

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING: THE SAMPLE OF AKSARAY**

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### ***Abstract***

*The concept of entrepreneurship has often been associated with personality characteristics in organizational literature in Turkey. Studies on entrepreneurship in our country involve what type of personality characteristics the individuals that can be considered “entrepreneurs” have and which individuals possess a higher potential for entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, considering the literature on entrepreneurship in Turkey, it is possible to conclude that there is no sufficient amount of research regarding whether entrepreneurship is a concept that can be learnt or whether entrepreneurial skills can be gained through training.*

*The effectiveness of the training that entrepreneurs receive through KOSGEB (Small and Medium Industry Development Organization) is analyzed in this paper. For this purpose, data were collected from entrepreneurs who received entrepreneurial training in Aksaray through a scale developed based on previous literature. We hope that the findings obtained from the research will contribute to current literature in terms of making up for the lack of research on the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training.*

**Key Words:** *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurial Training*

**JEL Code:** *L26*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional concept. It should be handled not only with its financial and employment dimensions, but also with social, political, cultural, global and career dimensions. Entrepreneurship must play a crucial role in the society's agenda, in the priority of politics, in the career plans of the young and in the center of education system. Policies which will support and encourage the entrepreneurship of especially the young and women must be developed. The artistic aspect should not be ignored in entrepreneurial activities and research should be carried out on artistic entrepreneurship (Karadal, 2013: 38). In this study, firstly the concepts of entrepreneurship, entrepreneur and entrepreneurial training have been handled. In the following parts, the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training in the sample of Aksaray has been examined through qualitative research methods.

## **2. THE CONCEPTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEUR**

### **2.1. The Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship has been an issue dealt by many theorists due to its contributions to economic and social life in every period of history. There are two different perspectives in the literature regarding the definition of entrepreneurship. The first one is called the economics school. This school defines entrepreneurship as creating value through establishing organizations. Here, entrepreneurs create value by discovering, innovating, using their creative skills or coming up with other products, services, sources, technologies or markets. On the other hand, the education school refers to individuals and their types of behavior. Thus, entrepreneurial behavior is defined as forming, developing and transforming organizations via opportunist, value-oriented, value creating, risk taking and creative activities (Balaban, & Özdemir, 2008:134-135).

Practical entrepreneurship definition is put forward by GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor). According to GEM's definition, the activities of businesses which are 42 months old are called entrepreneurial activities, whereas the activities of businesses which are older than 42 months are not defined as entrepreneurial activities (Parker, 2009:7).

GEM divides entrepreneurial activities into two: Startup or nascent entrepreneurship and "new" or "young firm" entrepreneurs. Startup entrepreneurs are the owners of businesses which are in the startup period and younger than three months. New entrepreneurs are the owners of businesses which have operated more than 3 months and less than 42 months. The division of these two

entrepreneurial activities is made in order to determine the contribution of each of these activities to economic growth. Besides, GEM uses Total Entrepreneurial Activity Index (TEA) in order to measure the entrepreneurial activities of a country. TEA index is calculated as the ratio of those who engage in entrepreneurial activities to the adult population. In this respect, TEA index consists of the combination of startup entrepreneurial activity index and new firm activity index. This index is a universally accepted reliable index and it allows the comparison among countries in terms of entrepreneurial activities (Dilsiz, & Kölük, 2008:9).

Robinson et al. (1991) mention eight recurring themes in entrepreneurship definitions in the literature: *the entrepreneur, innovation, organization creation, creating value, profit or nonprofit, growth, uniqueness, and the owner-manager* (Robinson et al.,1991: 19; Gartner, 1990). As for the definition of entrepreneur, Robinson et al. (1991) define start-up entrepreneur: an individual who has started more than one business, the last one being within five years, using some type of innovation (Robinson et al.,1991: 20).

### **3. ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING**

*“I firmly believe that all human beings have an innate skill. I call it the survival skill. The fact that the poor are alive is clear proof of their ability. They do not need us to teach them how to survive; they already know. So rather than waste our time teaching them new skills, we try to make maximum use of their existing skills. Giving the poor access to credit allows them to immediately put into practice the skills they already know.” Muhammad Yunus, Banker to the Poor, 1999.*

Is entrepreneurship really something inherited or can it be learnt? Muhammad Yunus (1999) seems to support the first view. Nevertheless, “trying to make use of the existing skills” and “giving access to credit” sound somehow related to entrepreneurial training or at least these expressions could be interpreted under the title of entrepreneurial training.

There is an issue which has been controverted for years: Are entrepreneurs born or made? Although this question might connote negativity, it is not only an appropriate question but also a question which is hard to answer. If entrepreneurship were not able to be learnt, hundreds of entrepreneurial training offered in Turkey and the world would become meaningless. If entrepreneurship were not innate, the children of many entrepreneurs would have to start over their lives from the beginning or would be working in other firms. Some entrepreneurs

have become natural entrepreneurs by firms they inherited from their fathers, while others have become entrepreneurs through learning and training (Özdevecioğlu, 2013: 8).

Just as leadership, it can easily be said that the controversy of whether entrepreneurship is innate or acquired is meaningless. It can be observed that individuals who do not have an innate entrepreneurial character at least cannot take risks easily, whereas certain individuals have a special tendency to take risks. Considering entrepreneurship concept as a behavioral category, Hisrich et al. (2005) indicate that this behavioral category is comprised of three basic elements: taking initiative, gathering social and economic sources for practice (organizing) and taking risks (risk failure). The fact that these three elements are not to be found in every human easily makes one think that entrepreneurship is an innate quality. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that these three qualities do not mean anything alone (Özçınar, 2013:96).

On the teachability debate, Wu and Jung (2008) suggested that one group of scholars emphasized inadequate entrepreneurial characteristics in people rather than training program effectiveness. According to them, these scholars believe that entrepreneurship is about personality traits and therefore, it is not teachable (Wu and Jung, 2008: 45; Ede, Calcich & Panigrahi, 1998). It is believed that those traits are inborn and training does not assist entrepreneurs in achieving their goals. Entrepreneurs are often so confident about their own abilities that they rely on themselves for venturing instead of getting help from certain sponsored training programs (Wu and Jung, 2008: 45; Zinger, LeBrasseur & Zanibbi, 2001). On the other hand, Wu and Jung (2008) indicate that there is another group of researchers who claim that training and education programs play a significant role in developing entrepreneurship. Apart from these two sides, Wu and Jung (2008) believe that entrepreneurship can be taught only when the training and educational programs are effective. Hence it is important to evaluate those programs (Wu and Jung, 2008: 45).

Similarly, Lans et al. (2008) argue that despite the widespread idea that entrepreneurs are born and not made, there is a growing amount of research that acknowledges the importance of entrepreneurship education and training as a source for increasing start-up intentions, survival rates and growth (Lans et al, 2008: 364; Katz, 2007).

Bharadwaj et al. (2010) note that there is a huge amount of research on entrepreneurial training, at whose center there is the question of “Can entrepreneurship be taught?”. According to Bharadwaj et al (2010), one of the

views on entrepreneurial training supports the idea that the most significant purpose of entrepreneurship education is to “weed out those who lack the right DNA.” (Grey, 2006; cit. Bharadwaj et al., 2010: 109). Another view proposes that what can be taught about entrepreneurship are *skills, frequency of start-up* and *opportunity recognition* (Hopkins, 2006; cit. Bharadwaj et al., 2010: 109).

Özdevecioğlu (2013) handles the issue of entrepreneurial training in a quite detailed way. He states that SMIDO (Small and Medium Industry Development Organization) started to offer applied entrepreneurship training and to provide people who deserve to receive a certificate with grant in order to encourage entrepreneurship and to enable new firms to appear. This training, which became widespread in Turkey and drew a considerable amount of attention, targeted young entrepreneurship candidates and women. There is a great need for new entrepreneurs so that countries will develop and improve their social services. Especially young people and women who have different ideas in mind, who are willing to take risks, who can recognize the opportunities but do not have capital have set up their own businesses thanks to SMIDO’s applied entrepreneurship training and have started to contribute to national economy. The entrepreneurial education offered at universities is not at the desired level yet. Universities rather offer vocational training. Entrepreneurship does not go beyond being a course in many departments except business administration department and the young are not encouraged to become entrepreneurs. However, young people who will employ are needed, rather than young people who will be employed. This training offered by SMIDO has a significant role in terms of filling the gap of universities (Özdevecioğlu, 2013: 2).

Applied entrepreneurship training involves classroom lectures and workshop activities of 70 (seventy) hours consisting of four main modules stated below:

Module 1: Testing Entrepreneurial abilities, developing business ideas and creativity exercises – 8 (eight) hours,

Module 2: The concept of business plan and its components (market research, marketing plan, production plan, management plan, financial plan) – 18 (eighteen) hours,

Module 3: Workshop work on consolidation of business plan components (market research, marketing plan, production plan, management plan, financial plan) – 24 (twenty four) hours,

Module 4: Points to consider in writing and presenting a business plan – 20 (twenty) hours (Özdevecioğlu, 2013: 2).

### **3.1. Goals of Entrepreneurial Training**

As it is mentioned above, entrepreneurship is a process that is achieved partially through personality traits and partially through training. It is not possible to become a successful entrepreneur merely by inborn abilities. Education is of utmost importance in entrepreneurship, as it is in every field. People can increase their knowledge and skills

What is gained through a formal training program are developing innovative, critical and analytical thinking skills and the encouraging entrepreneurship. Thanks to these training programs (Dilsiz & Kölük, 2008:9):

- Business opportunities and how to utilize those business opportunities can be learnt,
- Functions of management which are stated as planning, organizing, actuating, coordinating and control can be learnt,
- Information on laws and regulations can be obtained,
- Functions of a business can be analyzed,
- Information on financial resources and associations can be obtained.

According to Balaban and Özdemir (2008), the purpose of entrepreneurial training is to enable to reveal certain hidden characteristics of a person's entrepreneurial potential and to make them recognize that potential. In addition, to prevent those who possess entrepreneurial qualities from doing wrong actions and to enable them to utilize their resources more efficiently are among the goals (Balaban & Özdemir, 2008: 133-147).

### **3.2. Disadvantages of Entrepreneurial Training**

Having noted that applied entrepreneurship training has advantages such as appealing to everybody, involving practice, not being limited to specific regions, being free of charge and offering the opportunity to get a certificate, Özdevecioğlu (2013) has also pointed out that this training has certain disadvantages as well. These disadvantages can be stated as follows (Özdevecioğlu, 2013: 4-6):

1. The duration of the training (hours) are short, which is an important disadvantage especially for those who are from other fields. The parts of a business plan are not covered sufficiently in the training which is rather intended for preparing a business plan. The candidates can learn how to calculate break-even point or to prepare an income table but they cannot fully master its content. The goal of the training should be to gain the potential to prepare a business plan.

2. The people whose primary field is different than business and the candidates who have taken similar courses before are taught in the same classroom, which leads to differences between levels. While certain people or groups pass on to next levels quickly, those who come across the topics for the first time have difficulty understanding.

3. Another disadvantage is the fact that the training ends in one month. Although it seems like an advantage at first, teaching every day without revising the topics is a disadvantage. The theoretical information and practices do not allow revision, which brings about the difficulty of understanding.

4. The training is limited to one instructor. This is a significant disadvantage as well. Making use of people specialized in fields such as finance, marketing and management will increase the effectiveness of the training. If the instructor is specialized in marketing or management, the contents of the training is also dominated by marketing or management. It is not allowed for people with different specialties from different cities and provinces to instruct, which decreases the effectiveness of the training. It is acceptable for one person to teach on situations where specialized instructors are not available.

5. The training is in the form of a seminar, so it is not regarded as a lesson. Thus, exams cannot be performed. If a central exam can be carried out at the end of the training, the validity of the certificate will increase. SMIDO can increase the validity and value of the certificate through conducting central exams at the end of training or in certain times of the year.

6. One of the important disadvantages of the training is that the candidates cannot be chosen through interviews. As a result of not being able to accept candidates through interview or a serious preselection, the levels of excitement and motivation of the candidates show variety.

7. Accreditation of the instructors should be done by SMIDO or an authorized institution. The training given by instructors who are not accredited will result in failure. The instructors who will give this training are not subjected to instructor training, which is another disadvantage.

8. The lack of evaluation and satisfaction questionnaires is a disadvantage as well.

9. The educational materials used in the training are not standardized, which prevents the training from being standardized. SMIDO only gives the titles of the topics and this leads the instructors to fill the content on their own.

10. Candidates who are willing to attend the courses are accepted to the courses without being sufficiently evaluated in terms of entrepreneurial qualities or potentials. Even though the first module of applied entrepreneurship training is determined as testing entrepreneurial abilities, performing the test after the training has started can be considered a disadvantage.

11. The entrepreneurship training is based on business administration training. Business administration training within the applied entrepreneurship training is insufficient. The preparation of a business plan is quickly taught without deeply covering the topics and concepts.

12. Measures to be taken against possible problems or crises after investment are not mentioned in the applied entrepreneurship training. There is no such module. Young or new entrepreneurs are not taught this topic, which is a disadvantage.

13. The right to receive a grant at the end of applied entrepreneurship training is insufficient. The amount of support is not adequate. It is not adequate even for establishing a small business. SMIDO is not expected to give capital support but start-up expenses and machine equipment support is also insufficient.

### **3.3. Problems During Practice**

Özdevecioğlu (2013:7-8) indicates the problems faced during practice as follows:

1. The educational background of the candidates are different from each other and this leads to differences among their levels of perception and comprehension.

2. As not all the candidates aim to prepare a business plan and start up a new business, they have different levels of excitement and motivation. This situation affects the classroom interaction.

3. There is not enough time to come up with a business idea for those who come to courses without a business idea. The condition to finish the training in

one month (except university education) does not allow people to have enough time to develop a business idea.

4. The candidates have difficulty in attending the courses, which is another problem. Some candidates of entrepreneurship already have jobs, some of them are students, and some are housewives, which leads to attendance problems.

5. The training is not sufficiently supervised. Both SMIDO and the management of the institutions who lead the training cannot sufficiently supervise the place where training is given, the instructor and the course content.

6. The fact that instructors do not have standardized course contents cause differences in contents. For instance, whereas business law is not involved in the contents or it is to be covered in a short time, it is observed that 8-10 hours are allocated for business law.

7. There are no pre-defined standards regarding the places where training is carried out, which leads to technically and physically insufficient classrooms.

8. One of the most important problems related to the training is that the candidates cannot be followed after the training period is over. The entrepreneur who receives his/her certificate is not followed, and it cannot be understood whether he/she has set up a business unless they apply for grant. Thus, a follow-up system is necessary.

9. The announcements regarding the training are not made frequently, which has another problem. The institution that coordinates the training should make more effective announcements by making use of written and visual media.

10. The candidates are not given orientation training.

11. The time between the end of training and starting up a business is long, which is a problem. There are many prospective entrepreneurs who do not start a business after receiving the certificate. When the advantage of raising awareness is ignored, effort, time and money is wasted. This, of course, is an issue which is open to debate.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The objective of the study is to measure the effectiveness of the entrepreneurial training that entrepreneurship candidates in Aksaray receive through KOSGEB (SMIDO). The literature part of the study was to identify past researches on entrepreneurial training and effectiveness of entrepreneurial training.

The second phase of the study was to adapt two questionnaires from the relevant literature into Turkish and combine the items of the two questionnaires. The first 24 items of the questionnaire were adapted from the article of Bharadwaj et al. (2010). The items fall into four categories such as *product*, *process*, *people* and *physical evidence*. There are 7 items representing “product”, 14 items regarding “process”, 2 items regarding “people” and 1 item representing “physical evidence”. The remaining 12 items of the questionnaire were taken from the study of Nagesh and Murthy (2008) and adapted into Turkish. Likert 1-5 scale was used to evaluate the items. On one column, the “importance” of the items were located, and on the other column the “satisfaction” levels of the respondents were asked. The respondents were asked to mark the items according to the options of “1= very low, 2= low, 3= moderate, 4= high, 5= very high”. The aim of collecting data is to find out whether the importance level of entrepreneurial training has an effect on the satisfaction level regarding entrepreneurial training.

In total, 200 people participated in the study. Out of 200 questionnaires, 130 were considered to be valid. The results were analyzed using SPSS 20 program. In the findings, the first part of the questionnaire consisting of 24 items is referred to as “scale 1” and the second part consisting of 12 items is referred to as “scale 2”. The reliability scores of the scales are demonstrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Reliability Scores of the Scales**

Scale	Type of Measurement	n	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Importance Level 1	Likert 1-5	130	24	,932
Importance Level 2	Likert 1-5	130	12	,905
Satisfaction 1	Likert 1-5	130	24	,947
Satisfaction 2	Likert 1-5	130	12	,917

As it can be seen, all of the scales are highly reliable. Cronbach's Alpha of importance level 1 scale is ,932, importance level 2 is ,905, satisfaction level 1 is ,947 and satisfaction level 2 is ,917. In studies of social Sciences reliability scores are considered as highly reliable if the scores are higher than 0,70 (Tezbaşaran, 1996). The internal consistency coefficients of the scale are high, which reveals that the internal consistency of the scale has a sufficient level.

## 5. FINDINGS

The demographical features of the participants of the study are given in terms of percentage in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographical features of the Participants (percentage)**

Age		Gender		Hometown	
18-25	62,3	Female	42,3	Aksaray	43,8
26-30	16,9	Male	57,7	Other	56,2
31-35	9,2	Level of Education		Father's occupation	
36-40	5,4	Secondary school	,8	Entrepreneur/ Businessman /Shopkeeper	19,2
41-45	4,6	High school	4,6	Laborer /Official/Retired	56,2
46+	1,5	Associate degree	36,9	Farmer	16,2
		Bachelor's degree	41,5	Other	8,5
		Master degree	16,2		

(n=130)

As it is demonstrated in Table 1, most of the participants are aged between 18-25 (62,3 %). The people who are 46 and over represent only 1,5 % of the participants, which is the smallest percentage. As for gender, male participants constitute an amount of 57,7%; which is 15,4 % higher than the number of female participants. When the education levels of the participants are analyzed, it can be seen that those who have a bachelor's degree make up the majority (41,5 %), whereas only 0,8 % of the participants did not continue their education after secondary school. The majority of the participants were not born in Aksaray (56,2 %). Lastly, regarding the occupation of the participants' fathers, it is seen that 56,2 % of the participants' fathers are laborers, officials or retired.

Table 2 demonstrates the cross tabulation among demographical features. According to Table 2, the majority of the male participants are aged between 18-25 (40). The same case is true for the female participants, 41 of whom are between 18-25. Also, there are no female participants aged 46 or over, whereas only 2 among male participants are 46 or over.

None of the female participants graduates of secondary school. Likewise, there is only 1 male participant who did not continue his education after secondary school. The majority of both female participants (24) and male participants (30) have a bachelor's degree.

**Table 2. Cross tabulation among Demographical Features**

		Female	Male	Total
Age	18-25	41	40	81
	26-30	8	14	22
	31-35	3	9	12
	36-40	1	6	7
	41-45	2	4	6
	46 and over	0	2	2
Total				130
		Female	Male	Total
Level of Education	Secondary school	0	1	1
	High school	2	4	6
	Associate degree	22	26	48
	Bachelor's	24	30	54
	Master degree	7	14	21
Total				130
		Female	Male	Total
Hometown	Aksaray	17	40	57
	Other	38	35	73
Total				130
		Female	Male	Total
Father's occupation	Entrepreneur/Businessman/ Shopkeeper	9	16	25
	Laborer/Official/Retired	33	40	73
	Farmer	9	12	21
	Other	4	7	11
Total				130

The majority of the female participants (38) were not born in Aksaray, whereas the male participants who were born in Aksaray (40) are slightly more than male participants who were not born in Aksaray (35). The fathers of the majority of both female (33) and male (40) participants work as laborers, officials or they are retired.

Table 3 shows the differences between the scales according to paired samples t-test.

**Table 3. Differences between the Scales (paired samples t-test)**

Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
olcek_1_1 - olcek_2_1	,13718	,49449	3,163	129	,002
olcek_1_2 - olcek_2_2	,26603	,60549	5,009	129	,000

In table 3, paired t-test results can be seen. Mean of importance level scale 1 is 3,7769. Also, mean of the satisfaction 1 scale is 3,6397. Importance level scale 2 has 3,8878 and scale of satisfaction has 3,6218. When the results are analyzed, significance between importance level 1 and satisfaction scale 1 is ,002 and significance of importance level 2 and satisfaction scale 2 is ,000. So, there is a meaningful and positive difference between these scales. Thus, participants' importance level in terms of the entrepreneurship training has an effect on their satisfaction.

Table 4 reveals the correlation matrix of the scales. Correlations at the 0,01 level are indicated below.

**Table 4. Correlation Matrix of the Scales**

Scales		Satisfaction 1	Satisfaction 2	Importance Level 1	Importance Level 2
Satisfaction 1	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	130			
Satisfaction 2	Pearson Correlation	,803**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000			
	N	130	130		
Importance Level 1	Pearson Correlation	,743**	,589**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		
	N	130	130	130	
Importance Level 2	Pearson Correlation	,677**	,664**	,787**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	
	N	130	130	130	130

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When Table 4 is analyzed, it can be seen that there is a correlation between all of these scales ( $p=,000$ ). Correlation coefficient of importance level 2 scale is ,787, and its coefficient with satisfaction 2 is ,664, lastly coefficient with satisfaction 1 is ,677. Correlation coefficient of importance level 1 with

satisfaction 2 is ,589 and coefficient with satisfaction 1 is ,743. Finally, correlation coefficient of satisfaction 2 with satisfaction 1 is ,803.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study deals with the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training in Aksaray. It was conducted with 130 participants. Most of the participants are studying in Aksaray University. The scales used in the study were taken from the studies of Bharadwaj et al. (2010) and Nagesh and Murthy (2008) and adapted into Turkish. From the reliability scores it can be understood that the scales are highly reliable.

In the study, the demographical features of the participants has been included and various statistical tests have been performed. In order to see the differences between the scales, paired samples t test has been used. Besides, correlation analysis has been done to determine the relations. Additionally, cross tabulation data have been included in the study. According to the cross tabulation data, it is seen that there is a meaningful difference between the scales and it has been found out that there is a relationship. In this respect, the entrepreneurial training that the person receives has an effect on their satisfaction levels. The majority of the participants (62,3 %) are aged between 18-25. Also, only a small number of the participants (6,1 %) are 41 years old or older. This can be interpreted as most of the participants are either entrepreneurship candidates.

The fact that the study was conducted only in Aksaray University is the limitation of the study. Future researches can be carried out in other locations through different methods. Thus, different results might be achieved.

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