ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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Abstract
Vocational teacher training is at the heart of vocational education. The search for modernization of vocational teacher training leads to the incorporation of entrepreneurship education into vocational teacher training. However, little attention has been given to the context analysis of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training. The research question is as follows: what is the context for entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training? The aim of the research is to analyze the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training underpinning elaboration of a hypothesis on the promotion of the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence within vocational teacher training.

The present research involves a process of analysing the meaning of the key concepts entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, experience, competence, context and macro-level context. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of “vocational teacher training”. Explorative research was employed. Interpretive research paradigm was used. The empirical study involved a focus group of five vocational education’s stakeholders from different European countries on September 23, 2014 in Brussels, Belgium. The findings of the research allow drawing the conclusions on the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training. Directions of further research are proposed.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, experience, context, macro-level context, vocational teacher training, entrepreneurship key competence.

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Introduction
The paradigm on vocational education has recently changed. The changes occurred may be identified as a shift from neglected paradigm towards imperative paradigm on vocational education. It should be noted that vocational education is a part of education as well as lifelong learning as illustrated in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. The relationship between education and lifelong learning as well as vocational education (source: authors)](image1)

Vocational education ensures students with initial experience in an occupation. In pedagogy, experience includes knowledge, skills and attitude (J. Zaščerinska, 2013, p. 56) as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Elements of experience in pedagogy (source: authors)](image2)

It should be noted that competence also consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes (European Commission, 2004) as shown in Figure 3.
Competence refers to the capacity to perform professional work as to a sense of the future, which can be viewed as a foundation for the provision of future competence necessary for professional work. The analysis of literature shows that the focus on competence requires a shift in a vocational training and development of teachers. Vocational training and development aim at transfer of professional knowledge, while the development of competences focuses on metacognitive skills, which allow applying new skills in a professional environment (Melnikova, 2011).

Consequently, the terms *experience* and *competence* are used synonymously in pedagogy in general and in the present contribution in particular.

The paradigm shift outlines that vocational teacher training is at the heart of vocational education. The search for modernization of vocational teacher training leads to the incorporation of entrepreneurship education into vocational teacher training as entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training plays a two-fold role:

- in society, delivery of Europe 2020's objectives, namely smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010, p. 3), that is missing such a link as entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2010, p. 18), is ensured, and
- in vocational education, vocational teachers are the key actors to meet students’ entrepreneurship competence as a key competence.

However, little attention has been given to the context analysis of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training.

Theoretical Framework

The meaning of the key concepts of *entrepreneurship*, *entrepreneurship education*, *context* and *macro-level context* is studied in the present part of the contribution.

In a broad sense, entrepreneurship should be considered as a general attitude that can be usefully applied in all working activities and in everyday life, such as creativity and innovation (K. K. Sarri, L. I. Bakouros, E. Petridou, 2010). Regarding entrepreneurship as an individual’s ability, it means to turn ideas into action (European Commission, 2012, p. 7). It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives (European Commission, 2012, p. 7) as shown in Figure 4.
This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and it provides a foundation for entrepreneurs to establish a social or commercial activity (European Commission, 2012, p. 7). In short, entrepreneurship education means developing a culture which is through, for and about entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2011). In vocational teacher training, entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare teachers to be responsible, enterprising individuals who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve the goals they set for themselves to live a fulfilled life (European Commission, 2012, p. 44). Therefore, entrepreneurship education focuses on knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers which all together make up the entrepreneurship key competence (European Commission, 2012, p. 44). Entrepreneurship key competence serves as an indicator of acquiring entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education is not necessarily directly focused on the creation of new businesses, although graduate start-ups are one of a range of possible outcomes (European Commission, 2012, p. 44). The study of entrepreneurship education for teachers has not had a long story as described in Table 1.

***Entrepreneurship education for teachers in different years (source: authors)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Need in specific training for teachers</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Support to teachers and educators</td>
<td>Participants of the Conference on &quot;Entrepreneurship Education in Europe: Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets through Education and Learning&quot; (Oslo, 26-27 October 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Teachers’ perspective on &quot;Entrepreneurship Education&quot;</td>
<td>B. Backström-Widjeskog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>The entrepreneurial teacher: - national strategies to entrepreneurship education, - delivering entrepreneurship education, - teacher education for entrepreneurship education</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Teachers’ entrepreneurial experience or the right mindset, teachers’ personal career exploration</td>
<td>C. Ashmore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of entrepreneurship education for teachers highlights that entrepreneurship education for teachers requires significant changes in the way teachers themselves are educated (European Commission, 2011). One of the suggested ways is to adopt innovative methods to train teachers in entrepreneurship (The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe, 2006). These would include case studies and other interactive methods as demonstrated in Figure 6, such as involving teachers in real work on enterprise projects or even in running themselves a mini-company (The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe, 2006) as illustrated in Figure 5.
In the present research the terms *business*, *enterprise*, *company* are used synonymously. Integration of entrepreneurship education into vocational teacher training is facilitated by context analysis. Context analysis is done to develop a strategy or, in other words, hypothesis on the strategy in the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence (L. Aleksejeva, M. Zaščerinsks, J. Zaščerinska, N. Andreeva, 2013, p. 9). Context analysis as demonstrated in Figure 8 (L. Aleksejeva, M. Zaščerinsks, J. Zaščerinska, N. Andreeva, 2013, p. 9) is traditionally differentiated into
- the analysis of the macro-level context, namely, the level of a nation in the present research,
- the analysis of the mezzo-level context, namely, the level of an organisation in the present research,
- the analysis of the micro-level context, namely, the level of a students’ group in the present research.

By macro-level context analysis, broad, upstream analysis is understood (The World Bank, 2007, p. 53). In the present research, macro-level context analysis examines the social landscape that can be complemented by focus group contribution as more specific analysis of the context for the promotion of the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence in vocational teacher training as a particular type of reform (The World Bank, 2007, p. 53).

**Methods and methodologies**

The research question is as follows: what is the context for entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training?

The aim of the research is to analyze the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training underpinning elaboration of a hypothesis on the promotion of the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence within vocational teacher training.

The present research involves a process of analysing the meaning of the key concepts *entrepreneurship*, *entrepreneurship education*, *experience*, *competence*, *context* and *macro-level context*. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of “vocational teacher training”. The study presents how the steps of the process are related: theoretical framework on
entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training → empirical study within a multicultural environment.

The methodological background of the present research is based on the System-Constructivist Theory. The System-Constructivist Theory is introduced as the New or Social Constructivism Pedagogical Theory. The System-Constructivist Theory is formed by
- Parsons's System Theory (T. Parsons, 1976) on any activity as a system,
- Luhmann's Theory (N. Luhmann, 1988) on communication as a system,
- the Theory of Symbolic Interactionalism (G. Mead, 1973),

Application of the System-Constructivist Theory to learning introduced by Reich (Reich, 2005) emphasizes that human being’s point of view depends on the subjective aspect (E. Maslo, 2007, p. 39): experience plays the central role in the knowledge construction process (E. Maslo, 2007, p. 39). Therein, the subjective aspect of human being’s point of view is applicable to the present research to analyse the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training.

**Empirical Research**

The present part of the paper demonstrates the design of the empirical research, survey results and findings of the empirical study.

**Research design**

The design of the present empirical research comprises the purpose and question, sample and methodology of the present empirical study as demonstrated in Figure 7.

![Figure 7. Elements of the design of the empirical research (source: authors)](image)

The research question is as follows: what are the views of vocational education’s stakeholders on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training? The aim of the research is to analyze the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training via a focus group interview on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training.

The present empirical study involved a focus group of five vocational education’s stakeholders from different European countries during the workshop “Developing entrepreneurial skills – in students and in the workforce” that took place as part of the 2nd European Business Forum on Vocational Training ‘Business and VET – Working Together for Growth and Competitiveness’ organised by the European Commission on 23-24 September 2014 in Brussels, Belgium. All the respondents have been awarded a higher education degree in different sciences. As the respondents with different cultural backgrounds and diverse educational approaches were chosen, the sample was multicultural. Thus, the group (age, field of study and work, mother tongue, etc.) is heterogeneous. The sample of five respondents involved
- a researcher in the field of educational research, Centre for Education and Innovation Research, Latvia,
- a senior officer, Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Cyprus,
- a member of the Department Enterprise Development at National Centre for Entrepreneurship Education, United Kingdom,
- a university lecture at UNILEVER, Belgium,
- a member of the Department of Marketing and Development at JA-YE Europe, Belgium.

In order to save the information of the present research confidential, the respondents’ names and surnames were coded as follows:
- a researcher from Latvia was given the code R1 (Respondent 1),
- a senior officer from Cyprus was pointed as R2 (Respondent 2),
- a member of the department from the United Kingdom was considered as R3 (Respondent 3),
- a university lecture from Belgium was coded as R4 (Respondent 4),
- a member of the department from Belgium was identified as R5 (Respondent 5).

The interpretive paradigm was used in the empirical study. The interpretive paradigm aims to understand other cultures, from the inside through the use of ethnographic methods such as informal interviewing and participant observation, etc (P. C. Taylor & M. N. D. Medina, 2013). Interpretative research paradigm corresponds to the nature of humanistic pedagogy (I. Luka, 2008, p. 4). The interpretive paradigm allows creating an environment for the development of any individual and helps them to develop their potential (I. Luka, 2008, p. 4). The core of this paradigm is human experience, people’s mutual everyday interaction that tends to understand the subjectivity of human experience (I. Luka, 2008, p. 4). The paradigm is aimed at understanding people’s activity, how a certain activity is exposed in a certain environment, time, conditions, i.e., how it is exposed in a certain socio-cultural context (I. Luka, 2008, p. 4). Thus, the interpretative paradigm is oriented towards one’s conscious activity, and it is future-oriented (I. Luka, 2008, p. 4). Interpretative paradigm is characterized by the researchers’ practical interest in the research question (L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrsion, 2003).

Exploratory research was employed in the empirical study (D. Phillips, 2006, p. 306). Exploratory research is aimed at generating new questions and hypothesis (D. Phillips, 2006, p. 306). The exploratory methodology proceeds from exploration in Phase 1 through analysis in Phase 2 to hypothesis development in Phase 3 as demonstrated in Figure 8.

![Figure 8. Methodology of the exploratory research (source: authors)](image)

The qualitatively oriented empirical study allows the construction of only few cases (P. Mayring, 2004). Moreover, the cases themselves are not of interest, only the conclusions and transfers we can draw from these respondents (B. Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Selecting the cases for the case study comprises use of information-oriented sampling, as opposed to random sampling (B. Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). This is because an average case is often not the richest in information. In addition, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur (B. Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Random samples emphasizing representativeness will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight; it is more appropriate to select some few cases chosen for their validity.

Data were collected through focus group interviews. A focus group interview is ‘a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being focused’ on a given topic’ (F. Rabiee, 2004, p. 655). Focus groups interviews examine how knowledge, and more importantly, ideas, develop and operate within a given cultural context as well as explore exactly how the opinions are constructed (J. Kitzinger, 1995, p. 301). It should be mentioned that in the present research view is defined as a central, organizing stance (J. P. Portelli, A. B. Vilbert, 2002). The view comprises vision, mission and objectives. View in pedagogy is usually regarded as the concept of learning organization that focuses on the teaching and learning process design (T. Garavan, 1997; K. Thomas, S, Allen, 2006), namely, vocational teacher training.
Circle seating is usually used for a focus group interview (R. Krueger, 2002, p. 1). A focus group usually includes from five to 10 participants (R. Krueger, 2002, p. 1). Participants are selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, are within the age-range, have similar socio-characteristics and would be comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other (C. A. Richardson & F. Rabiee, 2001). It can also be advantageous to bring together a diverse group (for example, from a range of professions) to maximise exploration of different perspectives within a group setting (J. Kitzinger, 1995, p. 301). Moreover, it is important to be aware of how hierarchy within the group may affect the data (a nursing auxiliary, for example, is likely to be inhibited by the presence of a consultant from the same hospital) (J. Kitzinger, 1995, p. 301). Hence, the choice of participants for a focus group interview was based on three criteria as depicted in Figure 11:

- participant’s knowledge on a given topic,
- participant’s cultural difference and vocational education’s diversity (occupation, training, etc), and
- participant’s hierarchy in the group.

![Figure 11. Criteria of choosing participants for a focus group interview (source: authors)](image)

The number of participants depends on the heterogeneity of the focus group: the greater the heterogeneity of the group, the fewer the number of participants (C. Okoli, S. Pawlovski, 2004, p. 20). Further on, as smaller groups show greater potential (R. A. Krueger & M. A. Casey, 2000). Thus, five is a good number of participants for the study (C. Lopez, J. Salmeron, 2011, p. 202).

The focus group interview was identified as semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview was used as the researchers had obtained the initial knowledge on the research field (A. Kroplijs, M. Raščevka, 2004, p. 99) and were analysing the macro-level context of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training via a focus group interview on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training. The semi-structured interview included the following question: To which extent are vocational teachers trained to teach entrepreneurial skills? The non-structured interview was carried out in the focus group of five participants. It should be noted that all the five participants had received extensive experience in entrepreneurship education as well as vocational education.

**Research results**

In order to elaborate a hypothesis on the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence in vocational teacher training, non-structured interview was carried out in the focus group.

Participant 1 who had carried out a couple of studies on teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence identified a couple of issues to be taken into consideration when training vocational teachers to teach entrepreneurial skills. Participant 1 stressed that the implemented empirical studies had revealed a low level of teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence. Moreover, Participant 1 underlined that these studies allowed drawing the conclusion that not all teachers have the right mindset to run a business. Further on, Participant 1 paid attention to the fragmentarism in delivering entrepreneurship education to teachers in teacher training.

Participant 2 discussed the importance of teachers’ experience in a company. Participant 2 also highlighted that teacher have more academic knowledge that professional.

Participant 3 emphasised that bottom-up approach ensures the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence in vocational teacher training or, in other words, teachers should wish to acquire entrepreneurship competence.

Participant 4 assumed that evaluation of teachers’ entrepreneurship competence based on learning outcomes should be elaborated. As well Participant 4 suggested that teachers’ experience exchange is to
be ensured. Participant 4 considered that the focus in teachers’ lifelong learning should be put on creativity.

Participant 5 assumed that national educational policies should be aligned with European educational policies. Participant 5 pointed out that vocational teachers are not well-trained to teach entrepreneurial skills.

Findings of the Empirical Study and further discussion

The structuring content analysis (P. Mayring, 2004, p. 269) of the data demonstrates that the respondents highlighted different aspects of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training. Therefore, the respondents’ views on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training is not heterogeneous.

Summarizing content analysis (P. Mayring, 2004, p. 269) of the data reveals that the macro-level context for entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training is not favourable as a number of problems have been identified such as
- a low level of teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence,
- no right teachers’ mindset to run a business,
- fragmentarism in delivering entrepreneurship education to teachers in teacher training,
- teacher s’academic knowledge rather than professional knowledge,
- teachers’ wish to acquire entrepreneurship competence,
- evaluation of teachers’ entrepreneurship competence based on learning outcomes,
- compliance of European and national educational policies, etc.

The issues outlined in the present contribution that require joint efforts for further analysis in the fields of:
- Integration of teachers’ experience in a company into vocational teacher training is to be considered by the research and professional communities.
- Another issue such as the relationship between academic and professional knowledge has to be determined.
- Shaping the respondents’ opinions on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training has to be analysed as well.
- Further analysis is needed on such an issue as learning outcomes of entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training.

Conclusions

The empirical findings of the research allow drawing the conclusions on the macro-level context for entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training.

The following hypothesis has been formulated: the development of vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship key competence is facilitated if
- vocational teachers have a right mindset to become entrepreneurial,
- vocational teachers wish to acquire entrepreneurship competence,
- entrepreneurship education is delivered to vocational teachers within vocational teacher training,
- vocational teachers’ entrepreneurship competence is evaluated via learning outcomes,
- compliance of European and national educational policies on entrepreneurship education in vocational teacher training is ensured.

Validity and reliability of the research results have been provided by involving other researchers into several stages of the conducted research. External validity has been revealed by international co-operation as following:
- the research preparation has included individual consultations given by other researchers,
- the present contribution has been worked out in co-operation with international colleagues and assessed by international colleagues, and
- the research has been presented at international conferences.

The present research has limitations. The inter-connections between entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, experience, competence, context, macro-level context, vocational teacher training and
entrepreneurship key competence have been set. Another limitation is the empirical study conducted by involving the focus group only.

Further research tends to focus on empirical studies to be carried out in other institutions. And a comparative research of different countries could be carried out, too.

References

VERSLOMU UGDYMAS PROFESINIAME MOKYTOJŲ RENGIME: KONTEKSTO ANALIZĖ

Julija Melnikova, Jeļena Zaščerinska

Santrauka


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