

Entrepreneurship types and internationalization in entrepreneurship learning

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Summary

The Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014–2020 sets the general goal of attaining 80% of the average EU productivity. This strategy identifies important target groups of emerging and fast-growing ambitious enterprises whose annual sales exceeds by the end of the second year of operation 200,000 euros and whose export intensity will be at least 25% of their sales turnover (Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium, 2013). In order to create in Estonia globally competitive business environment and efficient production of products and services with high added value for the benefit of the entrepreneurial population, ambitious enterprises and increased export opportunities, internationalization of entrepreneurship learning is needed. However, different target groups involved in entrepreneurship education have diversified experience, readiness to start their own locally or internationally oriented business or act as intrapreneurs in existing business organizations. Sector-specific learning by doing opportunities and the need to integrate entrepreneurship education with international business knowledge has to be also taken into consideration when applying entrepreneurship education as an entrepreneurship growth tool. This article aims to address an essential question for developing international entrepreneurship in a small open economy: What is the basis for differentiating entrepreneurship education for different target groups?

Literature review reflects research by Welter (2011) and other authors explaining the links between context variables and specific types of entrepreneurial initiatives. Zahra et al. (2014) have explained, how the features of business sectors, development stages of markets, temporal, social and spatial context has to be taken into consideration when developing entrepreneurs. Kuratko et al. (2015) have compared the process of creating a new venture and modes of intrapreneurship that can be supported, when developing entrepreneurial spirit inside existing organizations. Among departure points for differentiating entrepreneurship education is the entrepreneurial orientation concept (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Lumpkin & Lichtenstein, 2005). Elenurm and

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Moisala (2008) have introduced a self-assessment questionnaire for specifying imitative, individually innovative and co-creative orientations in order to customize educational methods to support entrepreneurial journeys of target groups following these orientations.

Kwong and Thompson (2016) have pointed out the contradiction that although learning through practical entrepreneurship has been a key element of curriculum in many universities during recent decades, students focused on long-term innovative product development often prefer to learn from the experience of established entrepreneurs, create some financial basis and broaden their social network before starting their own business. Entrepreneurship education discourse has specified to some extent competing departure points of entrepreneurship education (O'Connor, 2013). Applying learning by doing through practical venture creation and business idea commercialization processes is a suitable framework if the student enterprise team is ready to jump-start such a process and their sector-specific resource base can be created. Learning for future entrepreneurship by exploring features and role models of successful entrepreneurs in various countries, studying different types of entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship, and new business opportunities in emerging industries is however also operational for students that need to broaden their interdisciplinary knowledge base and create their international network before launching a real start-up initiative.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2012–2014 Estonian surveys have demonstrated that entrepreneurs with international growth ambitions and innovation focus often rely on knowledge sharing with people arriving from other countries while entrepreneurs that are domestically focused trust more their close friends and spouses as business knowledge sources (Venesaar et al., 2014a). Cross-border entrepreneurship assumes a broader network and more diversified knowledge source than locally oriented entrepreneurship. Cross-border entrepreneurship is not limited to export and import operations. It can be driven by cross-border licensing of new technologies and products, knowledge sharing in international teams of founders and investors.

Preparing students for involvement in different types of cross-border entrepreneurship assumes broadening their networking skills with potential entrepreneurs from other countries and learning through projects where international student teams assist start-up entrepreneurs in their internationalization efforts. Examples of educational practices that have been applied at the Estonian Business School to link entrepreneurship and international business competencies include *Cross-border business projects for Baltic entrepreneurs*, participation in *X-Culture* global project teams and in the *Business opportunities in*

virtual networks cross-border course that links students in Tallinn and Helsinki to joint teams.

Based on analysis of earlier research and reflection of priorities of students involved in entrepreneurship learning, the following classification of target groups can be used for differentiating learning outcomes, content and methods of learning:

1. Level of education and learning outcomes of earlier specialization(s) as the input for entrepreneurship education.
2. Earlier work and entrepreneurship experience of learners.
3. Is the learner's priority independent entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship?
4. How are the learner's objectives linked to social and regional development?
5. Is the learner oriented to entrepreneurship in a co-creative team, to individual entrepreneurship or prefers to be self-employed?
6. Readiness of the learner to start and/or to develop a real enterprise during the entrepreneurship education programme.
7. Is the objective of the learner to develop a business model for a scalable start-up or step by step organic business growth?
8. Ambition of the learner to enter foreign markets and to develop international entrepreneurship.
9. Is the entrepreneurship education participant an Estonian resident or a non-resident who will potentially become connected to Estonia through entrepreneurship education and practical entrepreneurship?

During the special session of the annual conference of the Estonian Economic Association in 2016, 30 participants identified the highest priority target groups of entrepreneurship education for acceleration of the economic and social development in Estonia in the coming years. We applied group work where a tool explaining some optional learning methods that are relevant for different target groups was used. The following high priority target groups were specified by participants for differentiating entrepreneurship education in Estonia:

- Social entrepreneurs and hybrid entrepreneurs focused on linking social and economic goals;
- Start-up entrepreneurs that are internationally focused and have global business ambitions;
- Community (cooperative) entrepreneurs focused on utilizing local resources;
- Family business owners interested in handing owner business to their children (business continuity issues);
- Entrepreneurs commercializing R&D results, academic entrepreneurs;
- Intrapreneurs;

- Entrepreneurs in the digital sharing economy;
- Young people making a career change from the role of an employee to entrepreneurship but also people close to retirement age or retired people that have the same intention;
- Experts that lose their jobs as the result of structural changes in the Estonian economy.

Highlighting specific target groups does not exclude combination of different target groups as a source of knowledge sharing and synergy in training processes. The national entrepreneurship education system can take care of interdisciplinary connections between entrepreneurship and international business courses that are essential for entrepreneurs in export-oriented small open economies.

Entrepreneurship education in a small country has limited resources for global expansion but cross-border entrepreneurship learning module linked to a massive open online course can facilitate access of young Estonian entrepreneurs to new global business opportunities by broadening their online networks for tracing new cross-border business opportunities together with students in other countries. It is also a tool for using Estonian e-residency combined with Estonian entrepreneurship education to attract to Estonia larger numbers of talented foreign students that could bring new entrepreneurial ideas supporting knowledge-based economic growth.

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