

Entrepreneurship Education – The Way to Reach Active Citizenship

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Abstract

One of tourism education's chief objectives must be the ability to bring forth progressive social change. Our economies tend to grow from employee societies to entrepreneurs societies where autonomous and independent business activity is required of the individuals. Universities' fundamental role is to educate and train young generations capable of adapting to the changing world around them and to acquire the attitude of autonomous entrepreneurs (Etzkowitz et al., 2000). The inclusion of entrepreneurship skills and competencies – namely, autonomy, creativity, the ability to innovate and future orientation - in the curriculum can make a difference in how young people adapt to change.

Entrepreneurs, creating value that is not only economic, but also social - are significant pillars of civil societies. In their role as financiers and organisers they can impersonate the active citizen and therefore become role models for ambitious youth (Audretsch, Thurik 2000).

Universities' responsibility to society at large is to educate and train generations of active citizens. Active citizenship education is especially important in societies where the practice of democratic participation is unsatisfactory or missing, like in the case of Central and Eastern Europe (Varblane, Mets 2010). Engagement of students can be enhanced by entrepreneurship education inasmuch as it serves as a tool and method to introduce and spread proactive and autonomous behaviour, future orientation and abandon passivity, so frequent in societies with democratic deficit. 'Proactivity involves taking the initiative to address problems in one's service domain and a commitment to excellence in one's domain of expertise.' (TEFI White Paper 2008, p.16).

Active citizenship education could contribute to TEFI objectives by integrating it to Stewardship value pillar that incorporates sustainability, responsibility and service to the community.

Before designing an appropriate curriculum incorporating active citizenship, it is worth while exploring the attitude and perception of tourism students. This paper will look at the perception and assessment of active citizenship and of the figure and status of entrepreneur. It is important to understand what the students think about active citizenship, to what extent is this notion familiar to them and for those that are aware of the term – do they practise it? Initially, the pilot survey exploring students' assessments was carried out among 212 tourism and hospitality undergraduates in the Budapest Business School, but will be extended internationally to cover a wider population of tourism undergraduates.

Introduction

Recently, international forces of change have prompted hard questions to be asked about what it means to educate for citizenship within the global context and the location and representation of global citizenship in school curricula. Osler (2002, p. 2) writes: “We live in an increasingly interdependent world, where the actions of ordinary citizens are likely to have an impact on others’ lives across the globe. In turn, our lives, our jobs, the food we eat and the development of our communities are being influenced by global developments. It is important that young people are informed about the world in which they live and are provided with the skills to enable them to be active citizens and to understand how they can shape their own futures and make a difference. Education for living together in an interdependent world is not an optional extra, but an essential foundation”.

Merryfield (1997) suggests that educating for citizenship within the global context should embrace a holistic approach that allows students and teachers to better understand themselves and their relationship to the global community. Classroom practices, according to Merryfield, must attend to “teaching and learning globally oriented content in ways that support diversity and social justice in an interconnected world” (p. 12). Instructional practices should address holistically:

- Self-knowledge (identity, heritage, privilege).
- Cross-cultural experience and skills (listening, cooperation, conflict management).
- Perspective consciousness (multiple perspectives on a range of local and global issues).
- Values analysis (analyze values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin public information).

Humes (2004) argues that education for citizenship consists of three clearly distinguishable and intertwined strands: economic enterprise, moral renewal and civic activism. The below paper attempts to find a rationale for each of the three strands and explore the validity of this construct against the ‘recipients’ of the education – that is the students.

Entrepreneur societies

Audretsch & Thurik (2000) in their conceptual paper on the relationship between democracy and economy state that developed countries are undergoing a fundamental shift away from a managed economy and towards an entrepreneurial economy. Entrepreneurship is a fundamental characteristic of knowledge-based economic activity and this is because the potential value of new ideas and knowledge are inherently uncertain. The knowledge-based economy is in motion and is characterized by a high degree of people starting new firms to pursue, explore or implement new ideas. An entrepreneur can be seen as: economic agent or an individual with a particular personality or a Business Manager or any person (who pursues opportunity, and drives change to create value). Entrepreneurship is often about *bringing about change and making difference* (Koiranen 2008). Entrepreneurs are therefore agents of change and can be instrumental in bringing progress and positive change in societies. In the same way, young entrepreneurs can become role models showing the path to peers in positive thinking, dynamism, taking the lead in their lives, thus reinforcing the inner locus of control. Positive examples of entrepreneurship can instigate more and more successful entrepreneurship. It is the business schools' responsibility to develop curricula and include Entrepreneurship skills and competencies. These skills and competencies are instrumental in enhancing psychological empowerment and therefore are paramount to a higher level of subjective well-being .

Importance of entrepreneurship education

In the last decade the concept of 'entrepreneurship' has been widened and made a concern at the global level for schools and education, which raises the questions of the driving forces, underlying motives and consequences (Leffer, Svedberg & Botha, 2010). On one hand, entrepreneurship is thus described as something good for both the individual and the society while, on the other, it is questioned which relations between the individual and society entrepreneurship symbolises (Piperopoulos 2012). What values does entrepreneurship bring to education? Entrepreneurship acts as a remedy for unemployment and growth problems that are caused by the recent global economic crisis are the major issues in the political agenda of all countries today. However, for improving entrepreneurship and creating entrepreneurs that can create new jobs, adequate human resources and knowledge base are strongly required on national level. Entrepreneurship education gains importance for building entrepreneurship driven economy by making individuals acquire entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and mindsets (Askun, Yıldırım 2011. p.665.)

Universities around the world have been assigned a new role in society, a 'third task' – i.e. influencing regional innovation and economic growth (Etzkowitz et al., 2000); (Johannisson et al. 2012). Universities are 'required' under their 'third mission' to promote entrepreneurship, engage in spin-off activities, develop university-business-government partnerships and encourage technology transfer and commercialisation of knowledge and research. Universities can address the need to create new ventures and new business areas in order to achieve economic growth in a region, by fostering the motivation of their graduates in entrepreneurial activities (Etzkowitz et al. 2000).

'Entrepreneurship is not magic, it's not mysterious, and it has nothing to do with the genes. It's a discipline. And like a discipline, it can be learned'(Drucker, 1985). The quotation from Drucker illustrates that the question whether entrepreneurship can be taught and learned is no longer relevant. The new venture is viewed as a creation process, performed by an individual (or individuals), who has the ability to perceive and evaluate possibilities, and who is motivated to exploit them through his/her preferences as well as personal and business goals. The general consensus is that entrepreneurship education constitutes an essential contribution to the development of an entrepreneurial culture in countries, regions. Some authors go even further saying that 'in the realm of human affairs there exists an "entrepreneurial method" analogous to the scientific method spelled out by Francis Bacon and others with regard to the natural realm. This would imply that teaching entrepreneurship should be generalised, offering it to society at large, as a necessary and useful skill and an important way of reasoning about the world.' (Sarasvathy, Venkataraman 2011, p.20)

Active citizenship, empowerment

Trust in society, both between individual citizens and between people and government, works in favour of sustainability policy. One of the ways in which the social aspect can contribute to the realization of economic and ecological goals is by creating public support. However, the social aspects of sustainability are not only functional; they are also important in an autonomous sense. A society where trust is inherent, where people feel safe, where social fabric, cohesion and engagement are all strong, and where in addition material security is guaranteed, is an attractive society for people to live in. This situation is beneficial for people's physical and mental well-being, now and in the future. It also provides ample opportunities for a good start for future generations.

The Brundtland Report (1987) starts with the now well-known definition (and the basis of the present report): ‘sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This definition puts the needs of citizens at the forefront of the discussion, and those needs are not necessarily only material ones. Sustainable development should be seen as a process which does not focus on economic development alone, but which also includes well-balanced ecological and social development. In fact, sustainable development refers to quality of life in the broadest possible sense. The difficult thing about the social aspect of sustainability is that it is layered (it pertains to both an individual and a collective level), and that it is reflexive (there is a continuous exchange between what we observe, how we interpret this, and how we behave). Added to this, in a social respect, too, sustainability is a process in which goals are frequently being adjusted, which makes it difficult to measure it with any precision.

Lakatos (2002) writes that education is the key factor in ensuring sustainable development. It is the process of education and learning that leads to an ever-growing number of people, who are sensitive to environmental issues. Learning, as well as teaching, can be discerned so that learning is not a precondition of life, but can increasingly become one of its concomitants. To view it from a traditional aspect, the idea of “learning through life” means education outside the school system, taking place after the school is finished. It can be stated that learning is actually an endless process, having innumerable forms in human life outside the school system.

Across these various conceptions of citizenship found in the relevant body of literature, there are four common elements (Evans, Reynolds, 2005):

1. A sense of membership or identity with some wider community, from the local to the global.
2. A set of rights and freedoms, such as freedom of thought or the right to vote.
3. A corresponding set of duties or responsibilities, such as an obligation to respect the rights of others or a duty to obey the law.
4. A set of virtues and capacities that enable a citizen to effectively engage in and reflect upon questions and concerns of civic interest.

Nation-states construct young people as citizens in a variety of ways. The project of transmitting core values or ‘citizen virtues’ so as to unite members of a community runs

parallel to and can influence the strategies used to transmit different knowledge and skills to different groups of children in preparation for economic life. Some educational systems prioritise national civic values and patriotism, some local cultures and traditions whilst others emphasise human rights, and the promotion of peace and stability through democratic governance. The long term future stability and growth of a nation is then dependent on the success of the educational system on unifying each new generation into a common project and giving them the cognitive and affective skills necessary to flourish and build a secure life. (Davies et al. 2004, p.3.)

‘ ”Getting involved” in society means becoming a human person by doing something for others and thus being connected to mankind and society’ (Oser, Veugelers, 2008, p.1.) In today’s societies ‘getting involved is a dynamic process that challenges people to enhance special social and civic competences, in particular, attitudes, therefore its main perspective remains psychological – identity development. Recent thinking on ‘getting involved’ is related to the concept of citizenship, which, in contemporary social sciences is not limited to the formal political level of engagement, but extends to the social and interpersonal level. Modern conceptions of citizenship see ‘getting involved’ as a catalyst for a person to become a free, autonomous and participatory citizen (id., p.3.)

‘Citizenship education’ and ‘education for democratic citizenship’ have a broader meaning, and encompass skills and attitudes for participation in democratic processes as well as knowledge necessary for citizenship. The terms include elements of schooling which extend beyond the formal curriculum, such as the development of a democratic school ethos, democratic school structures, community service and extra-curricular activities. Even in those nation-states which retain the subject ‘civics’ in the formal school curriculum, there is a growing tendency to use the broader terms ‘education for citizenship’ or ‘education for democratic citizenship’ in educational debates to encompass these broader goals and activities .

Citizenship education involves a wide range of different elements of learning, including (Association for Citizenship Teaching, 2013):

- **Knowledge and understanding:** About topics such as: laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights, diversity, money and the economy,

sustainable development and world as a global community; and about concepts such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law;

- **Skills and aptitudes:** Critical thinking, analysing information, expressing opinions, taking part in discussions and debates, negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action;
- **Values and dispositions:** Respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view and a willingness to: listen to, work with and stand up for others.

Research questions

In the light of the above theoretical background, the author's main research focus was to find out - in the current politico-economic situation – perception and assessment patterns of tourism undergraduates. This has been done in the framework of a pilot survey targeting tourism and hospitality students of the Budapest Business School, College of Commerce, Tourism and Hospitality. The cohort examined consisted of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students, all having taken Entrepreneurship course in the framework of compulsory module. The objective of the research was to find out:

- (a) how necessary the students perceive entrepreneurship skills in their future life
- (b) what is their perception of the efficiency of the course in transferring entrepreneurship skills and competence, and
- (c) what is their assessment of the possibilities of democratic participation in policy making (inclusion, exclusion) and their intentions to participate, if there were empowered to do so.

The paper-based fill-out survey consisted of several questions addressing the above issues and the responses were provided on a 6-step Likert scale (0= totally disagree, 5= totally agree), except for the case of the PREPAREDNESS BY TRAINING question, where the answerer had to specify a percentage as a measure of perception. The table below shows the aggregate results for select questions in the survey.

Students perceive entrepreneurship skill as being very necessary for their future life (4,58), but the ammunition that they receive in the framework of formal education is not satisfactory (48,39 %). It is also important that believe that the participation of youth is fundamental in shaping future (4,37) – but they feel that they are far from being fully empowered to participating in policy-making (2,60). A discrepancy can be observed in the esteem of 'little

impact on future' and 'excluded from policy-making' as if the students thought that there was no direct correlation between policy-making and shaping future. This means that they believe that there are other ways of making an impact on future than policy-making. This is in line with the generally sceptical attitude to democracy and democratic institutions, only 40 % of youth considering democracy as the best political system (Youth 2008, p.55.) and with the hypothesis that youth today is neither interested nor concerned by active participation in democratic institutions.

Table 1: Perception of entrepreneurship skills and empowerment

		Necessity of entrepreneurship skills	Preparedness by training (%)	Participation required for future shaping	Excluded from policy-making	Requires participation in policy-making
N	Valid	209	206	212	212	212
	Missing	3	6	0	0	0
Mean		4,58	48,39	4,37	2,60	3,00
Std. Error of Mean		,047	1,463	,055	,093	,101
Median		5,00	50,00	5,00	3,00	3,00
Mode		5	50 ^a	5	3	3
Std. Deviation		,682	20,999	,795	1,357	1,470

Further to the above topics, various other questions were raised to the students, such as Questionnaire question 'Do you believe that entrepreneur skills must be taught to business school students because they will empower them for their future life' was answered by 79 % 'yes' against 28 % 'no' and 3 % 'I am not sure' responses. When asked about their views on the eventuality or rather the necessity of being involved in creating scenarios or strategies of societal well-being, students were overwhelmingly positive: Questionnaire question 'Do you think it is a good idea that entrepreneurship students could work in workshops and create scenarios on how to improve societal well-being?' Results: 86 % 'yes', 11 % 'no', 3 % 'I am not sure'. Students' perception of democratic deficit can be best captured by the following questionnaire question: 'If yes, should these scenarios be considered by policy-makers especially in times of instability?' Here, the results display hesitancy, there is a lower degree of positive perception, which corresponds and aligns to the general attitude of uncertainty and lack of clear future image: only 68 % answered that these scenarios should be considered, 29 % rejected the idea and 3 % was not sure. Those students who were otherwise favouring their democratic participation in the strive for improving societal well-being, were less certain about the feasibility of this – as if they did not trust the political decision-makers or were not

sure about their own power. This uncertainty can also be explained by great power distance dimension of the Hoovstedeian cultural model (Hoovstede 1993) and also by the (still) infant state or age of democratic institutions in Hungary.

The Questionnaire question of 'Do you think that entrepreneurs are agents of change and they can bring positive change' was answered by an overwhelming majority of 'yes' answers (88 %) and (12%) of 'no' answers. This can be interpreted that students have a perception of entrepreneurs as agents of serving progress in a society, both in economic and in societal well-being sense.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The survey demonstrated the need for delivering effective entrepreneurship education the skills and competencies of which (proactive attitude, responsibility for one's future, search for opportunities, responsible management) can be beneficial to their future progress by way of enhancing their democratic participation, thus empowering them for their future life. It has also been demonstrated that the students perceive a correlation between societal well-being and the number of entrepreneurs, which are believed to be – by their skills, competencies and attitude – agents of change. It is this generation that can introduce fundamental changes in the otherwise unstable political regime. Entrepreneurs are also the pillars of economic development – without them; there is no innovation and progress. This active participation in the economic life of the country can be instigated by showing the students good examples and models, building their confidence and faith in the institutions – empowering them. Finally, empowerment of youth to participate democratic institutions and policymaking can be seen as a means to increase subjective well-being on the societal level. This is in line with the Council of Europe study and subsequent recommendation (2000) which found that citizenship education adds to the curriculum what policy makers consider to be the added value of citizenship education - citizenship education is uniquely placed to:

- help young people and adults be better prepared to exercise the rights and responsibilities stipulated in national constitutions;
- help them acquire the skills required for active participation in the public arena as responsible and critical citizens as well as organised citizens (in civil society);
- increase interest in educational change, stimulate bottom-up innovation and grassroots initiatives of practitioners;
- encourage a holistic approach to education by including non-formal and informal learning in education policies.

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