entrepreneurs in benefiting effectively from the established networks, whether formal or informal. Hence, this study examines the rural cultural perspective towards entrepreneurship as a context-specific factor.

Being surrounded by a culture that does not consider entrepreneurial failures as a waste of time or hold a pessimistic perspective towards entrepreneurial initiatives, young entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, will be then more confident and motivated to reveal entrepreneurial aspirations and discuss entrepreneurial ideas. Such cultures, especially in rural areas, where children and nascent entrepreneurs are affected greatly by the surrounding atmosphere and societal views, can play a major role in their entrepreneurial paths (Grace & Smith, 2016). In addition, Goyal & Sharma (2018) argued that the social and peer environment surrounding individuals might not be sufficiently encouraging for nascent entrepreneurs to proceed with their entrepreneurial dreams. Hence, young ambitious individuals migrate from the rural areas, as their culture lacks the comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial picture. Despite individual young entrepreneurs' capability to launch their own ideas and businesses which overcomes the lack of opportunities they have compared to their urban peers; the lack of motivational support from the prevailing culture often makes it hard to promote entrepreneurial behavior in rural areas (Goyal & Sharma, 2018).

Returning to the issue of endemic poverty in rural areas, economic stagnation can be significantly reduced through the emergence of rural entrepreneurship, which is why astute governments strive to support this form of entrepreneurship, as explained previously (Abdullah et. al., 2018). Attracting foreign investment for local skilled entrepreneurs assists in setting the path for entrepreneurial initiatives and growth, which can decrease unemployment while preserving intrinsic resources within rural areas for long-term sustainability (Abdullah et. al., 2018). Empowering entrepreneurs entails assisting them in exploiting available (and accessible)

resources effectively and responsibly and increasing their chances of sustainability and growth. An empirical investigation concluded that the main barriers to promoting rural entrepreneurship are the following:

“Lack of trained personnel, infrastructure, absence of accredit policy that addresses the specific needs of enterprises, insufficient provision of funds by the government, lack of awareness of entrepreneurship education, rampant political and bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of counselling and orientation on the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes, and lack of systematic plans that can address the existing gap of entrepreneurship training in rural communities” (Abdullah et. al., 2018, p. 61).

Given the widespread prevalence of rural entrepreneurship barriers, skilled rural graduates and employees do not thus perceive success opportunities in their rural regions for their entrepreneurial ideas. Therefore, a brain drain to urban areas seeking commensurate opportunities further exacerbates the poor economic performance of rural areas (Azari et al., 2017; Lang & Fink, 2019). This migration of skilled brains graduates and employees negatively affects any attempts to improve the economic situation of disadvantaged regions, especially as most of remaining residents tend to be older people (Lang & Fink, 2019; Lang et al., 2013). Therefore, a significant interest in rural entrepreneurial is of critical importance for all stakeholders. Since promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas leads to the development and creation of new opportunities and jobs. This will have a direct impact on solving the major chronic problems of urbanization in developing countries (e.g. poor quality housing, overloaded urban infrastructure, air pollution, and traffic congestion etc.) (Dabson, 2001). Coping with this migration requires large and costly projects, but the root cause can be addressed more cost effectively and sustainably by promoting sustainable economic development and employment in rural areas, and entrepreneurialism is essential for this aim.

Markley et al. (2015) identified particular challenges to rural entrepreneurship as market-related, societal, governmental, and geographical barriers. Stam (2015) consequently listed culture in relation to encouraging entrepreneurial behavior in the framework that he developed, which embraced the major factors in an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The role of culture is nebulous and highly contextual; Campos et al. (2017) argued about the relevance and the role of culture in promoting entrepreneurship, especially in the rural areas. Nascent entrepreneurs flourish with motivation, encouragement, and positivity, as well as effective processes and programmes to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship (Campos et al., 2017; Miles & Morrison, 2018).

Several notable studies have examined the significance of culture in governments' attempts to promote entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. Fortunato (2014) considered cultural factors to comprise a form of intangible capital as fundamental to entrepreneurialism as more conventional financial resources, and Woodside et al. (2016) concluded that a positive culture is directly and encouragingly linked to the level of entrepreneurial activities. Stimulating young school children and individuals in rural regions to adopt the entrepreneurial path is a major challenge for governments, which depends critically also on the nature of support programmes provided to these individuals (Miles & Morrison, 2018). Therefore, teaching nascent entrepreneurs with practical skills on how to start their businesses, broaden their networks, and understand market facilitators can be effective tool to promote entrepreneurial activity properly in the rural communities in Kazakhstan.

In terms of geographical barriers, location of rural areas away from the urban centralized cities limits the flow of information to entrepreneurs into these areas, and might in some cases restrict the expansion of networks (Hustedde, 2018). As discussed earlier in this section, the fact that skilled young people are migrating from rural regions to cities seeking more profitable opportunities entrenches the stagnation of these areas, leaving behind less educated and ageing populations with less entrepreneurial abilities (Fortunato, 2014; Hustedde, 2018). In an attempt to promote rural entrepreneurship, Markley et al. (2005) suggested that institutional focus should be placed on the young generation in these regions, encouraging young people to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations. Exposing rural youth to the practicalities of business and the necessary business skills along with technical mentoring can increase rural youth entrepreneurial engagement (Hustedde, 2018). Governments and society need to understand that entrepreneurial activity is not merely a simple technical support that can be provided by private companies or public institutions. Rather it is an embracing, engaging, and motivating culture that triggers innovativeness and aspirations (Hustedde, 2018). Furthermore, Dabson et al. (2010) suggested integrating entrepreneurship within the educational curriculum, in order to promote a more supportive culture for entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGY

The research has been implemented upon realization of the State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020. The northern part of the country was chosen as the test ground due to its vicinity to the capital city (Nur-Sultan). Questionnaire was the main method of data collection. To achieve the aim of this research 1000 questionnaires were distributed to 500 school students aged between 14-18 years old. Questionnaires were also distributed to 500 parents in the rural schools of Akmola, Kostanay and North-Kazakhstan regions. All respondents or their legal representatives gave a voluntarily consent to collect and process data and the right to withdraw in a written form.

To ensure quality and credibility, the questionnaires technique was face-to-face, conducted at the place of residence of the respondents. The questionnaires for school students and their parents were similar in nature, structure, and content, and in most cases were identical. The purpose of developing similar questions allows comparing the opinions of both categories of respondents on each theme and issue related to the topic under the present study.

Prior to developing the questionnaires and moving into the data collection stage, a thorough analysis of the literature on the research topic was first conducted. Accordingly, a proper and appropriate programme and research tools were developed, which allowed to organise the field studies after preparing the questionnaires. Subsequent to the stage of data collection, statistical analysis has been performed with IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0. The analysis has been carried out with descriptive statistics in particular the output of frequency tables and variables conjugacy tables.

The questionnaires were designed to identify several issues such as how the respondents (students and parents) understood the meaning of the word “entrepreneurship”; their knowledge of the current situation regarding the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas; their attitudes toward innovations in entrepreneurship; their assessments and self-assessments of entrepreneurial skills; whether they themselves possessed the such skills; and the current situation regarding the formation of entrepreneurial culture in rural schools of Kazakhstan; the attitude and level of attractiveness of entrepreneurial activity as a potential profession of students

of rural schools of Kazakhstan; and the necessary actions aimed at developing entrepreneurship in rural areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from collected detail lustrate individual similarities and differences factors that influence respondents' perceptions of entrepreneurship. The analysis of the two sets (students and their parents) of data showed the existing culture in the designated rural area of Kazakhstan.

Students had diverse understandings of entrepreneurship. It was reported to be understood as *“doing business”* (39.6%), *“any activity leading to profit”* (36%), *“self-employment”* (19.2%), and *“the creation of a new innovative product”* (4.8%). 0.2% of students suggested their own answer option, suggesting the option of *“making a decision”*.

Parents' answers correlated with students' survey results. Parents understood entrepreneurship as *“doing business”* (40.4%), *“any activity leading to profit”* (39.6%), *“self-employment”* (16.2%), and *“the creation of a new innovative product”* (3.4%).

The data analysis indicates that students know how entrepreneurship is developing in their rural community. The vast majority of students (99.4%) specified various types of industries as being *“most developed”* in their regions, while choosing agriculture as the main field of industry (80.2%). Almost all parents indicated a branch of entrepreneurial activity, among which the highest level (82%) of the respondents agreed on the importance of agriculture. The high percentages of families in terms of students and parents in perceiving entrepreneurship reflects the area's knowledge and understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship (Stam, 2015; Grace & Smith, 2016; Campos et al., 2017). The domination of agricultural entrepreneurship in the surveys is attributable to the actual economic activities that predominate in the studied areas (Akmola, Kostanay, and North-Kazakhstan), which specialise in the agriculture industry and which are considered as essentially agricultural regions within the country. Other major entrepreneurship activities selected by student and parent participants included transport/network (9.8/11.4%), industry (4.0/3.6%), services (2.0/1.8%), hotel and tourism service (1.4/0.2%), and others (2.6/1%) (Respectively) (Table 1).

Name of entrepreneurship activity	Students (%)	Parents (%)
Agriculture	80.2	82
Transport, trade and communication services	9.8	11.4
Industry	4.0	3.6
Services (dry cleaning, laundry, car maintenance and repair, furniture, clothes and shoes repair, etc.)	2.0	1.8
Hotel services	1.4	0.2
Legal services, translators' and notarial services, design services, architect services, manufacturing management, auditing services, etc.)	0.6	0.2
Other (shops, commerce, sales, shopping centers)	1.4	0.4
Didn't answer the question	0.6	0.4

The importance of innovations was recognized by 85.8% of rural school students, who expressed a positive attitude to innovation (new ideas and perspectives), confirming their

parents' opinion that the students' attitude to innovations is quite positive (66.2%). This shows students' high interest in innovations and new ideas.

The analyzed data gave a demonstration of students' awareness of the skills required for an entrepreneur, such as quick-wittedness (28.6%), creativity (24.2%), dedication (13.4%), problem solving and decision making (10.2%), time management (7.4%), hard work (7%), innovative (6%) and open mindedness (1.2%). Such skills as mobility (0.6%), knowledge (0.6%), and flexibility (0.2%) were selected by a negligible minority of students (Table 2).

Skills	Entrepreneur required skills (%)	Entrepreneurial skills gained by students (%)	Entrepreneurial skills, developed by school (%)
Quick-witted	24.6	28.6	23.4
Creativity	19.6	24.2	33.2
Dedication	19.2	13.4	9.6
Problem solving and decision making	10.8	10.2	7.8
Time management	5.4	7.4	4.4
Hard work	8.4	7	4
Innovative	10.2	6	14.6
Open mindedness	0.6	1.2	1
Mobility	0.2	0.6	0.2
Knowledge	0.8	0.6	0.2
Flexibility	0	0.2	0.2

According to 64.8% of students, the above entrepreneur's personal skills can be developed through attending various extra-curricular clubs, subjects, and activities in rural schools (Hustedde, 2018; Miles & Morrison, 2018). Parents' assessment of the personal entrepreneurial skills of their children was similar, as revealed by comparative analysis. According to the results, "quick-wittedness" was considered the leading quality required from entrepreneurs (19.8%), which 30.6% of participants considered to be possessed by students of rural schools. The majority of parents (66%) also believed that an entrepreneur should be informed about the latest news and events in the field of entrepreneurship, and 29.6% of parents think that an entrepreneur should implement the latest entrepreneurial improvements in their activities (Abdullah et al., 2018).

Thus, it can be concluded that the formation of an entrepreneurial culture in the process of teaching and extra-curricular learning in rural schools occurs, but more efforts are needed (Lang & Fink, 2019). The current state of the pertinent culture (in Northern Kazakhstan' rural schools) is manifest in the wide range of school subjects and activities, indicated by 59% of parents. The development of some personal skills of an entrepreneur as indicated in the questionnaire was not considered to be at a sufficient level for the formation of entrepreneurial culture among students. It is highly recommended for rural schools' management to work on developing such skills particularly problem solving and decision making, planning and time management, hard work, and flexibility/adoptability. Students believed that studying financial literacy (52.8%), business administration (23%), and project management (15.4%) can contribute to the development of abovementioned skills (Dabson et al., 2010). For the development of these entrepreneurial skills, students considered it necessary to first conduct extra lessons on the development of

entrepreneurship at school (45%), and to create an entrepreneurial start-up school for everyone (30.4%) (Fortunato, 2014; Hustedde, 2018; Miles & Morrison, 2018).

The findings demonstrate that the majority of the surveyed students in rural schools (70.4%) find an entrepreneurial career to be attractive, explaining that entrepreneurship creates options from a certain level of autonomy (in terms of work on their own, independent decision making, and managing of income) to developing or creating as a part of an entrepreneur's activity. As many of young generations (Generation Y) aim for flexible work environment.

For instant, the surveyed students want to be independent in their activities, develop and create their own business environment (Abdullah et al., 2018). The level of attractiveness of the entrepreneur's activity as a way for their future careers in Kazakhstani rural schools is quite high, from the parents' point of view, with 75.4% considering an entrepreneurial career path to be attractive to their children. In general, the data highlighted that the parents' attitude to the choice of entrepreneurial activity as a future profession for their children was positive.

Necessary actions aimed at the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas according to the parents' opinion involve primarily conducting extra lessons on the development of entrepreneurship at school (50.8%). To maintain these reasons, it seems necessary to direct the process of education to the formation, maintenance, and fostering of independence, creativity, and the desire for development. In parallel, the influence of the environment on the choice of an entrepreneur's profession for rural students was supported by 58% of rural students themselves.

CONCLUSION

Since entrepreneurial culture plays a major role in enhancing young people's skills, learning, and knowledge necessary for their future careers. This study investigated the main factors influencing the development of entrepreneurial culture in Kazakh rural schools. Students have an understanding what entrepreneurship is and how it is developing in the rural communities. In addition, a high percentage of families reflected understanding and knowledge of entrepreneurship. Parents' knowledge on the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas is also important. The vast majority of parents indicated the importance of entrepreneurship in the area of agriculture.

Furthermore, students were aware of some of the main skills required for entrepreneurship, such as being quick-witted, having creativity and dedication, having problem solving, decision making, and time management skills, hard work and innovativeness. Such skills as mobility, knowledge, and flexibility were not considered pertinent by most students. Students believed that the relevant entrepreneurial skills could be developed through attending various extra-curricular clubs, subjects, and activities in rural schools. Moreover, parents were of a similar opinion and understood entrepreneurial skills as well as their children did.

Parents believed that an entrepreneur should be informed about the latest news and events in the field of entrepreneurship, and they think that an entrepreneur should implement the latest entrepreneurial improvements in their activities.

Some of the entrepreneur skills were not considered to be at a sufficient level for the development of entrepreneurial culture among students, and participants felt that it is important to study financial literacy, business administration, and project management to contribute in the development of these skills. Therefore, conducting extra lessons on the development of entrepreneurship and creating start-up activities at schools was considered essential. This research recommends that rural schools should focus on education for entrepreneurial

development in terms of fostering the attributes of independence, creativity, and the desire for development, to understand and develop a strong entrepreneurial culture. However, this study was limited to the students and their parents in rural schools in northern Kazakhstan, therefore there is a need for wider scope. In addition, further studies could include innovation initiatives, survey the point of view of schools, and undertake comparative study between Central Asia and developed economies, such as EU states.

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