Values of Entrepreneurship Education in EU-countries

Abstract

The main aim of our research study was to find out the most important issues around which entrepreneurship education (EE) in EU-countries should be constructed. That way we are able to propose some values of EE.

The quantitative survey data (N 124) were collected in 16 EU-countries in December 2010-April 2011 through an internet-based questionnaire of important issues of EE. As a result of the survey we created a list of 12 values of EE. This research will lead to further development of the EE and its evaluation, because evaluation should be based on values.

key words: entrepreneurship education, evaluation, values, EU-countries

Introduction

The value discussion of entrepreneurship education (later referred to as EE) is absent in many EU-countries, although EE is one of the topics of education for example in Finland. We are mainly missing the strong frame of EE, especially in basic level education. We are missing also the frame for EE's evaluation as well as the criteria of the evaluation of EE. We need to set a strong framework for EE and its evaluation, which demands an extensive discussion of values of EE. This kind of development requires opening a new dialogue about EE among researchers, educators and entrepreneurs in EU-countries.

The aims and contents of education are selected on the ground of what is valuable. Defining the values is also a very important part of the evaluation and the quality of evaluation is based on that. Evaluation should be a genuine part of all learning and teaching,

also in EE. Cultural diversity is certainly one of the aspects we should consider in researching values of EE, since there is significant variation among countries in terms of customs, beliefs, tradition and social organizations.

This article presents a research study where the aim was to find out what are the most important issues, around which EE should be constructed. That way we are able to propose some values for EE. To propose values is a very important part of the evaluation methodology and the quality of evaluation is based on that.

In a publication published by the Finnish Ministry of Education "Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat" – "Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education" (2009) different values and other important issues that should be promoted by EE are mentioned several times, likewise in the research studies, which Seikkula-Leino has carried out for the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2006 and 2007. The Commission of the European Communities (2005) has defined entrepreneurship by using some values. Hornaday (1982) has created a directory of features that can be connected to entrepreneurs. Some of these features were chosen for this study. The fundamentals of the Finnish curriculum give some values that should also be considered in EE.

We start by introducing the reader to data gathering and methods used in this study. Going into the main theme, we first present the literature review on the values of EE. Next, we introduce the issues that we picked for our questionnaire. This is followed by the results of the survey. After summarizing our work, we conclude by specifying our contributions to the research and practice of EE.

Data gathering and Methods

The quantitative survey data collection dealt with issues of EE. The experimental subjects consisted of teachers, principals, teacher educators and other educators from

different school levels from basic level to higher level and some entrepreneurs (N 124). The study was carried out in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, France, Portugal, U.K., Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Romania and Spain, one response came also from Pakistan. The countries were chosen based on the contact people we met in different conferences. An Internet-based questionnaire (Appendix 1.) was sent out to several liaisons in these countries and they forwarded it to people who are involved in EE in their country. 276 persons have opened the questionnaire and 124 filled it out correctly. Seven respondents had misunderstood the questionnaire; they had ranked all the issues instead of choosing only six to rank. The survey took place during December 2010 - April 2011. In the questionnaire there were 28 alternatives and the respondents had to choose the six most important issues of EE that should be promoted in the society, and put them in order of importance. The collected data was handled by using a computer program used for webropol. In that way we received the issues, which were mentioned most often by the respondents. As a next step a frequency distribution was done on which issue had received the most responses as the most important (1.) issue and which issue had received the most responses for being second (2.) most important etc.

The nationality of the respondents (N 124) is presented in table 1. They were mostly Finnish (69), then Swedish (12), Estonian and Portuguese (both 10), British (4), French, Austrian, Norwegian, Dutch, Romanian, Spanish and Irish (all 2), Belgian, Danish, Lithuanian and German (all 1) and one outside Europe, Pakistani (1). The professions of the respondents are presented in table 2. Most of the respondents were teacher educators at universities (24), then teachers or principals in basic education (22), entrepreneurs (18), teachers or principals at universities (14) and in High Schools (14) or some other educators (14), teacher educators at universities of Applied Sciences (11), then teachers or principals at Universities of Applied Sciences (10) and on a basic Vocational level (4). Seventeen of the respondents chose the alternative "other". We think that they were researchers, policy-makers

and representatives of organizations. Most of the respondents were female (69) and the respondents were mostly between 36-55 years of age (85), then between 56-66 years of age (23), 25-35 years of age (18) and 66 or over years of age were 3 respondents. One respondent didn't answer the question of sex and three respondents didn't answer the question of age.

Table 1. Nationality of the respondents (N 124)

Finnish	69
Swedish	12
Estonia	10
Portuguese	10
British	4
French	2
Austrian	2
Dutch	2
Norwegian	2
Romanian	2
Spanish	2
Belgian	1
Danish	1
German	1
Icelandic	1
Irish	1
Lithuanian	1
Pakistani	1

Table 2. Profession of the respondents (N 124)

Teacher educator in University	24
Teacher or Principal in basic Education	22
Entrepreneur	18
Other	17

Teacher or Principal in High School	14
Teacher or Principal in University	14
Other educator	14
Teacher educator in University of Applied Sciences	11
Teacher or Principal in University of Applied Sciences	10
Teacher or Principal in basic Vocational level	4

Values of EE

Value is the desirability of a thing, often in respect of some property such as usefulness or exchangeability: importance, worth, merit, advantage, benefit, desirability, help, mileage (*informal*), profit, serviceableness, significance, use, usefulness or utility. Values are the moral principles and beliefs or accepted standards of a person or social, the code of behavior. (MOT 1999; MOT 2006). Schwartz (1992) and Rokeach (1973) argue that values are aims, which are enduring in different situations, but their consequences may vary and they steer the action of the individual or the group.

The aims and contents of education and schooling are determined on ground of what is valuable. Planning, implementing and evaluating the school subjects are carried out on the ground of relevant values. To found important values for each school subject is a very important part of the evaluation methods and the quality of evaluation is based on that. (see Atjonen 2007; Korkeakoski 2008; House 1980; House & Howe 1999). Values are not a genetic feature, but they are absorbed through social interaction, education and schooling (Launonen 2004, 13). Therefore values that are connected to EE can be forwarded also through the schooling system. That demands discussion of values of EE among those who develop EE.

The problem in defining the value platform of EE lies in the difference between attitudes of the teachers and the school: in spite of the positive attitude of the teachers to

entrepreneurship and EE the school as an institution is presenting non-entrepreneurial values. Traditionally the basic non-entrepreneurial values of the schooling system have been security, systematics, leadership, knowledge, safety and traditions. (Seikkula-Leino 2007, 37.) If we look at the EE from the perspective of individuals and their personalities EE can, according to Kyrö & al. (1999), help many kinds of personalities and students with different backgrounds and at different levels. The target of the EE is to create a positive value circle with an ideal set of entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial values and principles. With this set/tool/package the EE will support the development and growth of the students towards the entrepreneurial thinking as well as towards a good citizenship. According to Kyrö & al. (1999) and Schwartz (1994) this could be one model to build up the value groundwork of EE.

We have not found any research on the values of EE, but Schwartz has carried out several studies about human values (Schwartz 1992; 1994; 1997; 1999; Schwartz & Huismans 1995; Schwartz & Sagiv 1995; Schwartz, Sagiv & Boehnke 2000; Schwartz & Boehnke 2004). Schwartz and Bardi (2001) identify value hierarchies across nations in their study, where they reported the order of importance of the 10 types of individual values across nations, and James (2006) has considered in his philosophical study the objectivity of values in general. Parry & Urwin (2011) have presented a critical review on the theoretical basis and empirical evidence of the popular practitioner idea that there are generational differences in work values. Research on work values has been carried out also by many other researchers (e.g. Roe et al 1999; Ghorpade et al. 2001; Loughlin & Barling 2001; Berings et al. 2004; Valentine 2004; Abbott et al. 2005; Lyons et al 2006; Porfeli 2006; Warr 2008). Cortés-Pascual (2009) carried out a study about the work values of teacher training students in a Spanish University and Levin (2006) describes in his study the tension between the educational values and the economic values of faculty work in U.S.

Hornaday (1982, 26-27) has created a directory of 42 characteristics often attributed to the entrepreneur. They are: confidence; perseverance, determination; energy, diligence;

resourcefulness; ability to take calculated risks; dynamism, leadership; optimism; need to achieve; versatility, knowledge of product, market, machinery, technology; creativity; ability to influence others; ability to get along well with people; initiative; flexibility; intelligence; orientation to clear goals; time-competence, efficiency; ability to make decisions quickly; positive response to challenges; honesty, integrity; maturity, balance; responsiveness to suggestions and criticism; responsibility; foresight; accuracy, thoroughness; cooperativeness; profit-orientation, ability to learn from mistakes; sense of power; pleasant personality; egotism; courage; imagination; perceptiveness; toleration for ambiguity; aggressiveness, capacity for enjoyment, efficacy; commitment; ability to trust workers and sensitivity to others.

In a publication published by the Finnish Ministry of Education "Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat" – "Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education" (2009) and in the research of Seikkula-Leino (2006; 2007) different values that should be promoted by EE are mentioned several times. Innovativeness, creativity, ability to take risks, responsibility taking, problem solving ability, ability to plan and manage projects, catching challenges, able to seize opportunities, initiative, pro-activity, independence, flexibility, thinking and cooperation are mentioned as promoting the development of an entrepreneurship-like attitude in the future of the schools. (Finnish Ministry of Education, 2009).

The Commission of the European Communities defines entrepreneurship as follows: "Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day to day life at home and in society, employees in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by entrepreneurs

establishing social or commercial activity." (Commission of the European Communities 2005). Here are also several values that are connected to EE.

The fundamentals of the Finnish curriculum mention the general values of education and schooling, which should be taken into account also in EE. These are, among others: communality; holistic and multidimensional growth of the human being; an ecologic way of living; reverence and ability to hear others; ability to discuss and acceptance of difference. (Finnish National Board of Education 2003 and 2004). Fetterman (1996) has developed an empowerment evaluation and assessment, which is very suitable also in EE. He mentions an interesting issue, which we find is very important also in EE: empowerment of the individuals and the community (Tiikkala et al. 2010b).

Issues of the questionnaire

We picked the issues to our questionnaire from six resources: Hornaday 1982; Finnish Ministry of Education 2009; Seikkula-Leino 2006; 2007; Commission of European Communities 2005; Finnish National Board of Education 2003 and 2004. The chosen issues are presented in table 3. Knowledge, thinking; Creativity, Being cooperative; Responsibility taking; Sense of direction and Initiative was mentioned in all our resources. We thought that these six issues would be the basis of the values of EE. Self-confidence and Sustainability were mentioned second most. These would be the next ones to take in the questionnaire. Ability to take risks; Ability to discuss; Catching challenges; Control of whole; Criticality, arguableness; Will power; Commitment; Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive; Tolerance of change; Problem solving ability; Enduring uncertainty; Reverence and ability to hear of others; and Future orientation was mentioned at least in three of our resources. That's why they were chosen to be next ones. We had to consider the rest of the issues very carefully, because there are so many different issues that could be in the

questionnaire. We decided to pick the following issues, which were mentioned in two of our resources: Specialization, concentrate on own know how; Awareness of quality, further more Competitiveness; Effectiveness, effective achievement and Acceptance of difference, which were mentioned only in one recourse, because we think these are not only very important issues, but they are current and easily promoted through education. Empowerment of the individuals and the community was chosen from one resource from the original list (Fetterman 1996), because it is an important issue in EE according to our study carried out in Finland 2008 (Tiikkala et al. 2010b). Innovativeness was mentioned in all resources, but we left it out, because we thought that it would be difficult to choose between creativity and innovativeness. We wanted to give the respondents an opportunity to bring up importantissues outside of our own list by answering the last alternative: Something else, what?

Table 3. The chosen issues and their recourses.

Issues of EE	H	FME	S-L	CEC	FNBE	F	Together
1. Effectiveness, effective achievement	x						1
2. Competitiveness		x					1
3. Specialization, concentrate on own know how		x		x			2
4. Knowledge, thinking	x	x	x	x	x		5
5. Criticality, agreeableness	x	x			x		3
6. Awareness of quality	x				x		2
7. Control of whole			x	x	x		3
8. Creativity	x	x	x	x	x		5
9. Empowerment of human and community						x	1
10. Will power	x	x			x		3
11. Initiative	x	x	x	x	x		5
12. Being cooperative	x	x	x	x	x		5
13. Commitment	x		x		x		3
14. Responsibility taking	x	x	x	x	x		5
15. Sense of direction	x	x	x	x	x		5
16. Self-confidence	x	x	x		x		4
17. Sustainability	x	x	x		x		4
18. Ability to take risks	x	x	x				3
19. Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive	x	x	x				3
20. Problem solving ability		x	x		x		3
21. Enduring uncertainty	x	x	x				3
22. Tolerance of change		x	x		x		3
23. Reverence and ability to hear of others	x	x			x		3
24. Ability to discuss		x		x	x		3
25. Acceptance of difference					x		1
26. Catching challenges	x	x	x				3
27. Future orientation	x	x	x				3

H = Hornaday 1982

FME = Finnish Ministry of Education 2009

S-L = Seikkula-Leino 2006 and 2007

CEC = Commission of European Communities 2005

FNBE = Finnish National Board of Education 2003 and 2004

F = Fetterman 1996

Results of the survey

In the questionnaire 27 alternative issues were mentioned. In addition, the respondents could choose the alternative: "something else". The issues were chosen from different literature sources of EE (Finnish Ministry of Education 2009; Hornaday 1982; Commission of the European Communities 2005; Seikkula-Leino 2006; 2007; Fetterman 1996; Finnish National Board of Education, 2003 and 2004). The writers of this article and some other Finnish people who are involved in developing projects of EE had a think-thank and chose these issues based on their own work and experience of EE.

The respondents had to choose six of the issues and put them in order of importance, the first one is the most important one and so on. 124 respondents answered the question. All the issues got a total of 744 responses from the 124 respondents. Each alternative got responses; the issue with the highest amount of responses was "creativity" and the lowest amount of responses was "sense of direction". All the alternatives and the responses are presented in appendix 2.

Table 4. The issues that got the most responses regardless of if they were most important, second most important and so on.

Issue	All responses together

Creativity	77
Problem solving ability	56
Being cooperative	45
Future orientation	44
Responsibility taking	44
Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive	44
Knowledge, thinking	39
Tolerance of change	37
Ability to take risks	37
Self-confidence	36

In table 4 the issues, which were mentioned most often regardless of if they were most important, second most important or so on, are presented. "Creativity" was mentioned the most: 77 responses of all 744 responses. "Problem solving ability" received the second most responses (56). "Being cooperative" (45), "future orientation", "responsibility taking" and "learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive" (all 44) were the next ones. "Knowledge, thinking" (39), "tolerance of change" and "ability to take risks" (both 37) and "self-confidence" (35) were the last ones having over 35 mentions.

Table 5. The issues, which got most responses for being the most important (1.) one, second most important (2.), third most important (3.), fourth most important (4.), fifth most important (5.) and sixth most important (6.).

Issue	1. most important responses
Creativity	26
Responsibility taking	17
Initiative & Being cooperative	11 both

Issue	2. most important responses

Creativity & Initiative	17 both
Problem solving ability	14
Ability to take risks	9

Issue	3. most important responses
Problem solving ability	13
Being cooperative & Tolerance of change	12 both
Control of whole & Initiative & Ability to take risks & Enduring uncertainty & Catching challenges	7 each

Issue	4. most important responses
Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive	13
Problem solving ability	11
Effectiveness, effective achievement	8
Ability to take risks	7

Issue	5. most important responses
Creativity & Tolerance of change	10 both
Commitment & Future orientation & Knowledge, thinking	8 each
Being cooperative & Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive	7 both

Issue	6. most important responses
Future orientation	22
Creativity	12
Knowledge, thinking	10
Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive	9

"Creativity" also received most responses for being the most important (1.) value, 26 responses. "Responsibility taking" received 17 responses. "Being cooperative" and

"initiative" received 11 responses for being the most important issue. "Creativity" also received most responses for being the second most important (2.), responses as well as "initiative" both 17 responses. "Problem solving ability" received 14 responses and "ability to take risks" received 9 responses for being the second most important issue. The third most important issue was "problem solving ability", which received 13 responses and the fourth most important issue was "learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive", which received 13 responses. "Creativity" and "tolerance of change" both received 10 responses for being the fifth most important issue and "future orientation" received as much as 22 responses for being the sixth most important issue.

As a summary, we created a list of the most important issues according to the questionnaire, which can be utilized for nominating the values of EE. These twelve values are not in order of importance:

- Creativity
- Problem solving ability
- Being cooperative
- Future orientation
- Responsibility taking
- Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive
- Knowledge, thinking
- Tolerance of change
- Ability to take risks
- Self-confidence
- Initiative
- Commitment

Those who responded alternative "28. Something else" specified their answer by answering:

1. "Team work, team skills and team entrepreneurship"
2. "Team skills, team entrepreneurship and team learning"

3. "Mistake"

4. "Helicopter view, systematic thinking"

5. "Ethics"

6. "Love (th)em All"

7. "Combining theory and practice"

8. "Positive focus"

9. "That starting and running your own business is a good thing and should be considered"

10. "Knowledge of the important subjects you need as an entrepreneur. You need to understand how you can realize an ide(a) in both private and public sector."

11. "All of them are equally important. Don´t think it is useful to establish any hierarchies."

12. "Raising aspirations Developing life/business skills"

The first and second responses are the same: teamwork and team entrepreneurship, which are certainly very important. It is a part of cooperation but clearly an own sector of it. Number three, "mistake", does not tell us what the respondent meant, because there was already alternative 19. "Learning from mistakes, seeing mistakes as something positive". "Helicopter view, systematic thinking" and "Combining theory and practice" could belong also to the alternative 4. "Knowledge, thinking". "Ethics", "Love (th)em All", "Positive focus" are all totally new alternatives and someway very important also. Response, number nine: "That starting and running your own business is a good thing and should be considered", also number ten: "Knowledge of the important subjects you need as an entrepreneur" and number twelve: "You need to understand how you can realize an ide(a) in both private and public sector" concern all business-courses or at least higher education. Response, number eleven: "All of them are equally important. Don´t think it is useful to establish any hierarchies."

Since the sampling from each country in this research was so small, we did not compare the responses in terms of age, gender, profession or residency, although it would have been very interesting and useful to have this information.

Table 6. The issues, which got the least responses regardless of if they were most important, second most important and so on.

Issue	All responses together
Awareness of quality & Reverence and ability to hear of others	9 both
Sense of direction & Ability to discuss	10 both
Specialization, concentrate on own know how & Acceptance of difference	12 both
Criticality, agreeableness & Control of whole & Sustainability	13 each
Competitiveness & Will power	14 both

The issues that were mentioned the least "Reverence and ability to hear of others", "Sense of direction", "Ability to discuss", "Criticality, agreeableness", "Control of whole" and "Sustainability" where perhaps too general values of all schooling. "Specialization, concentrate on own know how" and "Competitiveness", however, are often connected to EE, but maybe they could both be more connected to external entrepreneurship. Quite many of the respondents came from the basic level or where teacher educators who educated future teachers for the basic level.

Discussion and future research

The end result with the group of twelve values was not put in order of importance, since it is both difficult and also unnecessary. The open response "All of them (issues of EE) are equally important. Don´t think it is useful to establish any hierarchies" is very interesting, because this is the meaning of the whole research: why try to put the issues of EE in order of importance? We have so many different values of EE that it is difficult to choose on what to

concentrate in planning, implementing and evaluating EE. Rokeach (1973, 6) gives one very useful example of that: Most parents love each of their children in an absolute, unqualified manner, but in particular circumstances a parent may be forced to show a preference for one child over the others – for the one who is perhaps ill or in some other way needs more attention. Values are like the children we love so dearly. When we in our teaching or evaluating concentrate on one of the values, we typically do so without forgetting the other values.

Each issue, however, was chosen as a response at least with 9 responses, which tells us that all values chosen for this research could well be connected to EE. The open responses "Ethics", "Love (th)em All", "Positive focus" and teamwork are all issues that we had not considered at all. These themes should be recognized in further development and research of the EE. Innovativeness was mentioned in all our resources, but we left it out, because we thought that it would be difficult to choose between creativity and innovativeness. It was a clear deficiency, because creativity and innovativeness are not the same thing, although they are very similar. Creativity got many responses and certainly some of them were meant to relate more to innovativeness. There are certainly many other ways to choose the issues for the questionnaire, but this was the first step to do that.

The questionnaire was in English, which is the native language only for U.K. respondents. In each language the value terms are different (Schwartz, S. & Bardi, A. 2001, 279) so we cannot be sure if the respondents understood the terms in the same way we did. The English language certainly eliminated some respondents, maybe mostly on the vocational level, because only four respondents from 124 were from that level. 276 people had opened the questionnaire, but only 124 responded it. The questionnaire was not too long or otherwise difficult, so maybe the linguistic reason was the biggest obstacle for answering the questionnaire.

Cultural diversity is certainly one of the aspects we should consider in future research on the values of the EE, since there is significant variation among countries in terms of customs, beliefs, tradition and social organizations. Since the sampling from each country (except Finland) in this study was so small, we did not compare the responses in different nations. That would be a good subject to research.

Conclusions and Implications for practice

We believe that it is very important to find the most important values for EE because the evaluation of EE requires commonly accepted values, which should be agreed upon among different actors/instances and researchers. A common value basis directs the goals, the planning and the implementation of the activities and also gives a basis for evaluation criteria. In earlier research on the theme the values of EE have not been found. The goals for this research were therefore met and a foundation for further research was created. Now twelve values linked to EE were mapped, from which teacher educators, teachers, other educators and principals, entrepreneurs and other people interested in developing EE in different EU-countries chose the values they considered to be the most important ones. These values can be the basis in developing the evaluation of EE. The design of the study as well as the results were emphasized in Finnish context, but maybe the results can be applied to the other EU-countries as well.

In order to develop EE and it's evaluation we should focus on the following areas: give the students and pupils more responsibility concerning their learning and working, support all kinds of creativity, put the students/pupils to work in a co-operative manner, let them do mistakes, give them tasks that demand problem solving and practice them to orientate to the future. We should train the students/pupils to tolerate changes and require them to commit to their work and studies. We should support them to study hard to have

good knowledge, support them to think by themselves and to take risks. By encouraging them to be proactive and by trusting them, we support them to be **s**elf-confident and proactive.

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