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POSITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING IN IRAN'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Abstract:

Objectives of education systems of various societies will face new challenges through the path leads them into new and variable situation of new industrial technologies of the third millennium in which philosophical, scientific, cultural, social and economic foundations of societies will experience deep developments. The education system can play a key role to adapt societies to the new situation. The education system should pave the way for developing certain features such as independence-seeking, risk-taking, innovation, self-esteem and foresight in students through proposing proper training programs. Based on promoting entrepreneurial thinking, the education system can provide a condition in which the educated may act as producers instead of job seekers and may start businesses not only for themselves, but also for others. Thus, this study tries to analyze the position of entrepreneurial thinking in Iran's education system using examining the entrepreneurial features of students. To do so, a number of 335 students (third grade of high school) were selected through stratified random sampling based on discipline and gender. Then a questionnaire was used to collect and analyze the required data. The results gained from analysis of data imply that the educational programs of Iran's education system have failed to provide a proper condition to improve the entrepreneurial features of students. The results of the analysis of the variance, used to compare the performance of training programs in different schools, indicate that there was no difference among various schools in improving entrepreneurial spirit for students. There was no significant difference between students of various schools in terms of having entrepreneurial spirit, as well. Likewise T-test, used to compare the entrepreneurial spirit of girl and boy students in average, showed that there is no significant relationship between gender and entrepreneurial spirit.

Keywords:

Education System, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Students, Schools

Introduction

In past, entrance of high school graduate students to the job market was far easier. Nowadays, the students not only have to learn technical and job educations but also they are expected to have higher levels of skills and scientific knowledge. Therefore, the schools have to help the students in understanding how their learning and lessons are linked to their future job opportunities. That's why in advanced societies, most of schools, employers and experts are willing to create a bridge between school and job environment. These acts, in addition to learning the scientific basis, have caused the transformation of the education to the actual job environment and experience gaining in various job structures. In report of "future economy" the British employers declared that the companies having highly skilled workforce are among the samples with higher stability and growing (national training group 1992). In USA, it is also formally paid attention that the current workforce is not compatible with the present needs of society, because the workforce requirements increase with increase of changes in technology and foreign competition development (human force quality and job market efficiency commission, 1989). European society commission (1991) has asked the members to accept the responsibility of education for equipping the people for work in variable technical situation which needs the compatibility and capability of developing modern skills.

Although throughout these year modification have been applied in educational system of country whose main objective was to strengthening the relationship between the presented education and needs of job market, but a quick review of the graduated students' performance in job market and evaluation of employers' satisfaction in different sections, we can see that most of educational system outcomes have no basic job market required capabilities and abilities; in a way that they even can't get the existing job opportunities. On the other hand, high rate of unemployment in the educated people indicates the undesirable level of external efficiency and education system's failure in obtaining the acceptable efficiency rate. In this regard, the poor condition of the educational system and lack of sufficient relationship between the educations and goal and needs of job market could be recognized as one of the examples of one of former World Bank presidents said:

Regarding the significant growth of educational systems in developing countries in last 25 years, the development has not been guided appropriately. The result is one of the most unpleasant dilemmas of our time: while millions of educated people are jobless, millions of job opportunities have been withheld due to insufficient educated human force with the appropriate skills (Fresh 2000).

Such an emphasis on quality of workforce undoubtedly indicated the common factors among the societies which have had appropriate economic growth but are now facing with some crisis and ambiguities.

Therefore, despite the numerous modifications taken in recent decades especially after the Islamic revolution for improving and effectiveness of the executive goals and approaches of educational system, in particular high school education, still the education system of country is struggling with main issues. Therefore a long way is to improve the high school education system and its alignment with the economic needs of job market. Regarding these things, not only the realization of the educational goals in preparing the skillful and experienced youth for developing economic, industrial and agricultural and service section will face with problems, but also the rapid growth of unemployment among the high school graduates will be caused, while lack of semi-skilled and highly skilled workforce is one of the reasons for failure of development programs (economic-social).

In addition to the procedure and structural weaknesses in education system which have resulted to lack of a continuous and regulated relation between this system and job market, the other effective drawbacks such as demographic weakness and the demand-presentation aspect of job market, lack of clarity in job market information, no knowledge about the quality needs of job market and drawbacks in laws and regulations and their applications must be mentioned as well (Nafisi 1998).

Method

This research is descriptive-background seeking type, and as Delavar (2005) mentioned a descriptive research is aimed to describe a research society in relation with explaining a given phenomenon. That's why the researcher does not discuss about the existence of the issue, but inly addresses it in relation with the studied society and describe that. The statistical society included the second grade high school students and technical branches of technical-profession and work-knowledge high schools of Tehran amounting to 340000 people. For sampling, a sampled statistical society by separation of gender and school, was selected using Cocran sampling formula and classified-random sampling method which include 268 students.

The data collecting tool is questionnaire. The first section of the present study is associated to investigating the performance of educational programs of schools from students' point of view, which is adapted from a research entitled as "investigation of the causes resulting in entrepreneurial attitudes" conducted by Azizi (2003) in Shahid Beheshti University. In the second section, the questions associated with entrepreneurial thinking evaluation are used which are obtained from standardized sample questions from Moghimi book (2001). Also, the questions of this section were adapted from Jamshidi (2006) questionnaire from Babol Azad University who assessed the personal

and psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs, with some modifications. The questions were ranked by very much/completely agree (score 5), much/agree (score 4), no comment/medium (score 3) low/disagree (score 2) very low/completely disagree (score 1). The questionnaires' reliability was confirmed by professors in university and experts in entrepreneurship and future studies. For evaluation of validity, the questionnaires were experimentally distributed among 24 people of statistical society and they were asked to mark the unclear items, after collecting the questionnaires, the Cronbach alpha was obtained as 79% by means of SPSS software.

In this study, the collected data were analyzed in two forms of descriptive (including frequency tables and curves) and inferential (Anova T-Test binomial). Descriptive methods were used for organization and summarizing the data and expressing the demographic properties while inferential methods were adapted for answering to the major and minor questions of the research.

Findings

a) Statistical society properties

The demographic properties (age, gender, marital status, birth order, parents education, school type and employment status) can be described as:

- 1- The age of the students was between 17 to 20 years old, and most of the participants (8.63%) were between 17 to 18 years old. The average age was 18.19.
- 2- According to the data, 53.7% of the participants were female and 46.3% were male. The difference arises from the fact that the number of boy and girl students in the statistical society was not equal and the gender ratio was determined according to the existing statistics.
- 3- Female participants mostly were 17 (38.3%) and 18 (37%) years old while the majority of male participants were 17 (29.6%) and 18 (21.8%) years old. 7.7% were 19 and 20 years old.
- 4- distribution of marital status of the participants shows that 91% were single and only 9% were married. Overall it can be said that single students were far more than married ones.
- 5- Parents education level is one of the background variations investigated in this study. The data show that the highest percentage of fathers' education level was diploma (28.9%), bachelor (20%), Associate Degree (15.1%), primitive school (11.1%), high school (10.5%) illiterate (8.2%) master and PhD (6.2%), respectively. while for the mothers this order was diploma (35.1%), primitive school (19.1%), high school (16.1%), illiterate (12.4%), bachelor (8.4%) master and PhD (1.7%).

6- 1.1% of the female participants were employed and 98.9% of them were jobless. In fact among 142 female responders, only 2 people had a job. Among the boys, although the number of the employed people was higher than women but relative to the total percentage, the percent of the employed male participants was also low. Among 122 people, only 13 of them (10.5%) had a job and 89.5% were jobless.

b) Analysis

In this section, first the main questions and then the secondary questions of the research will be analyzed by inferential statistics:

From students' point of view, how was the performance of educational programs of the schools in relation with entrepreneurship thinking promotion?

Less than 50% evaluated that as weak performance and more than 50% thought that the schools' performance was strong, the average of the two groups was evaluated as equal which are shown in table 1.

Q 1: is there any difference between the educational programs of different schools for enhancing entrepreneurship among students?

Inferential statistics mentioned in table 3 which are the results of variance test and shows the value of $p=0.236$ (larger than 0.05) show that there is no significant difference. As it was thought that, at least in technical-profession and work-knowledge schools, the students' evaluation of schools programs for enhancement of entrepreneurship attitudes would be more positive. But the results of the table indicate no difference.

Q2: is there a significant relationship between gender and entrepreneurial thinking?

As the calculated t ($t=0.543$) and the level of its significance ($p=0.588$) in table 5 show, there is no significant relationship between gender and entrepreneurial thinking. Because as it can be observed from table 3, the calculated t is lower than 1.98 and their level of significance is larger than 0.05. average entrepreneurship of male participants is 53.33 which are so close to each other, therefore, male and female participant had the same level of entrepreneurial attitudes.

Tables, figures and curves

Table 1: performance of educational programs

Item	Class	Frequency	%	sig
Group 1	<05	197	76	0.000
Group 2	>50	71	25	
sum	-	268	100	

Table 2: test of average difference of educational program performance versus school type

Variable	item	Average	F	Sig
	Human science	42.8936	1.256	0.239
	Empirical science	43.1600		
	Mathematical and physics	42.7458		
	Car mechanics	43.7333		
	architecture	42.5000		
	computer	41.4000		
	electronic	39.5926		
	Electro-technique	43.3000		
	Construction and production	483636		
	Food industry	43.6875		
	installation	38.5909		
	building	48.4500		
	sport	40.0909		
	accounting	43.7273		
	total	42.7424		

Figure 1: amount of performance

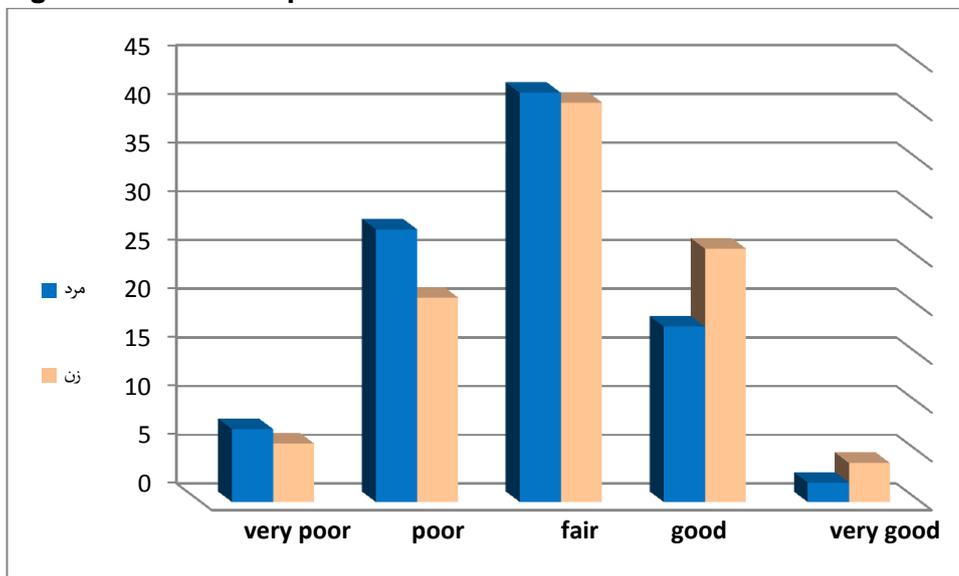
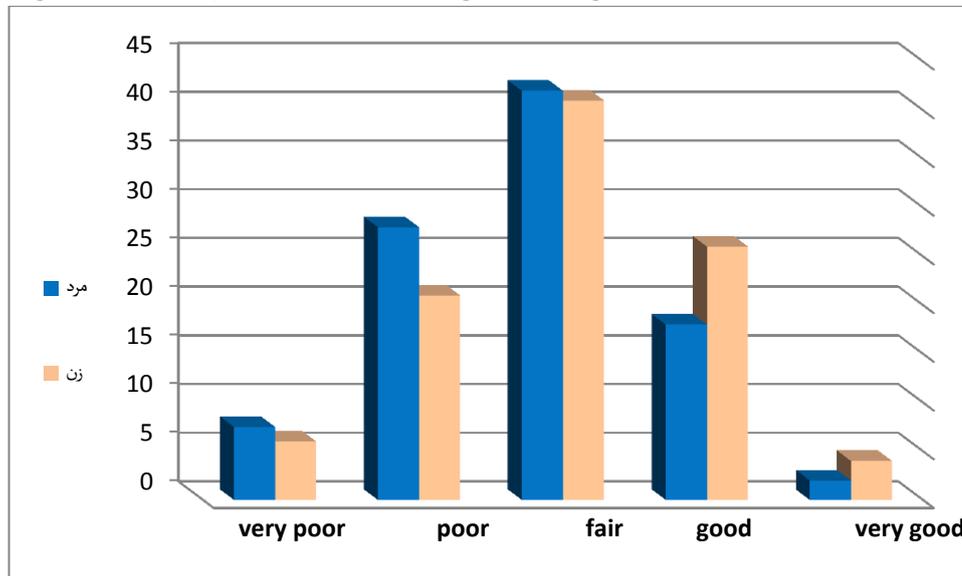


Table 3: test of average difference of educational program performance versus gender

variable	item	average	T	Sig
gender	Female	55.3315	0.543	0.588
	male	54.8847		

Figure 2: entrepreneurial thinking versus gender

Discussion and conclusion

The results show that the performance of the educational programs in Tehran schools for enhancing entrepreneurial thinking was poor, and 75% of the students evaluated it as poor. It can be said the students were not satisfied with the performance of educational programs. Only 25% of the students believed that the educational programs of their schools have promoted entrepreneurial thinking in them. Although the main features of entrepreneurship (creativity, independence, risk-taking, motivation, advancement and internal control) potentially exist in students, but the required abilities and skills are low which need to be enhanced among the students. Therefore it is required that the programmer and authorities pay attention to it and include future seeking and entrepreneurship enhancement policies in the programs designed for the students. The results of the study associated with the main question of the research were in good agreement with the results obtained by Azizi (2003), Badri (2005) and Shirazi (2006). In addition the results show that none of the 14 studied schools was superior or inferior in enhancement of entrepreneurial thinking among the students; and there was no significant difference among the schools and the minor observed difference is not statistically significant. In contrast to the belief that due to more empirical units in technical-profession schools, their performance in enhancement of entrepreneurial

thinking might be better than others, the results of variance test analysis show that studying branch is not an effective variable in promoting entrepreneurial thinking. Overall, none of the schools were successful in promoting entrepreneurial thinking attitudes. The results of this question were also in agreement with Azizi (2003) and Badri (2005).

Finally it can be said that male and female students were in the same level of entrepreneurial thinking attitudes and the minor difference probably is due to sampling errors, according to table 3 and the associated curve, we find that both male and female students have high entrepreneurship spirits. This could be due to having proper education, environmental condition, and experience of living in dormitory, communication with global scientific society, age and the fact of being young. The findings of this study were in accordance with studies conducted by Azizi (2003), Yaraei (2004), Tipetrin (2002), Histrich and Brush (1984).

As a general conclusion from this research regarding the comments of the students it can be said that the educational programs are not designed for enhancement of entrepreneurship attitudes and thinking. They are based on the converged thinking based on the memorized information and theoretical lessons without any attention to entrepreneurship promotion and future seeking, which has resulted in certificate orientated attitudes and lack of researching spirit among the graduates.

Research suggestions

The suggestion of this research is that to do a content analysis on the text books of different majors and branches in education system regarding their attention to entrepreneurship promotion. The executive suggestions of this research are:

- 1- This study showed that the entrepreneurial abilities and skills are not enhanced therefore, some modifications should be applied in educational programs of the schools; for example, entrepreneurship courses should be included as a mandatory unit (not solely a theoretical one) in educational programs.
- 2- Some workshops should be held for teachers for making them know future seeking procedures and the method of training entrepreneur people.
- 3- The study also indicates that low percent of the students are employed, as we know, job experience plays a crucial role in entrepreneurship; therefore for creation of a bridge between scientific issues and the real world, the school goals should be determined according to needs of society and industry, as a result schools and industry get closer to each other and the students can gain job experience along their education processes.
- 4- As entrepreneurship is an act which responds to changing needs of society, i.e. entrepreneurship is research oriented knowledge, the results of this study showed that the main goal of schools is to transfer knowledge. This means instead of researching in society and answering to its needs, schools just give

some information to the students. Therefore it is suggested that the duties of schools be revised and by researching in society, answering to its needs.

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