

Creativity, entrepreneurship and happiness: Ingredients for a High Education change

Presentación A. Caballero-García
Faculty of Education, Camilo José Cela University
Madrid, Spain

and

Esmeralda Guillén Tortajada
Faculty of Education, Camilo José Cela University

and

M^a Pilar Jiménez Martínez
Faculty of Education, Camilo José Cela University

ABSTRACT

The society of the 21st century continues to demand professional competences that are not sufficiently covered in university classrooms. Recent studies reaffirmed the possibility of predicting the academic performance of university students from their levels of emotional intelligence and subjective happiness. A sustainable growth, based on innovation and excellence, requires a growing number of creative university graduates with entrepreneurship skills. It is therefore necessary to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the university environment. The present work analyzes which aspects are related to the entrepreneurial spirit by offering an effective methodological framework for the university classroom that integrates the emotional intelligence, the subjective sense of well-being and the creativity as facilitator elements of the academic achievement and the professional competence that the labour market requires. The obtained results are discussed based on the necessity of a teacher training in methodological strategies, aligned with these dynamics and educational intership in different university classrooms, that encourage generate a successful and sustainable entrepreneurship, that address to the specialized labor demand claimed by the universities from sectors of the economic activity, and contributing to the personal and professional development of our students, their life quality, and the society in which they live.

key words: happiness, entrepreneurship, creativity, academic achievement, higher education.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

The academic performance of university students is an essential factor in terms of the quality of higher education, however, is high academic performance sufficient if we forget to develop university students at the personal, social, and professional level?

The current discussion is notable in that it arouses a great interest in our society. This conversation has led to debates surrounding whether there is a need for teacher training that

result in more effective strategies and methods that speak to the social reality of the labour market. The idea is that these strategies will in turn help young people to contribute to their own development as individuals, skilled in various fields and thus promoting their quality of life in the society in which they live.

The entrepreneur is the one who notices an opportunity, analyzes it, studies it and therefore, know to uncover beneficial opportunities. This person believes in their ideas, and is able to carry them out in and find a way to fulfil their dreams. An entrepreneur is someone who learns from his mistakes, who is not frozen or abandoned when he or she makes a mistake or fails. They are always trying to move forward despite the difficulties encountered along the way [1].

On the nature of the venture, Kizner [2] identifies the entrepreneur as the business element that makes human action something active, creative, and human rather than something passive, automatic, and mechanical.

But is entrepreneurship teachable? Will the entrepreneurial spirit transmitted by teachers in the classroom help college students approach employment after graduation?

Recent studies [3] [4] [5] [6] argue that the entrepreneurial spirit is in fact teachable. These studies point to the importance of including entrepreneurship in the educational classroom.

Along this line, authors like Martínez Mendez [3] affirm that education and training should help to promote entrepreneurship, promoting a positive attitude, increasing awareness of entrepreneurial career paths, and providing the necessary business skills to achieve success in such fields. Uribe, Valencian & Bonilla [4] note that the "personal qualities relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creativity, the capacity for initiative and common sense, may be useful for everyone, both at work and in everyday life" (p. 653).

For universities, entrepreneurship is considered a driver of development [5].

Education has a central responsibility to identify and foster the development of individuals who could be entrepreneurs. Therefore, there exist increasingly greater consensus about the role of the University as a training point for entrepreneurs [6].

It is precisely that educational responsibility that pushes us to elaborate a proposal for innovation aimed at fostering entrepreneurial skills in college students, and along with them, emotional intelligence (EI), creativity and optimism as facilitators for higher academic performance and incorporation into the labor force.

The concept of EI was coined in 1990 by Salovey & Mayer [7], who conceived EI as a genuine 'intelligence' based on adaptive emotions that allowed the individual to solve problems and adapt effectively to the environment surrounding him or her [8].

Zenasni & Lubart [9] taking into account the theories that suggest that EI can encourage creativity, developed a study that supports the idea that the highest creative performance was found in subjects who reported greater emotional intelligence.

It has also been shown that creativity is linked to entrepreneurial intentionality [10] [11].

Other authors as Veloso-Besio, Cuadra-Peralta, Antezana-Sagüez, Fuentes-Soto & Avendaño-Robledo [7] established a positive and significant relationship between perceived emotional intelligence and subjective happiness. This means that a person with higher EI will not only have more positive emotional experiences [12] but is also more likely to have satisfactory judgements about their life's achievements [7].

Therefore, we can conclude that EI improves the state of happiness among students, increases and enhances their creativity, as it creativity is related to entrepreneurship.

In this sense emerging positions attempt to associate the application of positive psychology with the personality of the entrepreneur [13] [14]. However, the empirical evidence that supports this relationship is very limited.

Some studies [15] show that happiness relates inversely with the intention of undertaking. To the extent that happiness is greater, it is less likely that it was the original intent of the undertaking (or vice versa). Nonetheless, other authors, such as Nunez [16], have found a positive correlation between happiness and entrepreneurial skills. Data, therefore, is not conclusive about the relationship between these two variables. Positive emotional states, such as happiness, are in fact present in enterprising people [14]. Therefore there arises the need for higher studies in a field that seems to be rather unexplored [16].

In a complementary manner, other studies [17] confirm that emotional intelligence showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with self-sufficient entrepreneurship, presenting a great practical relevance for the optimum development of autonomous work, which can be induced from the process of teaching and learning in the University classroom. In this sense, Salvador Ferrer signals the possibility of improving business results through knowledge and management of the EI.

It is therefore the responsibility of teachers to provide programs of prevention, education and training in socio-emotional skills that enable future practitioners [18] [19] [20].

The conclusions, which are established by Durán, Parra & Márceles [21] indicate that promoting entrepreneurship is a formative complement in the educational environment that forges healthy social and personal development and helps create successful entrepreneurs.

University education processes are influenced by the need of students who will join the labour market in the near future. It is

desirable, then, to promote cooperation and teamwork in all members of the community, to strengthen in students the ability to get and keep a job in order to access alternative employments and undertakings.

The acquired EI directly aids the state of happiness amongst students, and in turn their creativity and their entrepreneurial skills. The question we ask at this moment is if this will benefit college students in their academic environment in relation to their academic performance.

It has been demonstrated that EI is one of the many relevant aspects to take into account in determining the skills and capabilities of people. Additionally, it has been shown to promote and facilitate the achievement of goals in the individual and acts as a good predictor of a person's ability to adapt to their environment [22] [19] [23].

Authors as Ferragut & Fierro [24], demonstrate the existence of significant correlations between well-being and emotional intelligence, as well as academic achievement and well-being.

Studies such as the one conducted by Oliver [25] Bravo y Ortiz, [26], León y Barrera [27], among others, indicate an important relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance. Students with better academic performance show less burnout and more self-efficacy, satisfaction and happiness associated with studying. Furthermore, those students are not commonly projected to abandon their studies [25].

Happiness has a significant and positive effect on the relationship between university selection indicators and academic performance [28]. It has been shown that the higher academic performance achieved in the past, the greater the psychological well-being in the future, and this, in turn, will lead to an increased academic performance and vice versa [29].

The work we present aims to the promote the entrepreneurial spirit in the university classroom, offering an effective and innovative methodological framework that integrates the emotional intelligence, subjective well-being, and creativity as facilitating elements of academic and entrepreneurial expertise that is demanded by the labour market.

2. "START-UP, CREATE, AND ENJOY": A PROPOSAL OF INTERVENTION FOR THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM.

Entrepreneurship, understood as the creation of an organisation capable of capturing a business opportunity [15] has established itself as one of disciplines that has received more attention from academic leaders, and it has grown interest in fostering entrepreneurial competence among different students in classrooms of higher education.

Entrepreneurship education refers to the extent that knowledge, skills, and the ability to create or direct small, new, or growing businesses is incorporated into educational curriculums [27].

With entrepreneurship as the student's first contact with the business world, it prepares them for life in modern society, contributing to both their personal and professional development. Just as much as contact with entrepreneurship, the student's involvement in the academic world matters, since it is there where the students determine their interests, make their first contacts, are encouraged by professors and other

professionals, and are the source of inspiration needed to power this entrepreneurial spirit that forges a society of coexistence [28].

Covington & Omelich [32] note that in order to offer an effective methodological framework for our classroom interactions that will be in direct relation with the business sector, you'll have to take into account certain elements that facilitate long-term academic achievement.

Studies offer us the possibility of integrating, together with aspects related to entrepreneurship, other elements that facilitate academic achievement, such as emotional intelligence, the subjective sense of well-being and creativity.

Our innovative proposal for the university classroom takes into account all of these aspects and suggest dynamic activities that motivate students and assist in the development of their creativity, their happiness, and with that, their emotional and entrepreneurial skills, facilitated by positive classroom environment and high academic and work performance.

Taking as a reference the works of Alcaraz [33], Díaz-García, Sáez-Martínez & Jiménez-Moreno [34] & Labarca & Pérez [35], we propose a training model designed from the needs detected after an initial evaluation of the entrepreneurial competences and directed to the development of specific competencies of the entrepreneurial personality: Creativity, Confidence, Perseverance, Ability to face risk, Capacity to handle problems, Initiative, Strength and work capacity, Leadership, Achievement need and Tolerance to change, and we add other competencies in order to develop the optimism and emotional intelligence, as performance facilitators. The formative propose could be structured into four modules: "Motivation", "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership", "Creativity and Generation of Ideas", "Planning, Development and Evaluation of a Business Plan". This content would be developed through practical activities, based on participatory and cooperative learning, in which students internalize several contents of the program, either individually or in groups, as well as in the overarching learning community environment. In this situation, it would be fundamental that pedagogical intervention be adapted to fit the educational context at the stage and period in which the proposal develops. Additionally, it would be a rigorous and practical program that would at the same time have to be accompanied by a processes of monitoring and mentoring in order to ensure effective action and progress that can be sustained over long periods of time.

Our innovative proposal for the university classroom takes into account these aspects and sets out dynamic and motivational activities that increase creativity, happiness, achievement and the emotional and entrepreneurial skills of our students.

Based on the proposals by different authors [36], we propose methodological strategies based on role plays in which students are encouraged to perform a personality that exhibits ideas and thoughts that differ for his or her own, thus developing entrepreneurship, EI, happiness and creativity of University students.

We propose a situations students are confronted with real-life situations that can help them understand varying professional and business development methods. The students then carry out specific plans of action. In the realization of these plans, students will need to both find information and then preparation realistic projects that include specific goals, a co-operative methodology and research, an estimate of resources,

mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation, and a time-line.

The situation must be comfortable for the student so that they can be faced with circumstances in which the four elements; EI, entrepreneurial spirit, happiness and creativity, are fully engaged by working through the dynamics of the proposed activity and its evaluation.

We also recommend the use of technological tools that can help the development of personal and professional competences (e.g. social media networks, which can serve to develop entrepreneurial skills like job hunting). Manpower [37] concludes that the perspective of the global market requires technically competent and professional profiles, with students having computer skills, the ability to resolve problems, enthusiasm, and motivation as just some of the requirements of the 19th century to excell in professional ventures.

Authors such as Ramirez & Fuentes [38], have shown that activities that help students to deal with real life situations, combined with methodologies of innovation that encourage creativity and promote the involvement and motivation of students, making them feel happier and creating illusions, help to develop students personally and professionally, as well as to improve their academic performance. Additionally, these activities contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in university education.

3. CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, we have argued that recent investigations have shown emotional intelligence and happiness as the factors that facilitate the most optimal student performance [18] [7]. Furthermore, we maintain that subjective well-being improves creativity [9] [13] and the entrepreneurship skills of students [10] [11] [13] [14] [16] [17].

Authors such as Fernández Batanero & Reyes Rebollo [31] highlight the urgency of developing policies that foster entrepreneurship, a key aspect in job creation and the improvement of competitiveness for the economic growth of societies. At the beginning of this work we communicated that sustainable growth based innovation and excellence requires an increasing number of university-level creative and entrepreneurship abilities.

We are thus committed to a university education in line with these approaches. We understand the role of the university teacher as facilitator of the culture of entrepreneurship among their students and as a factor of change in schools. It is necessary, therefore, the promotion of a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the university environment. Additionally, we assert that each student develop skills related to leadership, teamwork, communication, creativity, and planning [39].

There exists a need for teacher training on methodological strategies, aligned with these dynamics and educational practices in the university classroom. Teachers must be trained in strategies favoring the generation of sustainable, and successful entrepreneurs who attend to the specialized labour demand, which attend to the demand from the different sectors of economic activity and contribute to the personal and professional development of our students, their quality of life and the society in which they operate.

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