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HOW DOES ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AFFECT THE ENTREPRENEURIAL TENDENCIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?

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Abstract

In the present study, a survey was administered to the students taking the entrepreneurship course in order to measure their entrepreneurial tendencies before the course started. The same survey was administered at the end of the course, too. In this regard, the purpose of this study was to demonstrate whether the entrepreneurship course has a positive effect on students. The sample was consisted of 528 students taking the entrepreneurship course in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering at Hitit University. As a result of analyzes, it was found that the students' entrepreneurial tendencies increase with entrepreneurship education, in other words education of entrepreneurship was effective in both faculties. This result showed that the education of entrepreneurship was effective. On the other hand, according to the subgroups of the study in two of the faculties post course scores were higher than pre course scores. This means that entrepreneurship courses increased the students' entrepreneurial tendencies in both faculties, Educational and Administrative Sciences Faculty and Engineering Faculty.

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Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial tendency, entrepreneurship education.



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1. Introduction

In today's digital world, the definition of business life is different from previous definitions. Competition combined with fast changes, intensive technology and cooperation, forced to change the concepts and approaches in management. And the traditional concepts and approaches remained in the past. One of the concepts that the intensive competition has brought along and that have become indispensable in today's business world is "entrepreneurship". While entrepreneurship offers a solution to the problem of unemployment and immaturity, it is at the same time one of the most important components of economic growth. As critical attention is given to raising entrepreneurs today, significant duties and responsibilities fall into the universities. Educating the young generation and preparing them for the business life, universities make changes in their programs in order to improving entrepreneurial tendencies of students and raising future entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship courses are carried out at all universities across Turkey. However, whether these courses achieve their purpose is a matter of curiosity.

In the present study, a survey was administered to the students taking the entrepreneurship course in order to measure their entrepreneurial tendencies before the course started. The same survey was administered at the end of the course, too. In this regard, the purpose of this study was to demonstrate whether the entrepreneurship course has a positive effect on students' entrepreneurial tendency or not.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Tendencies

The concept of 'entrepreneur' has been used in various disciplines such as business administration, economics and sociology for a long time. The first definition of the concept in the business world was made by an economist named Richard Cantillon in the early 18th century (Brown & Thornton, 2003; Tikici & Aksoy, 2009; Örnek & Danyal, 2015). An entrepreneur is described as a person who makes a product by gathering together the production factors and takes risks for the sake of the profit he/she will obtain (Tutar & Altınkaynak, 2014). Re-evaluating the entrepreneurship understanding of Cantillon, Joseph A. Schumpeter (1934) defined 'entrepreneur' as the person who demolishes the current economic system by creating new combinations such as developing new products and processes, finding new export markets, and creating a new organizational structure and coined the term 'destructive entrepreneurship' (Kaya, 2015; Tomak, 2015; Akansel, 2016). Entrepreneurship is defined as the process of bringing out and improving an opportunity and benefitting from it in order to create a value within a new or existing organization through creativity and innovation. In this definition, the concept is handled both from the perspective of individuals and that of businesses (Nwambam, et.al, 2018; Akdemir, 2015). Based on this definition, it can be said that the concept of entrepreneurship should not just be considered as an individual's starting his/her own business. An individual can demonstrate entrepreneurial characteristics in any career path he/she chooses.

There is very little agreement in literature about what defines an entrepreneur, what his/her actions are and what he/she does. The important determinants of their actions are their traits and there is significantly more agreement on this (Cromie, 2000). Koh (1996) and Caird (1991) showed that

entrepreneurs have a high need for achievement and autonomy, an internal locus of control, are moderate towards risk taking, have a high tolerance for ambiguity, have self-confidence, and are innovative and creative.

The above mentioned entrepreneurial characteristics are determining the entrepreneurial tendency of an individual. Researchers have also developed some psychometric tests to measure the level of these characteristics together with the overall entrepreneurial tendency (Caird, 1991).

The use of psychometric tests within industry for assisting in making personnel decisions is a widely accepted technique (Niekerk & Lingen, 2015). These tests are used to determine the abilities, characteristics and personalities of employees. However, the specific application of psychometric testing to examine entrepreneurs is still in an early stage (Mazzarol, 2007). Entrepreneurial tendency tests should consider the most significant entrepreneurial characteristics, motivations and attitudes since entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group. Only a few well validated psychometric tests measure the characteristics associated with entrepreneurs (Caird, 1993). Caird's findings are still valid today as shown by Liñán & Chen (2009), which found a shortage of standardized, validated and psychometrically based tests for entrepreneurial tendencies in spite of the increase in the amount of research into entrepreneurial tendencies.

2.2. Entrepreneurship Education

In knowledge society the importance and the economic value of physical power is diminishing and the importance of mental power is rising. And the entrepreneurship is the most important dimension of mental power in management research and development activities. In management researches, entrepreneurship is a young, but fast growing field. It is an important contributor to the economic growth of the country. Because of its importance academic education focused on entrepreneurship education for students at any ages. Specially, entrepreneurship education in the universities should give students the ability and vision to identify and act on different opportunities and difficulties they encounter, and develop them to establish a new venture or rebuild an existing business.

Entrepreneurship education, generally seeks to prepare people to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities (Holienka, et al. 2015; Papagiannis, 2018). The entrepreneurial education usually organized as a course for young people, and especially university students.

It is necessary to understand that aims of entrepreneurship education may not only be related to development of entrepreneurs, but also to development of enterprising life and work skills among people who may enter employment (or any other path of professional self-realization) rather than start a business (Caird, 1990). Caird (1990) grouped the goals of entrepreneurship education in three main categories:

- education for enterprise,
- education through enterprise, and
- education about enterprise.

Initially the entrepreneurship education was given only to management students. But then the scope of the entrepreneurship education was expanded. Lingen and Niekerk (2015) claimed that

“Entrepreneurship is no longer only offered by business schools and faculties of economic and management sciences, but also by faculties of natural sciences and engineering.”

2.3. Literature Review

Balaban and Özdemir (2008) conducted a research on Sakarya University Economic and Administrative Sciences Faculty students. They determined that education and especially entrepreneurship education is evaluated as a necessary condition to bring out the entrepreneurial tendency, but it is not sufficient.

Uygun, Mete and Güner (2012) aimed to investigate relationships between young entrepreneur candidates' entrepreneurship intention and personal characteristics which consist of entrepreneur personality characteristics and self-profile factors. The data was collected at Aksaray University. Analysis results exposed to meaningful relationships between young entrepreneur candidates' entrepreneurship intention and personality characteristics and self-profile factors.

Niekerk and Lingen (2015) searched the differences between the students who take management education and others. The results of the study showed that the common entrepreneurial tendencies of the students are increase while participating in an entrepreneurial program.

Holienka, Holienkova and Gal (2015) examined the entrepreneurial characteristics of university students in different disciplines. The main research question was to identify whether students from different selected disciplines exhibit different rates of enterprising potential. The student from business administration, psychology, pedagogy and applied informatics displayed differences about enterprising tendency levels. The highest enterprising tendency level was in business administration students, then respectively psychology, applied informatics and pedagogy.

A similar study by Çiçek (2016) conducted on Muş Alparslan University Economic and Administrative Sciences Faculty students. The results showed that entrepreneurial tendencies of the student increases with entrepreneurship education.

Aksel and Bağcı (2016) examined students' entrepreneurship tendency in different departments of economics and administrative science faculty in a public university. Research results have shown that they have the entrepreneurial tendency. In addition, it was found that male students have more entrepreneurial tendencies than female students and 24-26 age group students have more entrepreneurial tendencies compared to other groups.

Nabi et. al. (2017) Using a teaching model framework, they systematically review empirical evidence on the impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education on a range of entrepreneurial outcomes, analyzing 159 published articles from 2004 to 2016.

A similar study by Kiyani (2017) conducted on Pakistan students of the FAST National University Islamabad. The results revealed that the entrepreneurship education significantly affects students' attitude towards entrepreneurial activity.

Entrepreneurship courses have come to the forefront in several departments at universities over the last years. The literature contains a few studies aiming to determine the entrepreneurial tendencies of university students. However, it is difficult to see a comprehensive study that aims to determine students' perspectives of the concept of entrepreneurship at the beginning and at the end of semesters. Moreover,

there seems to be no study aiming to investigate two different faculty students' perspectives of the concept. It is thought that determination of the related relationships and effects will make a contribution to the literature as well as being important in terms of providing recommendations to both universities and faculties.

2.4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Creating more entrepreneurs can be only through educational programs. Although in all universities added entrepreneurship courses to their academic programs, the effectiveness of the courses is not clear. This would lead to some questions. First research question is: "Can the effects of an entrepreneurship education program be measured?" To answer this research question, the survey of entrepreneurial tendency applied to the student two times. By measuring the tendencies of the students before the program and after the program, we found out the difference made by the entrepreneurship courses.

To answer the second research question "Does the entrepreneurship courses make the same effect on all student?", the study was applied to two different groups of students, one group from social sciences, and the other group from applied sciences.

So, in this study the survey of entrepreneurial tendency applied to the students before and after the entrepreneurship course. On the other hand the study was conducted with two different faculty students. This little research is conducted into the value of entrepreneurial education in universities. And we investigated the difference between the students after taking the same course.

In order to address the research questions effectively these hypotheses were developed:

H1: There is a difference between the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students before and after the course.

H2: There is a difference between the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students studying in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (EAS) before and after the course.

H3: There is a difference between the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students studying in the Faculty of Engineering before and after the course.

H4: The entrepreneurial tendencies of the male students are higher than those of the female students.

H5: The entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience are higher than those of the students with no work experience.

3. Methodology

In this paper we focused particularly on education within existing education systems, especially university education. Different characteristics among student groups are inevitable for efficient and effective entrepreneurship education design and delivery. Different characteristics and paradigms of social sciences and applied sciences students would set different challenges for entrepreneurship education, and this will cause some differences before and after the entrepreneurship courses on students' entrepreneurial tendencies.

In this study the analyses were applied to students who were subdivided into two groups, one group was taking the entrepreneurship course in the departments of Business Administration (daytime education/evening education), Economics (daytime education/evening education), and Political Science and Public Administration (daytime education/evening education) in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. The second group of the study was taking the entrepreneurship course in the departments of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Food Engineering and Mechanical Engineering (daytime education/evening education) in the Faculty of Engineering. In the present study, the standardized test was applied to the students before the course and after the course, so it was investigated that the entrepreneurship course makes any difference on the university students from different faculties.

In addition to the above-mentioned purposes of the study, it was also investigated whether demographic variables had an effect on the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students. It is considered that the findings will generate useful results to see the importance of the concept from university students' perspective.

3.1. Sample

The study groups consisted of students taking the entrepreneurship course in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering at Hitit University. 183 students took this course in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, and 132 students in the Faculty of Engineering. 165 students from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences participated in the study before and after the course, while 99 students from the Faculty of Engineering participated in it before and after the course.

3.2. Measure

Entrepreneurial tendency was measured by using a 6-item scale developed by Liñán and Chen (2009) and validated in Turkish by Şeşen and Basım (2012). The internal consistency analyses on our sample of university students provided satisfactory values of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both faculties and in before and after tests (Faculty of EAS before course= 0.95, Faculty of EAS after course= 0.97, Faculty of Engineering before course= 0.97, Faculty of Engineering after course= 0.94).

4. Results

In total, 541 students participated in the study before and after the course. The analyses were conducted with 528 surveys in total (13 surveys were excluded from analysis). 330 of the participants were students in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (165 students participated before the course and 165 after the course) and 198 participants were students in the Faculty of Engineering (99 students participated before the course and 99 after the course). The average age of the students from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences was 22.38 before the course and 22.56 after the course, while the average age of the students from the Faculty of Engineering was 21.77 before the course and 21.18 after the course. In general, the average age of the participants (among 528 students, in total) was found to be 22.10. While 47.3% of the participants (N=250) were female, 52.7% (N=278) were male.

Table 1 indicated the samples obtained with this study, and the demographic characteristics of the samples.

Table 01. The Survey Samples and Demographic Information

	N	%	
Total	528		
Female	250	47.3	
Male	278	52.7	
		Pre course	Post course
Faculty of EAS	330	165	165
Faculty of Engineering	198	99	99

In the present study, t-tests were administered to find out whether the differences between the means regarding entrepreneurial tendencies before and after the course were significant. Table 2 indicates means, standard deviations and significant differences between groups.

Table 02. T-Tests of H1, H2 and H3

Hypothesis 1		N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Pre Course Total		264	20.1856	6.91939	263	-3.843	.000
Post Course Total		264	22.2008	6.72670			
Hypothesis 2		N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Fac. of EAS Pre Course		165	19.2000	6.55297	164	-3.465	.036
Fac. of EAS Post Course		165	21.5636	6.98456			
Hypothesis 3		N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Fac. of Eng. Pre Course		99	21.8283	7.22953	98	-1.759	.006
Fac. of Eng. Post Course		99	23.2626	6.16207			

While the first row of “Hypothesis 1” in the Table 2 indicates the students participating in the survey from both faculties before the course, the second row indicates those participating in the survey from both faculties after the course. According to the findings regarding the Hypothesis 1 on Table 1, there was a significant difference between the students’ perspectives of entrepreneurial tendency before and after the course. Similarly, it was determined according to the findings regarding the Hypothesis 2 that there was a significant difference between the perspectives of the students studying in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences before and after the course on entrepreneurship. According to the results regarding the Hypothesis 3, there was a significant difference between the perspectives of the students studying in the Faculty of Engineering before and after the course on entrepreneurship. It can be said in the light of the results of all three hypotheses that classes on entrepreneurship have a positive effect on students’ entrepreneurial tendencies. So the hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were supported.

Another t test analysis was conducted for Hypothesis 4 to determine the difference between male and female students' entrepreneurial tendencies.

Table 03. T-Tests of H4

Fac. of EAS Pre and Post Course (Total)	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	207	19.6039	6.17760	328	-2.696	.002
Male	123	21.6911	7.73869			
Fac. of EAS Pre Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	104	18.9231	5.45537	163	-0.708	.000
Male	61	19.6721	8.11936			
Fac. of EAS Post Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	103	20.2913	6.78758	163	-3.094	.521
Male	62	23.6774	6.84434			
Fac. of Engineering Pre and Post Course (Total)	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	43	20.1860	6.44115	196	-2.634	.852
Male	155	23.2000	6.69212			
Fac. of Engineering Pre Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	20	19.8000	6.24854	97	-1.412	.159
Male	79	22.3418	7.40562			
Fac. of Engineering Post Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Female	23	20.5217	6.72762	97	-2.499	.154
Male	76	24.0921	5.77391			

According to the Table 3, the entrepreneurial tendencies of the male students in the Faculty of Educational and Administrative Sciences were significantly higher than those of the female students totally before and after the course ($t=-2.696$, $p<0.05$). The same table also shows that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the male students in the Faculty of Educational and Administrative Sciences were significantly higher than those of the female students before the course ($t=-0.708$, $p<0.001$). In the light of both results, it can be said that male students have a more positive perspective of entrepreneurship. But third stage of the analysis the entrepreneurial tendency between female and male student after the course is not significant. This result showed that the difference according to the gender vanishes by education. Other results are not statistically significant. Thus, it can be said that there is no gender-based difference between the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students in the Faculty of Engineering. So the hypothesis H4 was partially supported.

To test the Hypothesis 5, it was analyzed the work experiences of students. It was hypothesized that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience are higher than those of the students with no work experience.

Table 04. T-tests of H5

Fac. of EAS Pre and Post Course (Total)	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	204	21.4951	7.35215	328	3.825	.000
No Experience	126	18.5794	5.56361			
Fac. of EAS Pre Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	88	19.5568	7.55038	163	.747	.000
No Experience	77	18.7920	5.20460			
Fac. of EAS Post Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	116	22.9655	6.87267	163	4.159	.528
No Experience	49	18.2449	6.12553			
Fac. of Engineering Pre and Post Course (Total)	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	117	22.6838	7.04377	196	.346	.545
No Experience	81	22.3457	6.30904			
Fac. of Engineering Pre Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	66	22.0909	7.26790	97	.509	.955
No Experience	33	21.3030	7.23483			
Fac. of Engineering Post Course	N	Mean	S.D.	D.F.	t	p
Work Experience	51	23.4510	6.73591	97	.312	.778
No Experience	48	23.0625	5.55210			

According to the Table 4, the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience in the Faculty of Educational and Administrative Sciences were higher than those having no work experience in total and before the course. Based on the same table, it was evident that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience in the Faculty of Engineering were not different from the students having no work experience before and after the course. So the hypothesis H5 was partially supported.

5. Conclusion and Discussions

The importance of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship has increased over the last years. Especially with the emphasis on raising entrepreneurs in recent years, more responsibilities fall to universities in this matter. Educating the young generation and preparing them for the business life, universities make changes in their programs it to do their share of work for improving entrepreneurial tendencies and raising future entrepreneurs. All universities across Turkey offer entrepreneurship courses. However, do they really achieve their purpose? According to the results obtained, it can be said that entrepreneurship courses have a positive effect on students.

There was a measurable difference between the students before and after the entrepreneurship courses. The entrepreneurial tendencies of the students were significantly increased by the courses. This result showed that the education of entrepreneurship was effective. On the other hand, according to the subgroups of the study in two of the faculties post course scores were higher than pre course scores. This means that entrepreneurship courses increased the students' entrepreneurial tendencies in both faculties, Educational and Administrative Sciences Faculty and Engineering Faculty. This study gathered parallel

results with Lingen and Niekerk' (2015) study, about the importance of the entrepreneurship education on engineering faculties.

It was determined that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the male students in the Faculty of Educational and Administrative Sciences were significantly higher than those of the female students before and after the course. It was also seen that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the male students in the Faculty of Engineering were not significantly higher than those of the female students before and after the course. According to this result, it can be said that male students took a more positive perspective of entrepreneurship in social sciences.

Lastly, it was found that the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience in the Faculty of Educational and Administrative Sciences were higher than those having no work experience before and after the course. On the contrary, the entrepreneurial tendencies of the students having work experience in the Faculty of Engineering were not higher than those having no work experience before and after the course. According to this result, it can be said that students working in the sector turn out to have higher entrepreneurial tendency in social sciences. It can also be indicated that the entrepreneurial tendency of a student having work experience in real life is much higher than a student with no work experience, and it makes an important impact in social sciences.

It is considered that the obtained results will contribute to the literature, universities, and practitioners. The limitation of the study is that it only involves students from one university. The fact that the study only includes students taking the entrepreneurship course can also be regarded as a limitation. Therefore, the sample group can be enlarged in future studies so that more generalizable results can be obtained.

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