

## Development of entrepreneurial competence of future primary school teachers

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the opinions of prospective teachers regarding the development of entrepreneurial competencies of future primary school teachers. This research was designed in accordance with the qualitative research method. The research was conducted with 40 pre-service teachers who received primary school teacher training at various universities in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The data of the research were collected by interview technique in order to get the opinions of the teacher candidates participating in the research. As a result of the research, it has been seen that pre-service teachers associate their entrepreneurial skills with being innovative, evaluating opportunities, taking risks, self-confidence and emotional intelligence. In this direction, the majority of pre-service teachers stated that they partially have entrepreneurial skills. In addition, pre-service teachers stated that universities, schools, teachers and teacher candidates

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have duties to develop entrepreneurship skills. In line with the research results, it is necessary to intensify entrepreneurship courses for primary school teacher candidates in universities, and to organise seminars for personal development and development of entrepreneurship skills.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, prospective teachers

## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of education systems is to prepare individuals for life. In the society, individual characteristics are at the forefront of the factors that separate the individual from the environment. Education is the most effective tool to reveal the factors that affect these features positively or negatively, to develop positive features and to eliminate negative features. Individuals can think creatively, solve problems, communicate, use information technologies, use Turkish correctly, effectively and beautifully, research questioning and entrepreneurship etc. in the education system. They can develop many skills that can be expressed. Although each of these skills is important individually, some are more prominent than others. One of them is the entrepreneurship skill (Ulkuur et al., 2015).

### 1.1. Theoretical and conceptual framework

Mars (2016) defines entrepreneurship as a strategic process that aims to develop the organisational structures necessary to achieve innovation by mobilising resources. According to another definition, entrepreneurship is explained as a process that creates value for the purpose of serving people and society, is shown by people who are aware of economic opportunities and causes changes in the economic system with the innovative movements it creates (Muzyka et al., 1995).

While entrepreneurship education is defined as preparing students for the business world in a narrow sense, it is defined as a process in which people gain a set of skills that they can apply in all areas of their lives and that will provide more individual, social and economic returns. In this sense, entrepreneurship is expressed as an individual's ability to transform ideas into practice (Bourgeois, 2011). A consensus could not be reached on how entrepreneurship education should be given and a successful model could not be obtained (Rasmussen & Sorheim, 2006). It is important for teachers to have problem-solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, confidence, aiming for high success in their work, innovative, contemporary, social, democratic skills as qualifications. In this sense, it can be said that many of these characteristics that teachers should have are closely related to their entrepreneurial personality. When we look at the entrepreneurial personality traits, it is seen that it consists of factors such as the need for success, self-confidence, being innovative, locus of control, risk-taking and tolerance for uncertainty. Entrepreneurial personality traits are accepted as one of the variables that affect an individual's attempt and success (Baum & Locke, 2004).

Since the theoretical programmes created on entrepreneurship education cannot be sufficient alone in terms of the effectiveness of education, universities and vocational training centres need to create more applied programmes for today's business world, because theoretical entrepreneurship education of universities is insufficient in conveying information to students. On the other hand, the

theoretical education process should be supported by practice, because if it does not know how to apply the acquired knowledge and skills, it will be insufficient. Therefore, it is thought that theoretical education should be supported by practical programmes (Binks et al., 2006). Peltonen (2008) emphasises the vital importance of teachers being more entrepreneurial if entrepreneurship is to develop among students. In this context, it is important how teachers make sense of entrepreneurship, how they care and their willingness to stimulate new methods.

## 1.2. Related research

When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies on entrepreneurship education and the evaluation of the training is given (Cheung, 2008; Yılmaz and Sunbul, 2009; Chen and Lai, 2010; Yelkikalan et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2015). Iscan and Kaygın (2011) aimed to measure the entrepreneurial tendencies of senior university students in their studies. As a result of the research, it has been revealed that the entrepreneurship tendency of the senior university students is positive. In their study, Seikkula-Leino et al. (2010) drew attention to the importance of educational information on how to transfer the concept of entrepreneurship into practice in both pre-service and in-service training processes.

Ruskovaara and Pihkala (2013) aimed to determine how the entrepreneurship education practices that teachers use in their lessons differ according to many variables. The findings determined that there is a connection between teacher education and entrepreneurship education practices. Akhtar et al. (2009) evaluated the entrepreneurial tendencies of teacher candidates in their study. The research was conducted in the survey model and the data were collected with the help of a scale measuring entrepreneurial tendencies. According to the results of the research, it was seen that female pre-service teachers showed higher entrepreneurial characteristics than male pre-service teachers. According to another result of the study, it was determined that the entrepreneurial motivation of female novice teachers was higher than that of male teachers. In their study, Olukemi and Gbenga (2016) aimed to determine pre-service teachers' perceptions of basic mathematical skills for entrepreneurship development and their perceptions of entrepreneurship development according to gender and school type variables. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that most of the prospective teachers believe that success in entrepreneurial activities depends on mathematical knowledge.

Wang and Wong (2004) aimed to determine the entrepreneurship levels of university students in their research. A significant difference was found between gender (in favour of men), education levels (in favour of those with honours certificates) and entrepreneurship skills. However, no significant difference was found between family income, ethnicity and citizenship and entrepreneurship skills. Arslan (2002) tried to determine the role of physical, social and economic environment in the formation of university students' entrepreneurial tendencies. As a result of the research, the prevalence of entrepreneurship among women and men predicted that the advantages of women will be equated with men over time. In addition, in the research, it was concluded that entrepreneurial candidates attach more importance to education and that they attribute their success or failure to their own internal equipment and preferences rather than external factors. In their study, Blimpo and Pugatch (2021) implemented a comprehensive training programme aimed at

improving pre-service teachers' entrepreneurial skills. As a result of this study, it was revealed that as a result of the training applied to the pre-service teachers, they were able to establish a connection between entrepreneurship and job creation.

In their study, Iwu et al. (2021) investigated the factors affecting the entrepreneurial intention of university students. In the study, cross-sectional quantitative data were collected from the students. In the research, it was concluded that the people taught in the institutions that provide entrepreneurship education should be encouraging and very good pedagogically. In their study, Uygun and Er (2016) evaluated the entrepreneurial characteristics of social studies teachers. As a result of the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the entrepreneurship levels of teacher candidates in terms of gender variable.

### *1.3. Purpose of the research*

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the opinions of prospective teachers regarding the development of entrepreneurial competencies of future primary school teachers. In this direction, the sub-objectives of the research were formed. The sub-objectives are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of prospective teachers about the concept of entrepreneurship?
2. What are the pre-service teachers' self-perceptions in the use of entrepreneurial skills?
3. What are the suggestions of teacher candidates regarding the development of entrepreneurship skills?

## **2. Method and Materials**

In this section, there is information about the research method, study group, process, data collection and data analysis.

### *2.1. Research method*

This research was designed in accordance with the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a type of research in which qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a process is followed to reveal perceptions and events in a natural environment in a realistic and holistic way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). Qualitative research is a method that inquires about the problem it examines, and interprets and tries to understand the form of the problem in its natural environment. Qualitative research, which uses various qualitative data collection methods for the solution of a problem, refers to a subjective-interpretive process of perceiving previously known or unrecognised problems and dealing with natural phenomena related to the problem in a realistic way (Klenke, 2016). Based on this, in this study, the views of prospective primary school teachers on the development of entrepreneurial competencies of future primary school teachers were evaluated with the qualitative research method.

## 2.2. Participants

The study group of the research was formed by the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling allows for in-depth study of situations that are thought to have rich information. The researcher tries to understand natural and social events or phenomena in the context of selected situations and to explore and explain the relationships between them. In researches using criterion sampling, observation units are formed from people, events or situations with certain qualifications. In this case, units that meet the criteria (basic qualifications) determined for the sample are taken into the sample (Patton, 2014). In this research, the basic criterion for participation in the research is that the primary school teacher candidates are in the process of completing the education process. The participant group of the research was chosen on a voluntary basis. The research was carried out with pre-service teachers who received primary school teacher education at various universities in Almaty, Kazakhstan. A total of 40 primary school teacher candidates, 11 male and 29 female, attended the final year of the primary school teaching department.

## 2.3. Data collection tools

The data of the research were collected by interview technique in order to get the opinions of the teacher candidates participating in the research. While applying the interview technique, a form developed by the researchers was used. This form was designed as a semi-structured interview form and consisted of questions to evaluate the entrepreneurial competencies of teacher candidates. While the questions in the semi-structured interview form were directed to the study group of the research, certain flexibility was exercised. In this technique, if the interviewer answered certain questions in other questions, the researcher may not ask these questions (Türnüklü, 2000). The semi-structured interview form prepared after the relevant literature review was taken and the suitability of the form for the research purpose was evaluated in accordance with the opinions of the experts. Then, the semi-structured interview form was applied to two primary school teacher candidates and its functionality was checked. Two pre-interviewed pre-service teachers were excluded from the study. The semi-structured interview form application was made ready. The questions in the semi-structured interview form are as follows:

1. What does the concept of entrepreneurship mean to you as a primary school teacher candidate?
2. As a primary school teacher candidate, how do you evaluate yourself in terms of entrepreneurship skills?
3. What are your suggestions for the development of entrepreneurship skills of primary school teacher candidates and teachers?

## 2.4. Data collection process

The interviews with the teacher candidates participating in the research lasted approximately 30–15 minutes. The interviews were conducted face to face. It took approximately 1 month to

complete the interviews with all teacher candidates. During the interviews, permission was requested from the pre-service teachers to take a voice recording. All interviews were recorded and then transferred to a semi-structured interview form by the researchers.

### 2.5. Data collection analysis

After the pre-service teachers' answers were transferred to the semi-structured interview form, the themes were created. The answers of the pre-service teachers to the interview questions were written under the themes created and the interview coding key was created. In the interview coding key, the themes reflecting the views of all the interviewed teacher candidates were listed as options under the related questions. The researchers independently classified the teacher responses to the themes under the interview questions. In order to determine the consistency of the markings made by the researchers on the interview coding key, the answers to each question were checked and compared one by one. The data created by the joint decision of the researchers are given in the findings section of the research with frequency and percentage tables. In addition, the views of some of the teacher candidates are given as examples under each table.

## 3. Results

In this section, the answers of the pre-service teachers were evaluated in line with the semi-structured interview forms.

In Table 1, the perceptions of the teacher candidates participating in the research regarding the concept of entrepreneurship are evaluated.

Table 1. Pre-service teachers' perceptions of the concept of entrepreneurship

| Theme                           | Category                                           | F  | %    |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| <b>Being Innovative</b>         | Ability to come up with new ideas                  | 33 | 82,5 |
|                                 | Ability to follow professional innovations         |    |      |
|                                 | Ability to apply new methods                       |    |      |
| <b>Evaluating Opportunities</b> | Ability to develop projects, designs and materials | 24 | 60   |
|                                 | Ability to make useful choices                     |    |      |
|                                 | Recognising opportunities in the profession        |    |      |
| <b>Taking risks</b>             | Recognising opportunities in different fields      | 19 | 47,5 |
|                                 | Ability to present different ideas                 |    |      |
|                                 | Ability to produce different solutions             |    |      |
| <b>Trust yourself</b>           | Ability to deal with occupational barriers         | 11 | 27,5 |
|                                 | Belief that you will complete the task             |    |      |
| <b>Emotional intelligence</b>   | Do not believe that you will succeed               | 5  | 12,5 |
|                                 | Being sensitive to the feelings of others          |    |      |
|                                 | Having self-control                                |    |      |

In Table 1, the views of pre-service teachers on their perceptions of entrepreneurship are given. Pre-service teachers emphasised the innovative aspect of entrepreneurship with their ability to present new ideas; follow professional innovations; apply new methods; and develop projects, designs and materials. Pre-service teachers defined making useful choices, being able to notice opportunities in the profession and recognising opportunities in different fields in the category of utilising opportunities. On the other hand, the categories of being able to put forward different ideas, producing different solutions and struggling with professional obstacles were considered by the teachers in terms of risk-taking. The belief that one will complete the task and that one will succeed are gathered under the theme of self-confidence. Being sensitive to the feelings of others and having self-control were categorised as the opinions of the pre-service teachers on the theme of emotional intelligence. 82.5% of the teacher candidates expressed being innovative, 60% utilising opportunities, 47.5% taking risks, 27.5% self-confidence and 12.5% emotional intelligence as their perceptions of the concept of entrepreneurship they have done.

The perceptions of some pre-service teachers participating in the research on the concept of entrepreneurship are as follows:

*'In my opinion, entrepreneurship is the ability to follow the innovations related to one's profession, to evaluate the opportunities related to the profession and to take risks. Especially struggling with the obstacles encountered in the profession can be counted among the risks that can be taken'.*

*'Above all, a teacher must be innovative in classroom practice and materials. It should be open to applying new methods. They should be able to decide what is more beneficial for students. In addition, he should have confidence that the education he gives will lead the student to success'.*

*'I think entrepreneurship can be explained by being able to put forward different ideas, solve problems, be open to innovations and have self-confidence'.*

*'I think entrepreneurship is more about being innovative and taking advantage of different opportunities. It is also very important to follow the innovations in the teaching profession and to produce new ideas'.*

*'Entrepreneurship comes with a rational attitude. In other words, I think teachers should have high emotional intelligence. It is very important to be able to both empathise and keep your emotions under control. Also, a teacher must have the courage to take risks'.*

In Table 2, the competencies of the pre-service teachers participating in the research on entrepreneurial skills were evaluated.

Table 2. Prospective teachers' competencies in entrepreneurship skills

| Theme                                        | F  | %    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|------|
| Having entrepreneurial skills                | 9  | 22,5 |
| Partial possession of entrepreneurial skills | 28 | 70   |

|                                |   |     |
|--------------------------------|---|-----|
| Lack of entrepreneurial skills | 3 | 7,5 |
|--------------------------------|---|-----|

In Table 2, the competencies of the teacher candidates participating in the research on entrepreneurship skills are classified. 22.5% of the teacher candidates stated that they have entrepreneurial skills, 70% of them partially have entrepreneurship skills and 7.5% of them have no entrepreneurship skills.

The views of some of the pre-service teachers participating in the research on their proficiency in entrepreneurship skills are as follows:

*'I think I have entrepreneurial skills. I research a lot, I follow new practices, I think I can apply it in my profession. I am open to new ideas. I trust myself on this topic'.*

*'I am confident in some matters. I can take risks, I am open to innovations. However, I do not see myself fully qualified in some subjects. So I think I am partially sufficient'.*

*'I think it is very important for a primary school teacher to have entrepreneurial skills. However, the education we receive at the university unfortunately does not have an educational content that allows to acquire these features fully. That's why I think I don't have entrepreneurial skills'.*

In Table 3, the suggestions of the pre-service teachers participating in the research for the development of entrepreneurship skills are evaluated.

Table 3. Suggestions of teacher candidates for the development of entrepreneurship skills

| Theme                                       | Category                                                                   | F  | %    |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| <b>Suggestions for Universities</b>         | Organising the curriculum in a way that provides entrepreneurship skills   | 34 | 85   |
|                                             | Organising personal development seminars                                   |    |      |
|                                             | Organising seminars on entrepreneurship                                    |    |      |
| <b>Suggestions for Schools</b>              | Organising in-service training programmes with entrepreneurship            | 21 | 52,5 |
|                                             | Organising in-service training programmes on personal development          |    |      |
| <b>Suggestions for Teachers</b>             | Self-development in taking risks and seizing opportunities                 | 15 | 37,5 |
|                                             | Developing a vision open to innovation and change                          |    |      |
|                                             | Giving importance to personal development                                  |    |      |
| <b>Suggestions for Pre-service Teachers</b> | Following the activities related to entrepreneurship within the university | 7  | 17,5 |
|                                             | Being open to self-development in entrepreneurship                         |    |      |

In Table 3, the suggestions of pre-service teachers regarding the development of entrepreneurship skills are categorised. Arranging the curriculum in a way that will provide entrepreneurship skills, organising personal development seminars and organising seminars on entrepreneurship were presented by the pre-service teachers as suggestions for universities. Pre-service teachers presented the organisation of entrepreneurship and in-service training programmes and the organisation of in-service training programmes related to personal development as suggestions for schools. Pre-service teachers made suggestions to primary school teachers about self-development, developing a vision open to innovations and change, and gave importance to personal development in terms of taking risks and evaluating opportunities. Finally, the pre-service teachers made suggestions to the pre-service teachers about following the activities related to entrepreneurship within the university and being open to self-development in entrepreneurship. 85% of the pre-service teachers developed suggestions for universities, 52.5% for schools, 37.5% for teachers and 17.5% for teacher candidates.

The suggestions of some of the pre-service teachers participating in the research for the development of entrepreneurship skills are as follows:

*'Developing entrepreneurship skills is possible by making the necessary arrangements in the education that we students receive. Lessons should be arranged accordingly. Personal development seminars should be given in universities. Teacher candidates are also obliged to follow these activities in universities'.*

*'I think that both universities, schools and teachers and teacher candidates in the profession have a great job in this regard. Entrepreneurship courses should be given at universities and entrepreneurship seminars should be organised. Entrepreneurship skills of teachers should be developed through in-service training programmes in schools. Teachers and teacher candidates should also be sensitive to this issue'.*

*'Primary school teachers should improve themselves in taking risks and seizing opportunities. Teachers should be open to innovations. Teacher candidates should follow the practices related to entrepreneurship in universities'.*

*'Adding entrepreneurship courses to our annual curriculum would be beneficial. Organising seminars on entrepreneurship will also increase students' entrepreneurial sensitivity. It may be useful to carry out similar studies in schools for primary school teachers'.*

#### **4. Discussion**

Entrepreneurship perceptions of teacher candidates participating in the research were categorised in the areas of being innovative, evaluating opportunities, taking risks, self-confidence and emotional intelligence. The majority of teacher candidates defined entrepreneurship as being innovative. When the researches in the field are examined, it is stated that the characteristics that entrepreneurial individuals should have are taking risks, being innovative, being creative and seeing opportunities. In addition, features such as adaptation to change, self-confidence, tolerance for

uncertainty, being determined and determined, desire to succeed, acting independently, communicating effectively, being a leader, having an internal locus of control and being able to make decisions were stated (Daft, 2017; Hitt et al. et al., 2005). In another study, Uzoka and adetayo (2008) stated that in the face of change, concepts such as creativity, risk taking and flexibility are becoming more and more important.

The majority of the pre-service teachers participating in the research stated that they partially have entrepreneurial characteristics. Bacanak (2013) revealed in his research that teachers have insufficient knowledge about the concept of entrepreneurship. Karabulut (2009) evaluated the entrepreneurial characteristics and tendencies of university students in his research. As a result of the research, although they received entrepreneurship education, they showed their hesitations and reservations about starting their own business. Seikkula-Leino et al. (2012), on the other hand, stated in their research that the courses related to entrepreneurship are not sufficiently included in teacher education and that the students of education faculties are not at the desired level in terms of having entrepreneurial characteristics compared to the students of different faculties.

The suggestions of the pre-service teachers participating in the research for the development of entrepreneurship skills were categorised as suggestions for universities, schools, teachers and teacher candidates. The vast majority of teacher candidates stated that the curriculum should be arranged in a way that would provide entrepreneurship skills, and seminars on personal development and entrepreneurship should be organised. Seikkula-Leino et al. (2012) also stated in their research that there are serious deficiencies in how entrepreneurship-related subjects should be included in the curriculum. In his research, Adeyemo (2009) tried to identify the basic concepts for developing entrepreneurial skills for teachers and students. As a result of the research, it was emphasised that in order for students to be successful in the future, they should be trained as entrepreneurial individuals and this would increase employability. In their research, Birdthistle et al. (2007) drew attention to the importance of educational information on how to apply the concept of entrepreneurship in both pre-service and in-service training processes. In the study conducted by Arogundade (2011), it was recommended to create an effective entrepreneurship education programme at all education levels in cooperation with governments and other education stakeholders in order to increase students' entrepreneurial skills.

## **5. Conclusion**

Today's teacher training policies are not only responsible for educating teachers with pedagogical content knowledge, but also equip teachers in every field. In our age, entrepreneurial skills are seen as one of the most important qualities that a teacher should have. In this direction, in this research, the opinions of prospective teachers were taken in order to improve the entrepreneurial competencies of future primary school teachers. As a result of the research, it has been seen that pre-service teachers associate their entrepreneurial skills with being innovative, evaluating opportunities, taking risks, self-confidence and emotional intelligence. In this direction, the majority of pre-service teachers stated that they partially have entrepreneurial skills. In addition, pre-service teachers stated that universities, schools, teachers and teacher candidates have duties to develop entrepreneurship skills.

## 6. Recommendations

Although the pre-service teachers who participated in the research perceived the concept of entrepreneurship correctly, it was seen that their entrepreneurial skills were partially sufficient. In addition, considering the evaluations of pre-service teachers on entrepreneurial skills, it has been determined that universities, schools, primary school teachers and primary school teacher candidates have a role in the development of entrepreneurial skills. In this direction, it is necessary to intensify entrepreneurship courses for primary school teacher candidates in universities and to organise seminars for the development of personal development and entrepreneurship skills. Teacher candidates should be open to developing their entrepreneurial skills and follow the activities in universities. In addition, in-service training programmes should be organised in schools for primary school teachers, and teachers should be encouraged to increase their competence in entrepreneurship skills and personal development.

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