

Entrepreneurial spirit of a modern university professor: Empirical data

Espíritu emprendedor de un profesor de una universidad moderna: Datos empíricos

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ABSTRACT:

Professional and personal traits of a professor have a special impact on the educational system quality. Entrepreneurial spirit is one of such traits. This article explains and concretizes the concept of "entrepreneurial spirit of a university professor". We provide an original psychological construct of entrepreneurial spirit with a complex of entrepreneurial traits of a professor. Empirical data are based on the "Your entrepreneurial spirit" test, which consists of 55 statements. The test was attended by teachers from Voronezh city. Thus, we have determined the strong and underdeveloped entrepreneurial traits of a modern university professor. This article provides features of readiness to take risks as the least formed and necessary entrepreneurial trait in achieving qualitatively different level of teaching. We have determined and described the determinants of entrepreneurial attitude formation and development of a university professor.

Keywords: entrepreneurial spirit; entrepreneurial structure; readiness to take risks; professional.

RESUMEN:

Los rasgos profesionales y personales de un profesor tienen un impacto especial en la calidad del sistema educativo. El espíritu emprendedor es uno de esos rasgos. Este artículo explica y concreta el concepto de "espíritu emprendedor de un profesor universitario". Proporcionamos una construcción psicológica original del espíritu emprendedor con un complejo de rasgos emprendedores de un profesor. Los datos empíricos se basan en la prueba "Su espíritu emprendedor", que consta de 55 declaraciones. A la prueba asistieron profesores de la ciudad de Voronezh. Así, hemos determinado los rasgos empresariales fuertes y subdesarrollados de un profesor universitario moderno. Este artículo proporciona características de la disposición a asumir riesgos como el rasgo emprendedor menos formado y necesario para lograr un nivel de enseñanza cualitativamente diferente. Hemos determinado y descrito los determinantes de la formación de actitudes empresariales y el desarrollo de un profesor universitario.

Palabras clave: espíritu emprendedor; Estructura empresarial; Disposición a asumir riesgos; profesional.

1. Introduction

Education is the main instrument of social development, transferability of learning and acquisition of skills necessary for the comprehensive development of nation and society. In this regard, the educational system quality directly affects the economic and social spheres (Blimpo 2014; Ganimian and Murnane 2016; Channa and Faguet 2016).

Student's knowledge depends on professional and personal traits of a teacher (Blimpo 2014; Ramphela and Rosovsky 2015; Zorina et al. 2016). However, the problem lies in the fact that university professors are not prepared to take an active, independent of stereotypes and biased approach in proposing and implementing non-standard pedagogical ideas due to their long experience in a stable conservative professional learning environment in developing countries (Hollyforde 2008; Heine 2013; Channa and Faguet 2016). Many teachers still do not know how to be innovative in achieving the objectives; they are not able to use their potential effectively (Mbiti 2016); teachers are limited in skills of showing courage or ingenuity (Haack and Ryerson 2016); they do not compete or take risks; they are not always focused on achieving the highest performance in professional-pedagogical activity (Bloom and Sevilla 2015). In other words, teachers turned to be entrepreneurially uneducated (Omarov 1990; Hisrich and Peters 1992; Kopytova 2013). In addition, the students are considering the entrepreneurship as a vital value, as a permanent component of quality of life; they believe that a teacher with entrepreneurial traits will be able to form them in their students.

In this regard, the renewal of Russian higher education for integration into European educational space requires a competent and initiative professor. Thus, scientists and practitioners are interested in such professional and personal entrepreneurial traits of a modern professor as professional mobility, self-management, performance capability, acmeological ability and entrepreneurial spirit.

Entrepreneurial attitude formation as a personality feature has a special role in the education of Western European countries because of the following improving traits of a professor (Seikkula-Leino 2015):

- Independence and originality;
- Innovation capability, initiative;
- Courage;
- Competitiveness and no fear of risk;
- Efficient use of resources;
- Focus on achieving the ultimate goal.

We consider their formation as a necessity in the framework of additional vocational training. Concretizing the concept of "entrepreneurial spirit of a university professor" is an urgent matter, as well as proving the need for its result-oriented development.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to analyze the entrepreneurial spirit of a modern professor and the ways to promote it in developing countries through the example of the Russian University.

2. Method

Entrepreneurial spirit as a personality feature

Authoritative reference sources define entrepreneurship as an activity, demonstrating innovation, creativity, self-reliance; as an ability to take action at the right moment to make a decision in appropriate situations; as a personal attribute – energy level, ingenuity, courage and resoluteness. Definition of scientists is determined by their scientific views and concepts. According to A.M. Omarov (1990), an initiative person is characterized by thinking flexibility, high energy level, an ability to try hard in implementing decisions and by readiness to take risks. The psychologist R. Hisrich (1992) believes that entrepreneurship is characterized by the

independence and originality of thought; awareness of own destiny and by the ability to take risks (Hisrich R. D., Peters 1992). S.D. Reznik (2013) have made a successful attempt to substantiate and discover the essential features of business and entrepreneurial qualities. He divided them into two groups: 1) the ability to think strategically – general intelligence, life wisdom, the ability to generate ideas, promising outlook, originality of thought; 2) tactics of daily activities – desire for self-realization, business activity, commitment, self-control, the ability to link plans with actual conditions, etc.

Thus, entrepreneurship is individual-personal in nature and requires a deeper and more holistic study not only as economic, but also as a psychological phenomenon by analyzing personal activity classification necessary in searching for effective means of self-transformation and environment transformation. Obviously, entrepreneurial spirit can be successfully realized in labor, education, scientific, artistic and commercial activities. In this context, due account for foreign experience is useful: the researchers emphasize initiativity and entrepreneurial attitude within the core competencies, traditionally generated in training and lifelong learning in the EU, along with communication in native and foreign languages, mathematical and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning disabilities, social and civic competences, cultural awareness. For example, M. Hought defines entrepreneurship as a person's ability to turn ideas into productive activities; as creativity, initiativity, innovative thinking and readiness to take risks; as the ability to project planning and management, focused on achieving the objectives (Teaching of Entrepreneurship in the EU countries 2015). According to the EU Strategy for Education and Training in 2020, its main areas include entrepreneurial training – strategic approach to improving business literacy of every citizen by entrepreneurship training throughout life (Teaching of Entrepreneurship in the EU countries 2015).

In summary, entrepreneurial spirit should be considered as one of the leading qualities of a modern university professor, which is formed due to certain demands and interests of a person; as an initiative, which provides creativity in professional and educational activities based on ideas that promote qualitative transformation of professional and pedagogical reality (Chigirinskaya 1995; Abdalina 2016). Entrepreneurship spirit as an integrative quality of a person has its own composition, structure, and includes motivational, intellectual, creative and regulatory components. There are the following personality traits that are indicators to assess the entrepreneurial attitude formation: initiativity; the ability to use own potential effectively; ingenuity; self-confidence; the ability to turn ideas into action; readiness to take risks; corporatism; internal locus of control; focus on the highest achievements. Therefore, psychological construct formation of entrepreneurial spirit and the study of its leading indicators-traits are the urgent challenges of a modern professor. They required the specification and evaluation of those entrepreneurial personality traits of a professor, which are the most significant for entrepreneurship attitude development and for appropriate psycho-diagnostic instrument selection.

Empirical study of entrepreneurship indicators

Empirical study of entrepreneurship indicators was carried out by means of a "Your entrepreneurial spirit" test (Libin, 2000), which consists of 55 statements and an assessment scale of personal attitude: 5 (always), 4 (usually), 3 (sometimes), 2 (occasionally) and 1 (never). The test allowed to measure how teachers assess the formation of their entrepreneurial traits: the ability to find and use opportunities; perseverance; the ability to keep a word; demands on quality and performance; readiness to take risks; ability to set targets; search for information; ability to plan and control; ability to convince and work with others; self-confidence.

Conditionally, we have determined the following boundaries for expected level of entrepreneurial traits:

- unsustainable level of manifestation – 5-11 points;

- situational level of manifestations – 12-18 points;
- sustainable level of manifestation – 19-25 points.

We have studied 52 university professors under the age of 55 years and with teaching experience of not less than 5 years: 9 men and 43 women (Voronezh, Russia).

3. Data, Analysis, and Results

Comparative analysis of the average values of entrepreneurship indicators showed the following results (table1):

Table 1. Entrepreneurial ability of teachers

Entrepreneurial traits	Group means (points)
ability to find and use opportunities	16.6
perseverance	16.9
ability to keep a word	17.6
demands on quality and performance	18.3
readiness to take risks	15.6
ability to set targets	17.5
search for information	17.6
ability to plan and control	17.7
ability to convince and work with others	17.2
self-confidence	17.1

According to results, the majority of professors have a situational level of entrepreneurial trait manifestation: the average values within one group are in the range of 12 to 18 points. In other words, there are manifestations of entrepreneurial traits in professional behavior of teachers due to different kinds of external factors: Federal State Education Standards, professional standards; orders from administration, department chairman and other teachers. The conversation with professors has proved that manifestation of their entrepreneurial trait is appropriate even under internal factors – psychological markers of a person – interests, needs, cognitive and creative activity, professional and personal position, personality traits, emotional impulses, etc.

Test results indicate that such entrepreneurial traits as demands for quality and performance, the ability to plan and control, the ability to set targets and keep a word, search for information, are the most formed and the most strong. This may reflect the fact that many teachers are most successful while fulfilling design, organizational and informational functions. However, a number of entrepreneurial traits that promote the motivational, research and creative functions are not strong enough: motivational function as the availability of self-confidence, - 17.1 points; creative function as the ability to seek and use the opportunities – 16.6 points; research function as readiness to take risks – 15.6 points.

Better results in teaching (Slavchenko and Podymova 1997) require the professor's ability to act and to overcome a situation of uncertain pedagogical challenge and relationship, the competence in assessing the possibility of achieving a target result and of failure, the ability to self-control in the case of poor necessary references, namely – readiness to take risks (Algin 1989; Arendachuk 2012; Vlasenko and Loseva 2014).

There are many different professional risks in professor's activity determined by both objective and subjective factors. Professional risk is a decision making process that may have unintended and even negative consequences. Although, they may be considered as appropriate consequences on the part of a professional. Objective factors are conditions of uncertainty and risk in educational, organizational, research and educational activities of a professor that may be rise under the influence of any university authorities. This uncertainty rises in the form of information, organizational and technological limitations in realizing new versions of federal state educational standards and professional standards, in developing and improving basic educational programs and steering documents. Subjective factors may involve psychological risks determined by professor's traits and socio-psychological risks of interpersonal interactions and relationships. They are generated by a professor himself and by his or her activities because of low competence (special, innovative, psychological, social, etc.), the complexity of the problem situation, limited time and resources, etc. Subjective risk factors include the specificity of interaction between the structural element of a psychological construct, as well as features of interpersonal and intergroup relations among professors and students (Hartog and Belschak 2012; Heine 2013; Kublanov 2015). The study of such aspects of risk as its awareness, assessment and acceptance remains urgent, since they are part of entrepreneurial behavior, of achieving higher level of teaching and of personal fulfilment.

Thus, we can conclude about a low level of entrepreneurial attitude formation of a modern university professor as a vocationally important trait; about the relevance of the research on the content, dynamic, functional and performance aspects of entrepreneurship spirit; about the necessary enrichment of psychology theory and practice in the field of professional development and personal growth.

Professor can development his or her entrepreneurial spirit by:

- postgraduate studies;
 - educational forums;
 - exchanging his or her experience with domestic and foreign professors.
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4. Conclusion

Thus, the entrepreneurial spirit of a professor is based on such traits as courage, responsibility, orientation on the highest performance. In considering the term "entrepreneurship", we have paid attention to the ability to act in accordance with the circumstances and to respond to their changes fast. Currently, the entrepreneurial spirit of a professor is weak due to outdated system of teacher's preparation. Therefore, Russia as a developing country has to renew the educational system with emphasis on teacher's attribute development, especially on entrepreneurial traits.

This study does not cover all the aspects of a matter. The further research will be devoted to substantiation of qualities inherent in initiative professor, to determination of psychological determinants affecting the entrepreneurial personality development, to holistic concept development of entrepreneurial attitude formation in the context of additional vocational education.

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