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A New Approach in Preschool Education: Social Entrepreneurship Education

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Abstract

The preschool years is a critical period for children because of the fact that their speed of learning and development is at the highest level in this period. If the education, which is offered during this period, has the qualities to support children's social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and linguistic development, it has great importance for children in terms of living their development positively. In order to support qualities of preschool education and enhance its positive effects on children's development, it is quite important to integrate new educational approaches into preschool education. Social entrepreneurship education is one of these approaches recently emergent. Through providing social entrepreneurship education, it is possible to develop children's abilities and enable them to produce innovative solutions to social problems. In order to achieve this, children needs to meet social entrepreneurship education in their developmental period. Social entrepreneurship education, which is taken during preschool period, has many positive effects on children in terms of individualistic aspect. Social entrepreneurship education gives children a chance to experiment what is taught in the school through living in daily life, and in this way, it makes education lifelong by supporting all developmental areas of children. In addition to that, social entrepreneurship education supports children's self-sufficiency, creativity, empathy, rational thinking, and entrepreneurship skills. Moreover, because it is given in a critical period, it has important place in children's life and has an impact on children's academic and social success through both preschool and higher education. In this context, the aim of the study is to reveal the need of school entrepreneurship education, and in parallel with this, to identify individual benefits of social entrepreneurship education which can be applied in preschool education institutions in where children meet with education for the first time.

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1. Introduction

Education is lifelong process applying to develop basic characteristics of individuals and add new skills to them. As well as preschool education years is critical period because basic characteristics of individual are built in this period. Therefore, it is important to get successful preschool education for children in order to achieve themselves in the future.

There are many factors affecting education and success of individual. If the factors affecting success of individual are investigated with the perspective of preschool education, it is possible to say that social environment factor is at the top of the list. The reason is that in the first years of life children interested in what they see, model the behaviors of others, imitate what they observe, discover by trial and error, and by combining all of them, children try to create their own individuality. Hence, in order to adopt to social environment and realize themselves in there, in the first years of life, it is important for children to get information about social environment that will affect their success and development. At this point, social entrepreneurship education is needed as an approach for education, which will support development of children, make received education more effective, and strengthen the target behavior that preschool education tried to teach children.

Social entrepreneurship education is needed in order to improve the quality of education and raise qualified individual. Giving social entrepreneurship education in the preschool institutions makes many things possible in terms of child development. Social entrepreneurship education is likely increase social awareness of children, make them sensitive to problems in their environment, provide them a chance to explore the right things, help them to create innovative solutions for the problems and support their ability of giving an opinion about created solutions.

In addition to these individual achievements, it is possible to say that social entrepreneurship education also has effects on society. Social entrepreneurship has come forward to find sustainable solutions for social problems and these solutions have significant role in social progress of the society. Hence, social entrepreneurship education giving in preschool period has importance in terms of both individual and social effects. These considerable effects are one of the reason why social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship education gain popularity in recent years.

2. Social Entrepreneurship Concept

Social entrepreneurship concept is not known as economic entrepreneurship; however, it gains popularity and develops increasingly. Because social entrepreneurship is still in developmental stage, there is not common definition that is accepted by everyone and this makes difficult to define social entrepreneurship in one common sentence.

When studies about social entrepreneurship are examined, it is seen that there are many definitions of social entrepreneurship. Some of these definitions state common ideas, however, each of them emphasizes different sides of social entrepreneurship and tries to make definition by considering emphasized sides. The reason may be that several disciplines are interested in investigation of social entrepreneurship's individual and social benefits and each of them tries to examine it with different aspects. Basic data are sufficient in order to give the meaning of social entrepreneurship even if there are different types of literature about concept of social entrepreneurship.

When current literature related to concept of social entrepreneurship is investigated, it is seen that the concept is defined and evaluated differently by many researchers and especially some of definitions are at the forefront.

In the early years of the existence of social entrepreneurship concept, it is seen that there are many descriptions defining the social entrepreneur rather than the definition that meet exactly the concept of social entrepreneurship. Many of the researchers indicate their ideas about social entrepreneurship by specifying the characteristics that social entrepreneur have or should have. Robert Theobald is the researcher who made one of the first definitions of social entrepreneurship. Theobald (1987) defines social entrepreneur as "change agents" who having a desire to take risk of presenting new ideas and approaches to individuals, groups, and institutions. Although Theobald's definition

of social entrepreneur is one of the first definitions, he evaluates social entrepreneurship with broad vision and points out the taking risk and being innovator that will be seen as main characteristics of social entrepreneur.

Leadbeater and Goss (1998) take attention that social entrepreneurship is community-oriented action. They state that social entrepreneurs are the ones who work in needy communities or creative voluntary organizations in order to meet needs of community by benefiting from unused resources. The key point, which is distinguish social entrepreneur definition of Leadbeater and Goss from others', is that they make connection between social entrepreneur and voluntary organizations. In other words, it is needed to work in voluntary organizations or reach to deprived community by applying social entrepreneurship actions.

The definition, which is indicated by Glancey and McQuaid (2000), contains the features of being innovative and using underutilizes resources as other definitions have. Glancey and McQuaid (2000) argue that social entrepreneurs develop innovative solutions for social problems and satisfy needs of the community by using unused resources in order to reach their aims. Moreover, this definition claims that social entrepreneurs can work in all sectors like governments, nonprofits, or businesses.

Paul Light is another researcher claiming that social entrepreneurs can take part in all sectors. Light (2009) states that a social entrepreneur is the one who finds sustainable solutions for social problems and aims to make changes that affect large scale. The one may be the group, individual, network, or organization. Differently from other researchers, Light (2009) takes attention to social problems. According to him finding sustainable solutions for social problems is very significant and decisive feature of social entrepreneur.

Bornstein's (2004) definition of social entrepreneur includes the idea of being "transformative forces". Bornstein (2004) sees social entrepreneur as transformative forces and defines them as the people who develop new ideas in order to address main problems and always work until achieving their visions.

When all of these definitions of social entrepreneur are investigated, it is understood that researchers evaluates social entrepreneur's characteristics, working area, aim of actions, and results of works by considering different views, and as a result of this, variety definitions of social entrepreneur have arisen. If all of these definitions are considered, it is possible to reach a conclusion that social entrepreneur should be innovator, have desire to take risk, think creative, observe social problems, develop sustainable solutions to social problems, be hardworking and be skillful. In that case, it is likely to say that social entrepreneurship should also include the features that social entrepreneurs have since social entrepreneurship is output of social entrepreneur's activity. At this point, in order to clarify the answer of what is social entrepreneurship, it is important to examine some of the definitions.

Leadbeater (1997) ve Fowler (2000) take attention that social entrepreneurship is benefit oriented. According to Leadbeater (1997) while achieving social aims for the benefit of disadvantaged social group, social entrepreneurship focuses on using social entrepreneurship behavior instead of focusing profit-oriented behavior. In other words, it is essential that social entrepreneurship action includes social mission and results in benefit to society. Similarly, Fowler (2000) states that social entrepreneurship is the action of creating relationship, organization, application, economic structure, and foundation in order to produce social benefits. The common point of these two definitions indicates that activity of social entrepreneurship should provide benefits to society and have social mission.

Another definition of social entrepreneurship draws attention that realizing new opportunities and evaluating them are important sides of social entrepreneurship. It stresses that social entrepreneurship is searching new opportunities in order to found new social organizations and preserve innovation that available social organizations have (Mort et al., 2003). Likewise, Mair and Marti (2006) handle the concept as evaluating new opportunities and define social entrepreneurship as the process of combining different sources in order to satisfy social needs, create social value and speed up social change, either benefiting from opportunities by using these sources innovatively.

Birch ve Whittam (2006) take notice of entrepreneur and define the social entrepreneurship concept as having an ability to combine motivation and vision in accordance with the purpose in order to bring together different interests.

Social entrepreneurship concept has variety of definitions and it is the action that always exist in the society from past to present. In addition, even it is not defined as concept, social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs have always been in the society. With the usage of social entrepreneurship as a term, it expands the boundaries and increases functionality (Dees, 1998). This gives a lead for occurring individual and social benefits of social entrepreneurship clearly.

Increasing effects of social entrepreneurship and need for social entrepreneur cause to handle social entrepreneurship concept as an educational approach. In this context, both sustaining social entrepreneurship activities and educating well-equipped social entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurship education is needed.

3. Social Entrepreneurship Education

It is possible to say that anybody can born as entrepreneur. Every individual learns entrepreneurship by getting lifelong experiences and promotes skills of entrepreneurship by developing necessary features (Dees et al., 2001). In that case, if individual wants to be entrepreneur, getting education is the first stage in order to acquire and develop entrepreneurial skills.

When studies about social entrepreneurship education are examined, it is seen that putting social entrepreneurship education in school curriculum is quite new and developing event (Pache and Chowdury, 2012). Although it is a new situation, in order to provide qualified social entrepreneurship education, curriculum development studies are continued in many educational institutions all around the world (Brock and Kim, 2011).

Even if requirement of social entrepreneurship education is noticed newly, it has been essential for strong social structure in each period. In competitive society, in order to raise generation, who think others instead of themselves, with empathetic thinking; it is needed to give social entrepreneurship education. In order to build strong community, it is essential to respect others' rights and responsibilities because if people work only for their own benefit, it is difficult to reach social welfare and sustainable development. Social entrepreneurship education equips the individual, who is building block of community, with social characteristics and gives them an idea to develop the society. For this reason, benefiting from social entrepreneurship education with starting preschool education until higher education is very significant for both individual and social.

When activities of social entrepreneurs are investigated, it is seen that these activities result in a beneficial way for the society and strengthen social fabric. Increasing these benefits and raising new social entrepreneurs are even sufficient reasons for giving social entrepreneurship education.

The studies conducted during the recent years point out the needs and interest to social entrepreneurship education. According to the study, conducted by Brock and Kim (2011), many universities, engineering faculties, business faculties, and high school institutions take part in giving social entrepreneurship education. The same study expresses that especially university students demand to get social entrepreneurship education. Many higher education institutions provide education program for being social entrepreneur because of this interest and demand to social entrepreneurship education (Brock and Kim, 2011).

Advantages of social entrepreneurship activities, which increases popularity day by day, and education institutions' goal of raising entrepreneur create consensus about importance and necessity of social entrepreneurship education. Greg Dees, who leads this consensus and seen as father of social entrepreneurship education, indicates that main goal of social entrepreneurship education is understanding how social change can be made in a positive way and creating useful results (Worsham, 2012).

There are two different opinions about giving social entrepreneurship education. The first opinion states that social entrepreneurship can be given in order to raise social entrepreneur, in the direction of this opinion, Pache and Chowdhury (2012) develop social entrepreneurship education model, and they indicate three important benefits of providing social entrepreneurship program with the aim of raising social entrepreneurs:

- First advantage is that social entrepreneurship education adds individual an ability to see entrepreneurship opportunities in any area and evaluate these opportunities.
- Secondly, social entrepreneurship education develops individual's ability to combine sources effectively.
- Lastly, network of social entrepreneurs keeps all social activities together and this contributes to sustaining actions of social entrepreneurs.

Pache and Chowdhury's (2012) social entrepreneurship education model is attracted attention with the idea that by giving qualified social entrepreneurship education it is possible to contribute students' life positively and revolutionize their life and this give students a chance to attempt to enterprise, which will affect the life of people out of the school.

Besides the aim of giving social entrepreneurship education for raising social entrepreneur, the second opinion stresses that social entrepreneurship education can be given in order to add vision to entrepreneurs. Greg Dees is one of the researchers supporting this idea and according to him, each entrepreneur should have social abilities and social entrepreneur needs to respect others, emphasize with others, and act modestly in order to work with their employees. This will be possible with social entrepreneurship education (Worsham, 2012).

While studies about curriculum and scope of social entrepreneurship education continuous, variety of studies regarding how social entrepreneurship should be given and what aims should be considered as giving this education is conducted. Generally, target audience of these researches is selected from business faculties of higher education and results are evaluated by considering students of higher education. In other words, students of higher education are seen as target group of social entrepreneurship education. Whereas, how results of social entrepreneurs' actions affect people from all segments of the society, giving social entrepreneurship education should address to each individual and should be accessible for everyone. Bornstein (2004) reflects his ideas about this necessity by saying that he looks forward to day when social entrepreneurship education is taught students in preschool and primary school institutions. According to Bornstein (2004), entrepreneurship is not only related with economy, productivity, or sustainability. Entrepreneurship is related to getting all people together by overcoming the obstacles. By considering Bornstein's statement, it is possible to reach conclusion that social entrepreneurship is not only related to people who are in business schools, not only associated with economic terms and it can involve everyone who want to create a change. Therefore, it is possible to say that providing social entrepreneurship in preschool education institutions is needed, because in there, social values, creativity, ethic concept, and many social behaviors are taught to children for the first time.

4. Social Entrepreneurship Education in Preschool

Nobody can reach their available position in a short time because life involves different developmental process and many factors that affect development of individuals and their chance to reach present position. School and the education, which is taken from school, are basic factors that affect life and development of the individual, since the school contains teachers, classroom and classmates, courses and educational activities having potential of changing vision of the individual (Torokoff, 2006).

First learnings of individual are so significant. Preschool period is the time when individual performs first learnings and this period involves zero – six age group. In order to prove the importance of the preschool period education, when individual get their first education and perform first learnings, many researches are conducted. The common point of child development theories and studies shows that early year experiences influence brain development dramatically and individual has highest learning capacity in early childhood education period.

The education, which is taken during preschool period, can be seen as making an investment for future life. The studies, which state the importance of preschool education, reach common conclusion that getting the education in preschool period is directly affect future education, job, and social life success of individual. In this point, it is

possible to say that by getting social entrepreneurship education in preschool education period, when basic characteristics of life is created, individuals can be more successful in future life experiences and their life can be more qualified. Developing children's emotions, such as love, respect, corporation, collaboration, responsibility, toleration, cooperation and sharing, giving children a chance to be aware of others' feelings, supporting their imagination, critical thinking, communication and ability to express their feelings are some of the main principles of early childhood education and these principles show parallelism with principles of social entrepreneurship. Because of this, it is possible to say that giving social entrepreneurship education in preschool period can support the basic principles which are should be gained during this period.

Although children of preschool period and concept of entrepreneurship combination is unusual, giving social entrepreneurship education to these children is appropriate for their development. Numbers of studies are conducted regarding importance of learning in early childhood education period and giving entrepreneurship education in this period. One of these studies shows that while important percentage of children, who attend to preschool education institutions, have entrepreneurial skills, less amount of students, who attend to high school express skills of entrepreneur (Kent, 1990). The result of this study supports the idea that giving social entrepreneurship education in preschool period will support entrepreneurship characteristic of the children in the following years. Therefore, if children have entrepreneur characteristics and skills in preschool period, it can be seen as necessary to give them social entrepreneurship education in order to take a considerable step for children's future and to expand impact area of social entrepreneurship.

It is possible to determine individual effects of social entrepreneurship education, which is given during preschool education period, by observing characteristic of children, their attitudes towards others and their behaviors. However, because social entrepreneurship is still in developing process and cannot be applied effectively in schools, it is difficult to indicate its individual benefits. When features of social entrepreneurship are investigated and characters of social entrepreneurs are observed, it is possible reach a conclusion about individual benefits of social entrepreneurship.

Advantages of social entrepreneurship education, which is given during preschool education period, can attribute characteristics of children. This issue can be evaluated in the sense of the abilities that social entrepreneurship can add individual's characters. By providing social entrepreneurship education, individual can gain competencies and be successful. Sherman (2011) sorts these competencies like that,

- Instead of complaining about the problem, individual takes action in order to find sustainable and creative solutions about the problem.
- Individuals can achieve changing their situation and believe that they can do this, with the help of self-efficiency.
- Under favor of being hardworking and goal-oriented, individual can achieve completing their tasks.
- Individual can learn to be strong against problems or obstacles and evaluate negative achievements as valuable feedbacks.
- Individual can see new possibilities and act by thinking extraordinary in order to benefit from new opportunities.
- Individual can empathize with other people and this is the best way for understanding others' feeling and needs.
- Individual can be successful at interpersonal communication because of having ability to connect with others and create strong relationships.

In this regard, social entrepreneurship education has potential to make children's development more effective by serving common goals of preschool education. By combining this potential with effective education environment, possibility of raising individuals, who have sense to community and environment, can be increased.

5. Conclusion

Social entrepreneurship concept develops increasingly. Drawing attention of different disciplines, evaluating with different aspects, and being raising value contribute to increasing awareness of social entrepreneurship. With this awareness, demand of taking advantage of social entrepreneurship's benefits arises and numbers of social entrepreneurship activities are done in this direction. When all of these activities are examined, it is seen that all of them contribute to social welfare, sustainability, and strength. Herein, it is needed to get social entrepreneurship education, in order to enhance available benefits of social entrepreneurship and to clarify it for next generations.

Social entrepreneurship education makes individual sensitive to social problems by supporting their developmental areas, and this give individual a chance to find solutions for these problems and develop abilities by applying found solutions. While individual is living these processes, self-sufficiency, creativity, empathy, entrepreneurship and rational thinking abilities of individual are supported and contributed to development. Since found solutions contribute to social welfare, it is also important for community development.

Providing social entrepreneurship in preschool education period has potential to expand impact area and power of social entrepreneurship education. When social entrepreneurship education is given in self-respect development period, which is in preschool education time, it helps individual to grow up with innovative perspective. Social entrepreneurship activities gain sustainability when individual has innovative and sustainable perspective. Social entrepreneurship education increase sustainability of individual and turns individual value into social value. Then, it is important to combine social entrepreneurship education, which has potential to increase effectiveness of child development in terms of social, cognitive, physical, linguistic, and emotional, with preschool education in order to increase the possibility of raising individual who is sensitive to society and to environment.

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