Entrepreneurial Orientation of School Principals and Social Perceptions of Principalship in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina

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The notion of an ‘entrepreneurial university’ has become an established fact in the academic literature, denoting the ‘third mission’ of higher education, as related to the university involvement into applied research and technology transfer, creation of new enterprises and regional socio-economic involvement (Etzkowitz, 2013). At the other hand, the entrepreneurial involvement of educational institutions at the elementary and the secondary educational levels has not been systematically analysed in the existing body of literature.

A literature search has indicated several attempts to address the entrepreneurial orientation of schools and their principals, as well as to analyse its potential social impact in Europe. The most obvious avenue of academic inquiry is related to the school response to the introduction of market logic in education (van Zanten, 2009). Another dimension of the principals’ entrepreneurial orientation is related to their borrowing of the practices and tools, originated in the private (enterprise) sector, as potential solutions to problems in education (Rigby, 2014). Provided that the social orientation, i.e. attributes of individuals and groups, oriented toward entrepreneurship, are not just about starting new enterprises, but should be rather, interpreted in terms of flexibility, innovation, autonomy and accepting responsibility for one’s own actions (Gibb, 1987), there seems to be an ample space for a more inclusive definition of entrepreneurially oriented education.

Previous empirical research has addressed the assessment of different educational practices and the resulting pupils’ entrepreneurial attributes in Croatian (Baranović, Štibrić & Domović, 2007; Vican & Luketić, 2013) and Swedish schools (Leffler, 2009). However, the institutional orientation toward entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial solutions of educational problems has been rarely empirically evaluated, although the decentralization and autonomy of educational institutions have been emphasized in educational policies, since the 1980s (Weiler, 1989).

This study provides an empirical analysis the school principals’ personal attributes and explores their relationships with the perceived social position of principals and their profession. In this context, it continues an effort by Israeli educational researchers (Yemini, Addi-Raccah & Katarivas, 2015), who have used the case study approach to study the entrepreneurially oriented school principals, although by using the survey method to collect and analyse the quantitative data. The primary data collection will be conducted in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which creates an opportunity for the comparative analysis of the potential impact of EU membership to the entrepreneurial orientation of school principals and its social interpretation.

Keywords: school principals, entrepreneurial orientation, social perceptions, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
References