

Entrepreneurial Competence

Subjects: **Education & Educational Research**

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Entrepreneurship encompasses a variety of motivations and goals that have global significance, including social impact, commercial success, and environmental sustainability. Entrepreneurial competence combines knowledge, attitudes, and skills that inspire people to undertake projects addressing unmet needs or opportunities. This competence considers cultural elements and external factors as key determinants in enhancing the ability to recognize and create opportunities, enabling the transformation of ideas into action. Ultimately, this contributes to a more dynamic and competitive society.

entrepreneurial competence

attitudes

knowledge

sociodemographic variables

skills

1. Introduction

Since the Lisbon European Council in 2000 included among its strategic purposes the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture, education systems have followed several objectives: emphasizing non-formal learning ^[1], increasing university–enterprise relationships ^[2], developing entrepreneurial competence in curricula ^[3], and promoting transversal contents in different non-business university degrees and creating entrepreneurial in campus activities ^[4]. While the majority of research on entrepreneurship education concentrates on university ^[5] or pre-university levels ^[6], there is an increasing interest in exploring the role of entrepreneurial education at the school level. A number of studies suggest that it is important to introduce entrepreneurship education before tertiary education ^{[7][8]}.

In response to the challenges posed by globalization and digitalization, there has been a growing impulse towards entrepreneurship in education. European policies have encouraged this trend in its member states. In the Spanish case, it has become an objective of the educational system since 2006 ^{[9][10][11]}.

Entrepreneurial competence is recognized as having a “sense of autonomy and entrepreneurship”, being one of the eight key competencies for lifelong learning since 2018 in the EU ^[12]. In addition, the European Framework for Entrepreneurial Competence: EntreComp, aims to provide a reference framework and a standard conceptual model to identify the elements that make up this competence and facilitate its inclusion in education systems ^{[13][14]}. It is worth noticing that entrepreneurial competence is part of the curriculum in Spain within Organic Law 3/2020.

The need to renew knowledge and boost entrepreneurial activity is increasing interest in improving entrepreneurial and financial skills at an early age ^{[15][16]}. Indeed, since 2012, OECD-driven financial competency has been incorporated into the PISA exams ^[17]. An education that understands these competencies and empowers young

people to have initiatives, make decisions, and develop projects that promote collective socio-economic improvements is an educational priority [18]. Equipping students with these tools will help them in their personal [19] and professional development [20][21] and contributes to the innovation and economic progress of society [22]. These skills are essential in times of digital revolution and changes in the labor market [23].

The inclusion of entrepreneurship education in school curricula has occurred gradually, either as a subject or as a transversal competence, in all educational stages [24][25], although it has a more substantial presence in secondary and higher education. However, teaching entrepreneurship is a challenging task due to its multifaceted and complex nature [26]. Furthermore, its philosophical trend in education is still uncertain [27]. Thus, recent reviews demonstrate the rise and multiple approaches to entrepreneurship education: educational levels, disciplines, tools, resources, content, assessment, pedagogies, etc. [28]. Implementation in the classroom has been heterogeneous [29] and usually generates some uncertainty [8]. The literature detects the need to improve teacher training because they have a crucial role in its implementation [30][31][32], the use of appropriate methodologies [33][34][35], and the need to correctly evaluate it [36][37][38].

2. Entrepreneurial Competence: Attitudes

Entrepreneurship encompasses a variety of motivations and goals that have global significance, including social impact, commercial success, and environmental sustainability [39]. This broad vision of entrepreneurship in the educational context has gained widespread consensus in the literature about entrepreneurship education [40]. The personal and motivational aspects are completed with the necessary knowledge of the entrepreneurial discipline from an institutional, legal, and technical perspective for this activity to develop.

Entrepreneurial competence combines knowledge, attitudes, and skills that inspire people to undertake projects addressing unmet needs or opportunities [41]. This competence considers cultural elements and external factors as key determinants in enhancing the ability to recognize and create opportunities, enabling the transformation of ideas into action. Ultimately, this contributes to a more dynamic and competitive society [42].

In short, cultivating an entrepreneurial skillset requires a multifaceted approach that involves developing specific personality traits and attitudes and the necessary knowledge to initiate and oversee projects from start to finish. This holistic approach is essential for establishing a robust entrepreneurial identity.

Moreover, this competence is framed in a whole perspective, in which the moral [19][43] and personal [44] dimensions acquire particular relevance. This competence is composed of different elements that intertwine and complement each other in a complex way, aimed at strengthening initiative and personal autonomy in the realization of entrepreneurial projects. Along these lines, all theories that study entrepreneurial competence are based on intention models and the theory of planned behavior [45][46] to predict entrepreneurial behaviors [47], which are derived from prior attitudes towards entrepreneurship [48], favorable sociocultural environment [49], cultural values [50], and social models [51]. Therefore, education emerges as a determining element [52].

3. Entrepreneurial Competence: Knowledge

Having the right blend of personality traits, attitudes, and knowledge is crucial for successfully launching and managing entrepreneurial projects. This comprehensive approach is vital in establishing a strong entrepreneurial identity [53]. The literature defines three dimensions of entrepreneurship: the “know-why” (understanding the importance and values of entrepreneurial activity), the “know-how” (possessing the necessary skills to carry out a project), and the “know-what” (having knowledge of the economic context, management, and business creation) [4]. Therefore, apart from personal attitudes and skills, knowledge encompasses economic and practical aspects crucial for equipping students with the entrepreneurial human capital required before embarking on an entrepreneurial journey [5][54].

In order to fully develop human potential, it is essential to acquire basic knowledge in legal, strategic, and managerial aspects, in addition to non-cognitive skills [37]. Understanding lawful knowledge involves comprehending the legal and administrative structure of a business undertaking, aligned with various legal concepts, and its operations within the boundaries of institutional and market regulations. Having strategic knowledge means having the foresight to provide a product or service that gives a competitive advantage [55]. This enables one to focus on a particular audience, thereby increasing the likelihood of being chosen over competitors [32][56]. Managerial knowledge pertains to the comprehension of business management and administration functions, as explored by the pioneers of this field [57]. There are multiple activities encompassed in administrative functions, including the production of goods or services, as well as commercial and financial functionality. Additionally, there are transversal functions that are essential to any executive role, such as planning, organization, direction, and team coordination. It should be noted that having financial literacy is not just important for the technical aspects of business, but it is also a crucial skill for making informed decisions throughout life [58]. Therefore, the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes are crucial elements in shaping an individual's entrepreneurial identity. This foundation is based on theories regarding human capital and its connection to entrepreneurship [59].

4. Entrepreneurial Competence and Sociodemographic Variables

Researchers have conducted extensive studies on how various factors influence entrepreneurial intention. One particular area of focus is the impact of gender, where the data display a noticeable imbalance, but there is also evidence of a correction in the discrepancy. According to the last studies in 2018, there was a percentage of 46.9% of women entrepreneurs, so there is a gradual reduction in the gender gap [20]. In addition, the GEM Global Spain report reveals that in the last two years, female entrepreneurship has increased by 10%, while the gap has been reduced to 6.5% [60].

When it comes to analyzing entrepreneurial curriculum implementation, there may be differences between privately held schools and state-owned schools. Previous investigations have observed that the promotion of entrepreneurial competence in educational centers in Spain has been more prevalent in private institutions,

whether through their own programs or the incorporation of the subject in the curriculum. This trend has been observed in comparison to state-owned centers ^[61]. Studies internationally conducted confirm that students attending private schools exhibit 10% higher levels of entrepreneurial intention than their public school peers ^[62].

Finally, regarding the parents' educational level, research has revealed that parents with experience in the business industry tend to have children with a stronger inclination toward entrepreneurship. This suggests a positive correlation between parents involved in the business world and their children's entrepreneurial aspirations ^[62].

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