

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Entrepreneurial education: An overview of alternative and effective school practices and actions in Cyprus and Greece educational system**

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**This conceptual paper aims to annotate the existing practices and actions of entrepreneurial education in Cyprus and Greece educational organizations taking into account the centralized school contexts. At the same time, it presents the literature background regarding the new principal's role in the 21st century in order to provide adequate school practices and actions in recent years. Specifically, it seeks to report the entrepreneurship theory and aspects concerning current practical applications in educational organizations. Consequently, the study indicates that according to the entrepreneurial education via the educational systems has the opportunity to adapt relevant programs for leading the schools in the effectiveness and improvement.**

**Key words:** Entrepreneurial education, leaders' role, practices, actions, centralized educational system.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years regarding to the constant changes were instead at all scientific levels, each person should be adapted accordingly to achieve effectiveness in educational organizations. In particular, the significant role of the stakeholders in education revealed the contribution to acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to the students regarding the modern reality. Therefore, workplace changes have directly affected the critical role of the Professional Counsellor and the Career Counsellor. Specifically, they should be adapted in the context' needs, as well as engaged the entrepreneurship

with educational purpose and aims (Eurydice, 2012). Undoubtedly, changes in the workplace are related to the continuous development of digital technology and its integration into all workplaces. In essence, persons should possess knowledge, skills, and abilities of digital technology and use them daily to increase project production and personal and professional improvement.

It is important to refer, that the high unemployment of young people, which is constantly increasing worldwide, and the economic crisis in connection with the rapid changes associated with the complex

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economy and knowledge society, constitute the need for transversal skills. Consequently, these skills characterized the implementation of processes that promote entrepreneurially and, in particular, innovation and critical thinking and develop creativity and social skills.

However, various researchers claim the development of knowledge skills and mentalities regarding significant importance to entrepreneurial development in Europe (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2016; Eliophotou - Menon, 2016; Eliophotou Eliophotou - Menon, and Athanasoula – Reppa, 2017).

In addition, other researchers, as Leffler et al. (2010), argue that the business approach should be supported by teaching methods such as (a) action-oriented, e.g., problem-solving teaching and learning (b) project-based teaching and learning (c) focused on practical learning and (d) from the opening of schools to cooperation with professional life. In these similar views, Gibb (2008) investigated that in order for business education to be integrated into the education system, it should be: student-centered (elementary), topic-focused (secondary), professionally focused (on further education), and industry-focused (at the University).

In this respect, the literature review highlights the changing pattern from conventional/traditional teaching in modern methods based on "active learning". The "business education" seeks a combination of experiential learning, skills development, and most importantly, a change of mentality (Wilson, 2008). Consequently, entrepreneurship is included globally in the "Agenda 2030", in sub-objective 4.4., between the 17 Objectives and 169 UN sub-objectives for Sustainable Development (UN, 2016).

This article investigated the significance of entrepreneurial approaches on education in Cyprus and Greece and emphasized to the key elements of entrepreneurship by international research. Teachers and leaders in 21st Century need guidance and monitoring for selecting and adopting effective entrepreneurial practices and actions in their organizations. In particular, the current study aims to provide: (1) the basic dimensions of entrepreneurial education, (2) the Principal's role, and (3) alternative entrepreneurial actions and practices in centralized educational systems. Specifically, the study sought to illuminate, understand and present evidence drawn from the international aspects and lead the practices and actions of entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education's importance were based on the adopting of various programs and actions in the internal and the external educational organization environment. Promoting entrepreneurship in modern educational organizations has always been one of the educational policies of the European Union and a key element of achieving school effectiveness (Eurydice, 2021). In recent years, entrepreneurs should have organized actions based on

The mutual support, sharing ability and collective competence that as Mignenan (2021) stated are the appropriate strategies in the post pandemic era. Therefore, the author also investigated the collaborating management characterized as a main factor of effectiveness taking into account a specific context.

### **Entrepreneurial education and critical elements**

The concept of entrepreneurship includes any attempt to transform the initiative into a result of economic or social value. Its key components are creative thinking, innovation, initiative development, management, and Leadership (Reppa, 2018). Entrepreneurial education derives related to the cultivation of the trainees' skills and way of thinking to turn creative ideas into business action (European Commission, 2013). Therefore, recent studies underline the significance of entrepreneurship, such as a critical competence for all learners, which promote personal growth and improvement, active citizen participation, and simultaneously aim, to the social inclusion and employability. In the context of the implementation of entrepreneurial education, the role of a Professional Advisor becomes crucial and decisive in the achievement of the whole process (Reppa, 2018). The entrepreneurship has an effective adaption if it characterized the innovation. Entrepreneurship education provides the use of knowledge and new ideas to produce and provide new products or services. For instance, international studies (European Commission, 2013) have focused on exploring and mentioning innovation, such as a new product or service through the way of production or the technology used and the management structure of an organization. Moreover, the increasing emphasis on innovative actions can be radical, regarding the immediate and decisive changes in the workplace or gradual, with the long-term implementation of innovative elements, taking into account the status quo (European Commission, 2013).

It is important to understand that entrepreneurial education is regarded the appropriate dimensions for school effectiveness. Through entrepreneurship, creative thinking provides the mental function, ability, and process of producing original and innovative ideas and products based on value or utility in the individual, society, and culture.

More specifically, this new approach characterizes by strong mental mobilization and perseverance and includes the precise shaping of an initially confused and undefined problem. Furthermore, international organizations indicate the rational and disciplined character of critical thinking, while aiming to produce original and innovative ideas through imagination and intuition rather than basic elements. In essence, the procedure is based on alternative solutions. At the same time, creative thinking also implies the exercise of critical thinking. Entrepreneurial education is directly related to

critical and creative thinking (European Commission, 2013). Therefore, against critical and creative thinking, there are different characteristics.

Critical thinking is a process performed on the individual; it focuses on further analysis, and is convergent in several cases. Additionally, it is generally characterized by one-dimensional features and logic. Therefore, the procedures of adopting critical thinking provide acceptance or rejection of situations, justifying all possible manifestations and seeking advantages and disadvantages in each case. In contrast, creative thinking, based on the synthetic ability of the individual, is deviant, occurs in parallel with other forms of thought, and is generally multidimensional. Although that, the main element, such as innovation, assumes an individual accepts situations while seeking further evidence and explanations. Consequently, entrepreneurship education promotes significant skills and knowledge in all the educational levels that could be useful for the educational organizations, as well as for the student's future.

### **New leader's role**

The leader is characterized as a depended factor of school effectiveness. Hence, there is the successful adaption of the entrepreneurial approach regarding the effective style of leadership approach. Kuratko (2007) indicated that effective entrepreneurial leaders should be characterized by continuing development and improvement in order to have a continuing adaption in every single context. A significant assumption regarding the support of government in all the programs and actions created for promoting entrepreneurial skills. According to Pashiardis and Brauckmann (2008), entrepreneurial leadership style has a positive and significant influence on 21st-century school effectiveness. Therefore, based on the exercise of management and leadership practices, the leader should seek parental involvement in the educational process and the involvement of other external factors for the successful implementation of the business leadership style. Simultaneously, cooperation is an essential element regarding the appropriate resources used to implement entrepreneurial elements. The entrepreneurial leadership style based on the LISA program was observed to be applied by most managers in the participating countries. The program's results investigated that there is a general trend toward entrepreneurial leadership style for the reason that there are limited resources to utilize. However, there is a need to create supporting educational systems and as a result stated, the leader's influence was based on building alliances.

Specifically, the similar research views extracted by Brauckmann and Pashiardis (2011) stated and highlighted the following leadership styles: Pedagogical, Structural, and Entrepreneurship, which create a

successful "cocktail mix of leadership" styles. Moreover, the above research highlights the entrepreneurial leadership style characterized as the most effective leadership approach. Entrepreneurial leadership style practices seem to be used more by managers. Thus, the entrepreneurial behavior of leaders is a common European leadership characteristic. At the same time, this research effort report that there is no perfect leadership style against the leadership style that is applied, taking into account the school context of each educational organization. In this context view, Anastasiadou (2020) stated that the factors that have a positive and statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial education are Self-Efficacy, Opportunity Detector, Sociable, Planner, Risk Taker, Leader and Creative. Simultaneously, this research strengthens the positive leader's role in the process of successful implementation of entrepreneurship, since the strongest correlation was between the conceptual constructs Leader and Entrepreneurship. Pauceanu et al. (2021) investigated that entrepreneurial characteristics are engaged with leadership characteristics. Therefore, leaders have the opportunity to become effective entrepreneurial leaders if they adopt, develop and improve characteristics such as creativity, risk-take, achievement orientation and visionary.

In this respect, the entrepreneurial leadership style sets as essential preconditions the involvement of the external environment and financial management. Moreover, it is directly related to the creative use of external networks and resources to help accomplish the school's mission. In particular, leaders develop positive interpersonal relationships and partnerships with parents and the wider school community. The favorable climate and the positive interpersonal relationships among parents and the educational organization influence the learning outcomes and the student's achievement (Pashiardis, 2000). Similar views pointed out by Dinham's (2005) research demonstrate the importance of the external environment in school effectiveness. Moreover, developing positive relationships with stakeholders in the external environment can secure the necessary resources to implement entrepreneurial activities.

A recent research study focusing on the new scientific management, "New Public Management," directly connects with the external environment and modern changes and reforms (Pashiardis and Brauckmann, 2018). The implementation of this approach takes into account the personality traits of leaders, education, and training, as well as experience. Leaders can combine leadership practices of entrepreneurial leadership styles and pedagogical leadership styles. Based on the application of business style and according to the elements of innovation, find creative solutions in the educational organization. Consequently, the researchers who previously referred pointed out the significance of entrepreneurial Leadership according to the achievements

in the educational organization. Therefore, school entrepreneurship regarding the correlation of the educational organization with the labor market promotes the implementation.

In addition, similar research findings (Brauckmann et al., 2019) indicated the significance of school leaders' entrepreneurial Leadership approaches as potential Leadership based on new public management across various educational contexts. Therefore, other research studies regarding this research context, such as Pashiardis and Brauckmann (2019) research highlighted the elements of Edupreneurial leaders regarding the critical role of change processes and the significance of alternative teaching methods.

Currently, researchers such as Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz and Pashiardis (2020) investigated that the principal adopted Entrepreneurial Leadership in schools through specific phases: (1) "Entrepreneurial School Leadership as an unwelcome act". In this phase, the leaders are hesitant to make relevant decisions by implementing entrepreneurial activities and actions in their schools. This adoption will be more difficult in educational systems where the school autonomy has limited the decision-making. (2) "Entrepreneurial School Leadership as a voluntary and occasional act". In this phase, the leaders understand the school's efficiency, and therefore there is difficulty implementing new actions, (3) "Entrepreneurial School Leadership as a necessary action because of accountability". In this phase, the leaders need to apply entrepreneurial actions to reach the school's effectiveness, and in the (4) phase as called "Entrepreneurial School Leadership as transformation into something new" the leaders adopt the entrepreneurial actions for high impact on the external environment, and the pedagogical style for reaching the highest results to the internal environment. A similar view stated by Yemini et al. (2014) provides the significance of school autonomy for adopting entrepreneurial Leadership by the principal. Bagheri and Harrison (2020) indicated that an effective cultural and economic context supports the promotion of entrepreneurial leader's skills. Consequently, developed economies develop an effective context for a successful entrepreneurship adoption (Harrison and Burnard, 2019).

In recent times, a period of changes and uncertainty in different levels of society, school leaders have the opportunity to supply specific entrepreneurial leadership skills in order to succeed the school effectiveness and improvement (Pashiardis and Brauckmann, 2022). These skills should be based on collaboration with all the external stakeholders.

More generally and regarding to the research of Pashiardis and Kafa (2021), a successful school principal should be able to create school's external relations, promote networking and therefore, developed actions in order to connect the school with the society needs. The entrepreneurship education was based on the leaders'

effective promotion and supplementation.

### **Skills developed through entrepreneurial education**

Undeniably, entrepreneurship is an emotion-oriented human activity. As entrepreneurs have an essential role and impact on the economy and society, their success or failure may be crucial for their psychology. Frese and Gielnik (2014) support that some personality dimensions such as self-efficacy and achievement are highly associated with entrepreneurship. It also argued that entrepreneurs must develop specific skills such as creative and critical thinking.

Creative thinking is the mental function, ability, and process of producing original and innovative ideas and products that have some value or utility in the individual, society, and culture. It is characterized by mental solid mobilization and perseverance and includes formulating an initially confused and undefined problem (Reppa, 2010). It does not have the rational and disciplined character of critical thinking and aims to produce original and innovative ideas with imagination and intuition rather than simple logic. It does not look for one of the correct solutions but alternative solutions.

Even though creative thinking is considered the strongest among the two for an entrepreneur, it also requires critical thinking. According to scientists who study the function of the human brain, there is a division of the brain into two hemispheres, which, however, are constantly in contact with each other; the left hemisphere refers to knowledge and logic related to critical thinking, and the right hemisphere refers to emotions, imagination, and creativity, related to creative thinking. In addition, the right hemisphere of the brain responsible for people's emotions is also named the "heart".

To become entrepreneurial, teachers need to educate their students to have a "heart" that thirsts not for knowledge and information but emotions, too (Reppa, 2010). They should cultivate students' emotional world and, more significantly, their emotional intelligence. Governments should let the teachers not forget that they have a pedagogical role in addition to the didactic role. This pedagogical role is realized by developing personal Relationships with students, where students feel such confidence with their teachers that they open up and talk about their anxieties and dreams.

Most importantly, they show their true self and not just the self they think the teacher expects. Students develop their humanity and creative thinking only when such relationships of trust occur, an essential ingredient for entrepreneurship.

### **Educational organizations and entrepreneurship**

According to the European Commission

(<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/cyprus/overview>), Cyprus' and Greece educational systems are centralized and therefore, depended from national legislation. Consequently, the aims and principles of education, the regulations of operation of schools or other educational institutions, examinations, funding and staff related issues are determined by the Ministries of Education.

Additionally, educational systems have the centralized authority in policy making in education. However, the autonomy characterized as very limited at the school's unit level. According to school's limited autonomy teachers have the autonomy to adapt the offered teaching methods and principals to manage a small budget for extra expenses of the school unit. Simultaneously, school units have the opportunity since 2017 to create an additional mentioned aim at the beginning of the school year regarding the school's context and needs. At the higher education level, the Council of the universities have the responsibility to management the financial affairs and therefore, characterized as autonomy organizations. It is important to state that Entrepreneurship Education should be a part of this centralized educational system according to the limited autonomy of school unit.

### **Cyprus educational organization and entrepreneurship**

The Cypriot and Greek educational organizations support teachers' collaboration with their students according to the entrepreneurship. Therefore, they had proven various innovative and valuable activities. Utilizing their ideas, students create a real business as entrepreneurs within a business program called the Student Enterprise program of Junior Achievement. The program's founders seek to utilize emerging students' talents in business and inspire the youth of today against social and economic challenges with new ideas and achievements. However, the program has also been developed to educate and empower students to transform their future and own their economic success, which will solve many social problems. It has been endorsed as the best practice in high schools in Cyprus by the European Commission, and up until 2020, it has involved more than 2,500 students in its educational programs.

Specifically, the Junior Achievement of Cyprus, through a yearly National Competition of Entrepreneurship, serves as a bridge between students and a great network of the business community, educators, mentors, volunteers, and alums.

It provides an entrepreneurial learning experience that seeks to nurture a new generation of innovative talents, aiding them to reach their potential and dream big. Entrepreneurial teachers stand alongside students to motivate them as business mentors and guide them to

run a real business, form their teams, raise capital, develop a business plan, develop their product or service, and run marketing and sales activities of their business. Consequently, the students take responsibility for their actions and become accountable to the shareholders of the business for its running and growth, supporting the concept of learning by doing.

Simultaneously, creativity and innovation should be developing to the students from an early age - kindergarten, utilizing the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) fields through the general reform of the Curricula.

As part of this idea, the Entrepreneurial School has created: The "school" of entrepreneurial (School Education Gateway-Erasmus+, 2014), but also several other initiatives and programs, which utilize entrepreneurial ideas and focus on the students of Cypriot educational organizations. Therefore, there is the first focus on entrepreneurship within the educational organization. Specifically, a "sense of initiative and entrepreneurship" is one of the eight critical skills for lifelong learning promoted in the European Union. Therefore, teachers must be prepared to introduce it into their classrooms.

Overall, an increased interest characterized the Entrepreneurship Education in Cyprus in the last few years. The Cyprus Ministry of Education promotes specific skills regarding entrepreneurship development. As a part of this process, a national working group supports these actions. Specifically, entrepreneurship education was adapted in Science and Economic school subjects. According to Ministry of Education, effort has created a lot of programmes and actions. The Company Programme that was organized by Junior Achievement Cyprus and referred to secondary education lever promotes the students entrepreneurial skills. The students have the opportunity to create an idea for their own business and supply it (<http://jacyprus.org/2014/12/companyprogramme/>).

Additionally, according to the Support Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship and in order to promote and support the entrepreneurship education to young people, a specific programme takes place in Cyprus. However, this programme was supported by European Regional Development Fund and Government (<http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/mcit.nsf/All/55800C9432D0D9C6C2257C15002F899F?> A similar with the purpose programme namely Cypriot Enterprise link was included in the education system. The programme referred to students and institutions. Specifically, promote entrepreneurship aims under the provision of information, workshops and projects via a youth –led online platform (<http://www.projectcel.com/>). Moreover, a relevant programme is the Innovation Camp by Junior Achievement Cyprus and this programme is characterized as an International Programme of Innovation Camp via the adoption of an annual one-day

event adapted in Secondary Education for promoting teamwork and explores ideas and entrepreneurial skills (<http://iacyprus.org/2014/11/innovationcamp/>).

Simultaneously, a several relevant programmes and actions were promoted in Greece educational system. Entrepreneurship education provides challenges and new era in all the education levels as referred in Pouliopoulos and Stimuli for Social Change team (2022). Higher Education level consisted via specific courses in universities' schools, such as economic and business administration schools. However, there are optional courses that were taught in other departments. Additionally, entrepreneurship was adapted in Primary and Secondary Education via general subjects for utilizing curriculum actions (Papagiannis, 2018). More specifically, Ministry of Education promote international trends such as "Skills Laboratories" in Primary and Secondary Level of Education.

These skills laboratories regarding four aims: quality of life, environment, social responsibility and innovation. Consequently, these skills are correlated with the 21st Century Skills such as life skills, soft skills and entrepreneurial skills. The teacher's and leader's roles are significant according to the utilization of curriculum actions. Therefore, the autonomy of the educational system is limited and the leader and teacher should be adapting their entrepreneurial actions in this specific context.

### **Entrepreneurial courses inserted in school curricula**

It is interesting to explore and examine the cases where Ministry officials have approved the reform of school curricula towards entrepreneurship. For the first time, the initiative was taken in Cyprus. From September 2020, the school curricula of the third grade of Lyceum of Cyprus have inserted a course named Practice and Application of Organization and Business Management (Charalambous, 2020). The course up to this point was theoretical, and there was no practice or application involved. As renamed to an applied field, it aims to present issues related to modern business organization and management and energize students that setting up a business that provides differentiated products and services from competitors and taking on financial risks can produce profits.

The course includes modules that generally concern companies and organizations, such as functions and efficiency of a company, business environment, modern trends, and competitive advantage proposals. In addition, a new teaching manual has been launched, full of case studies and practical illustrations to cultivate innovative talents and respond to the demands of entrepreneurial education. The manual relates to theories of outstanding academics such as Michael Porter and Igor Ansoff case studies and examples to develop an entrepreneurial competency framework.

The scope of the course, for instance, requires students to (1) explain and distinguish through business scenarios and scripts, the four competition strategies proposed by Porter and the four development strategies proposed by Ansoff, (2) prepare a SWOT analysis, based on business scenarios and scripts, categorizing the data into strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment and opportunities and threats of the external environment of a company, (3) define, explain and give examples of stereotypes, self-limiting thinking, one-dimensional thinking, assumptions and traps in thinking as barriers to decision making, and (4) distinguish through business scenarios and scripts, the obstacles, and pitfalls in decision making.

The course offers students the opportunity to learn about how organizations conduct their work by carrying out practical applications. Currently, the course is not obligatory for all students and taught by their choice, but the effort is being made to reach all school curricula. Its focus and approach to learning by teaching entrepreneurship more quickly and more efficiently. Through the reformed curricula of the course, students learn to become entrepreneurs by trying to solve authentic problems and researching other entrepreneurs' novelties.

### **Greek educational system and entrepreneurship**

Additionally, on a similar vein the Greek educational system (Ministry of Education, 2017) promotes entrepreneurship in educational organizations through specific programs and actions. Activities aimed to develop innovation and social entrepreneurship within the institution of the school cooperative. The purpose of these activities were based on familiarizing students / three secondary schools with the concept of social entrepreneurship, which is governed by the principles of school cooperation, such as mutual assistance, cooperation, social responsibility, development of independent thinking and democratic consciousness, knowledge of collective forms of economic activity. The Youth Entrepreneurial Association offers support for educational activities on this topic. Therefore, it proposes and supports relevant programs that promote the exchange of experiences and ideas between students from different schools, different regions of the country, and different social environments, while, in addition, highlighting the role and value of volunteering.

Moreover, activities aimed at the development of innovation and social entrepreneurial are promoted - Social Innovation Competition in order to familiarize secondary school students with the basic principles of economics and the concept of social enterprise (which aims to cover social needs, operating as a non-profit organization) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). The purpose of these educational activities were characterized

by the social contribution and the satisfaction of the needs of society as the main goals of innovation and social entrepreneurship, always with respect for the natural environment, and to contribute to enhancing the students in search of innovative solutions and taking community-based initiatives to realize their potential to contribute to economic progress and positive social change.

Respectively, some efforts have been made with students of the Higher, and Higher Levels in Greece. For example, scientists are testing in public, some for the first time, their skills in the scientific field. A similar program focusing on the student "Virtual Business" in Greece, within the global organization Junior Achievement Worldwide, offers the "Company Program" for 100 years in Greece. Based on this program, students create unique products and provide services as entrepreneurs; therefore, any profits that arise are donated to charity. During this program, they have also participated in Trade Fairs inside and outside Greece. A centralized educational system with similar purpose with Greece's program, adopted by the Cypriot educational system. Therefore, at all levels, various relevant programs have been developed in the Cypriot educational system.

In Secondary Education, similar to this view, programs, such as the Creativity, Innovation, and Business Ideas Program "Ideodrome" Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Program, contribute to developing entrepreneurial skills and abilities. At the same time, in the Greek educational system (Ministry of Education, 2016, 2017), activities were developed for innovation and social entrepreneurship within the institution of the school cooperative - startups.

Additionally, the student "Virtual Business" of the Youth Entrepreneurial Association / Junior Achievement Greece is a remarkable effort in Greece. Therefore, in recent years, the competent authority in Greece has promoted several activities as a specific educational policy, which aims to develop innovation and social entrepreneurship-Social Innovation Competition.

Although modern educational organizations focus on the holistic development of students, emotional skills are not fully developed. That is due to two main parameters. In essence, the degradation of arts and lessons of experiential activities, and at the same time, in fear of teachers being in uncharted waters, taking into account the time pressure. In particular, the Curricula are more knowledge-based by overloading the material. At the same time, cultivating children's emotional world is minimal or non-existent. In the centralized education systems (Cyprus and Greece), some courses are degraded at all education levels, and others are superior. The visual arts, dance, theater, movement, music, and sports are in a secondary role, setting aside benefits and positive elements that would result from their proper use. The rich "nutrients" for developing children's emotional intelligence could be utilized through them. The second

main reason for insufficient emotional skills development within the educational organization is teachers' hesitation about what they will face since many do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills, or the time required for this process. Teachers are not unjustifiably afraid to wander in uncharted waters and spend valuable teaching time cultivating emotional skills, escaping the familiar paths of their teaching. The overload of the Curriculum prevents teachers from engaging in the process of developing specific skills, although they know and understand their importance in the overall development of students.

Entrepreneurial education is a crucial factor in growth and innovation. For many years, the development and promotion of entrepreneurial education have been one of the primary policy objectives of the European institutions and the Member States. However, while some countries have been committed to promoting entrepreneurial education for over a decade, other countries are just beginning. Curricula in European countries integrate entrepreneurial education strategies related to entrepreneurial education (EU) designed by the central authorities, 2014/15 prove that the four strategic goals are the active participation of citizens, social entrepreneurship, the creation of new businesses, and employability. A recent program, "KidVenture" (School Education Gateway - Erasmus, 2020), strengthen children's business mentality through electronic games, and is aimed at children, teachers, parents, and all those interested in education in entrepreneurial electronic learning games. The project's primary goal is to create an innovative digital educational game for Entrepreneurial Education for children aged 6-10, which can be used in formal, non-formal, and non-formal education environments and will be available completely free of charge throughout Europe.

The previous assertions are further reinforced by the fact that, in Europe, the main goals for the current students regarding the knowledge and skills they will need as adults, are based on the development skills such as (1) interdisciplinary skills, (2) creative and analytical skills, (3) business skills, (4) leadership skills, (5) digital and technical skills, and (6) global awareness and citizen education (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2017).

Undoubtedly, Greece educational system has promoted relevant programmes and actions taken into account the co-variables of the centralized educational system and the limited school autonomy. Specifically, characterized programme by Junior Achievement Greece applied at all levels of Education is the Virtual Enterprise programme that referred to 15-18 year old students and based on the creation of an entrepreneurial idea. This idea should be adopted in practice via real structure and procedure. This programme is supported by Ministry of Education and external sponsors. Moreover, the succeed of Network of Entrepreneurial Schools that promote practices of entrepreneurship in Greece was based on

additional support of Ministry of Education.

Overall, the Greece educational system offer specific development actions regarding the needs of each educational level. The Business Skills Certificate offered to the Secondary Education and has an International recognition. This Certificate regarding the appropriate entrepreneurial skills (<http://senja.gr/>). A relevant certificate promoted via the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass that belongs in a Global Company Programme – Junior Achievement Greece and therefore, in National Focus Group (<http://senja.gr/>). It is important to acknowledge that collaboration and actions are based on a national level. For the same purpose, the Social Enterprise 360 was created. It targeted students and teachers in order to promote the learning and development of entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, it was based on collaboration within 8 European Countries and supported by the Erasmus+ programme (<http://senja.gr/>). A similar educational action regarding the Virtual Enterprise programme that represent the idea of “learning by doing”. The principle role is significant to succeed this action and in order to support students for creating their own company-business (<http://sen-programs.senja.gr/>).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is characterized by a qualitative research approach according to the existing literature review of entrepreneurship and of the adoption of entrepreneurial practices and actions in Cyprus and Greek educational systems.

Consequently, the study adopted a specific protocol. Therefore, the study's structure is based on the following procedure: (1) Search for relevant literature (entrepreneurship education) in scientific data bases, (2) Evaluate the international scientific research sources (validity and reliability), (3) Identify the themes (entrepreneurship key elements, practices and actions, leader's role) (4) Outline the structure and (5) Writing the research study. More generally, the current study investigates the importance of entrepreneurship education in centralized educational systems.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The educational systems that the business-entrepreneurial school is trying to implement should be based on their actions for understanding students' specificities, motivations, ambitions, and risks, as well as provide solutions to any obstacles that are likely to erode their skills. Therefore, entrepreneurial education should include and involve practices and actions for students from the lowest levels of education in order to observe, understand, and apply the concepts that they taught in future situations (Raponso et al., 2011). The presentation of learning outcomes related to entrepreneurial education is still incomplete and is not yet associated with a strategic priority. However, several programs were implemented, and as a result, entrepreneurial education is constantly gaining ground in primary education, although it is still more common in upper secondary education. However, it should be necessary to promote

the Entrepreneurial education from the lower educational levels in order to have student's interactions with specific practices and common knowledge.

Teachers are convinced that entrepreneurial education has several benefits, especially in primary education. They believe that if the Curriculum is restructured and essential elements of promotion and acquisition of entrepreneurship introduced, the results will be maximum. Therefore, elements should be incorporated, which promote the cultivation of the entrepreneurial spirit and the diffusion of business culture, while at the same time, teachers should participate in the relevant training by providing specific material for use (Dinaki, 2016).

The educational system has not fully been implemented regarding the full integration of entrepreneurial education. Additionally, consultants should focus on improving teaching. They inspire learners and are characterized by openness and confidence, flexibility and responsibility - but sometimes they go astray. They know how to listen, use and promote ideas, work with the student in mind and take action. Consequently, they are team players and have a good network.

Entrepreneurial education consultants seek to bridge the gap between education and economics and ensure the involvement of external experts in their teaching, focusing on real-life experiences. Simultaneously, they always refer to the economic dimension; in their courses - regardless of the scientific field - business issues play an essential role. Plato says about creative education:

"Do not educate children through coercion. Instead, guide them through good behaviors and avoid displaying some profane ones. Only in this way will you discover with certainty the degree and the areas of genius, in each child separately".

Consequently, innovation should be a key feature of pedagogy. Based on these, specific strategies have been developed, which are more widespread and fully applicable in Northern Europe and the Western Balkans, due to the development of education policies centrally by the EU (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2016). In essence, the European Commission's indicated that all young people, regardless of age, should have at least some practical business experience before completing compulsory education. Therefore, all strategies are part of a specific framework to achieve this position.

In addition, the training of teachers and counselors stems centrally are from various programs and reports - EU education policies. Specific European education policies argue that particular emphasis should be placed on initial teacher education. In particular, there will be a need for Entrepreneurial Teacher Training Institutions, specific training programs for teacher educators in the field of entrepreneurial education, development of skills and abilities in focus on teaching methods and



pedagogical methods based on entrepreneurship or innovation, networking of schools and teachers with the ultimate goal of exchange of good practices. Teachers must be aware of the needs of the labor market to relate them to their practices during the implementation of the entrepreneurial process in education.

At the same time, in addition to the initial training of teachers involved in entrepreneurial processes within the educational organization, there must be continuous professional development in this area. Lifelong learning should occur through the Schools of Entrepreneurial education, but also according to the programs for the training of active teachers in entrepreneurial education and innovative teaching methods and concepts related to entrepreneurial education. Although strategies for the promotion of continuing professional development service providers and the existence of ongoing, initiatives to support active teachers play an essential role. In conclusion, integrating entrepreneurship within the educational organization contributes to forming the global economy and modern societies.

This educational policy is characterized as a challenge for all education systems, which, if implemented by the right teachers and through specific strategies, can bring positive results at all levels.

## Recommendations

The research study offers insight into entrepreneurship programs and actions in Cyprus and Greece educational systems and simultaneously, it highlights the importance of the leaders' role. The continuing changes of the 21st Century promote the need for the adoption of Entrepreneurship Education in all school organizations to reach the quality of the educational system. This study elaborates suggestions for the teachers, leaders and by extension for the educational systems in order to include Entrepreneurship education in daily use. Furthermore, future research should examine specific practices and actions in different educational systems (centralized or decentralized) and contexts in order to create a global guide for teachers and leaders. It should be mentioned that the educational systems via this study has a guide to create or improve educational policies concerning entrepreneurial practices for teachers'/leaders' preparation and professional development.

## CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interests.

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