

Views of University Students on Entrepreneurship: An Analysis on Private and State Universities in Turkey

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Abstract

Enhancement of the entrepreneurship activities of the young population is one of the most stressed approaches in Turkey in recent years. Therefore, during their career planning period, it is important to sway university students towards entrepreneurship. In this research, the opinions on entrepreneurship of a total of 200 senior university students at management departments of state and private universities have been measured with statistical methods in a comparative approach. According to the findings of the research it is revealed that the opinions of students from state and private universities on entrepreneurship and their evaluations in Turkey are not necessarily different.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, private university, state university

Introduction

The increasing evaluations and studies on entrepreneurship both in the national and international arena after 1980, still could not clear what entrepreneurship is, or whom to be called an entrepreneur. Although today there is still no unified definition of entrepreneurship yet, all definitions consider "risk taking" and "creation of innovation" as the common characteristics. Hisrich and Peters [1] define entrepreneurship as a process of value creation, state that the entrepreneur should devote sufficient labor and time as well as take material, physical and social risks in this process, and thus they could attain monetary awards, personal satisfaction and independence. Casson [2] on the other hand describe entrepreneurship as the totality of the processes of risk-taking, opportunity-seeking, realization, and innovation. Bridge et al. [3] also state that entrepreneurship in essence contains starting a business, owning a business as well as development and enlargement of the business.

In the last decade, a dramatic rise has been observed in the researches made on the subject of entrepreneurship as well as the entrepreneurship trainings delivered in the universities both in the developed and developing countries [e.g. 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12]. The most important reason for this level of increase in the interest towards entrepreneurship is the consideration by the countries regarding entrepreneurship, which they see as an important element of economic progress and development. As a result, countries began to seek for alternative policies for the dissemination of entrepreneurship activities at the countrywide scale [e.g.13]. The most widespread among these policies is the commencement of entrepreneurship programs and/ or courses in higher education institutions [e.g.14]. According to Gibb [15] another reason behind the increase in the entrepreneurship programs

and courses is stated as while the form and content of the classical business administration programs focus only on the improvement of the analytical skills of the student, the entrepreneurship trainings necessitate the acquisition of skills such as creativity, analysis, decision-making and evaluation of information. Hence, according to a number of researchers in the field [e.g.16] there is a coincidental relationship between the entrepreneurship trends and entrepreneurship trainings. However, researches implemented in United States, Norway and Sweden [e.g.17,18,19] demonstrate that the students that received entrepreneurship trainings set up their own businesses more frequently compared to the students educated in classical management. In this regard, it can be stated that the educators and universities have important duties and responsibilities as of a missionary for the adoption and dissemination of entrepreneurship culture.

Although it is a fact that the universities have a significant mission in the formation of an entrepreneurial society, it should not be underestimated that some social phenomena and personal preferences manipulate the entrepreneurship trends as well. For instance, in societies that lack “*entrepreneurship culture*”, which forms the tacit, unwritten principles of entrepreneurship, it is inevitable the dissemination of corrupted cultural behaviors such as guile and deceitful acts [e.g.20].

Similar to other countries, one of the approaches focused on by the policymakers in Turkey mostly in the recent years is to increase the entrepreneurship activities of the young population. For the young population in Turkey, making up some 40% of the total population, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a job in the public or private sector, along with the escalating levels of unemployment. For this reason, during their career planning period, it is important to sway university students towards entrepreneurship, that is, to launching their own businesses, as well as to disseminate entrepreneurship culture in universities by offering entrepreneurship as an alternative option. In this effort, the business administration departments of the faculties of economic and administrative sciences at universities come to bear an important mission. For the effective realization of this mission, it is important to analyze and evaluate the opinions of university students on entrepreneurship and their viewpoints on the notion of entrepreneurship, as well as their post-university career plans.

It is possible to mention a number of researches conducted in Turkey regarding the general approaches such as entrepreneurship in Turkey, success factors in entrepreneurship and characteristics of entrepreneurship [e.g. 21,22,23,20,24] However, the number of researches measuring the viewpoints of the university students towards entrepreneurship is rather limited. These researches are mostly focused on the evaluation of viewpoints of the university students towards entrepreneurship within the scope of the curricula of the courses given at the business management departments [e.g.25]. With this research, it is determined the entrepreneurship trends of the students in private and state universities and found out how the student viewpoints on entrepreneurship at these universities differed according to the determined factors.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to determine the entrepreneurship trends of the senior year students of Business Administration departments at the Faculties of Economic and Administrative Sciences in private and state universities as well as through comparison of these trends, to put forth the ways in which these differentiated at the state - private university distinction.

For a developing country like Turkey, which has a 40% of young population, it is of great importance the dissemination of entrepreneurship as a fundamental element of economic development and progress, as well as the trainings to be provided in this regard, particularly within the scope of universities. For the realization of this, the universities should prepare their educational curricula to raise entrepreneur candidates through the analysis and evaluation of the opinions of university students on entrepreneurship and their viewpoints on the notion of entrepreneurship, as well as their post-university career plans.

Research Design and Data Collection

The main material of the research consists of the primary data obtained as a result of 200 questionnaires applied to the senior year students of Business Administration departments at the Faculties of Economic and Administrative Sciences in private and state universities. Questionnaires were used as data collection tools and it is composed of 3 sections and a total of 27 questions. In addition to the primary data in the research, several researches, publications, and reports about the subject matter have been examined and used in the data analysis and interpretation of findings. In order to obtain the primary data, face-to-face survey method has been used which is preferred in practical researches. Simple random sampling technique has been used for the determination of the students, whereas a total of 200 queries have been decided to be taken into evaluation after the control of the queries applied to a total of 215 students.

Findings

Within the scope of the research, the general characteristics of the students at private universities and state universities are stated as follows.

- The total of 200 students included within the scope of the research, 44,5% is composed of female and 55,5% male students.
- Distribution of students per age is stated as; 87% are 23 years old and below, and 13% is 24 and above.
- The distributions in terms of the working status of student parents are as follows: 12,5% of mothers is employed in public sector, 8,0% in private sector. 5,0% of the mothers is self-employed and 29,5% of mothers is retired. The ratio of students that specified the working status of their mothers to fall under the other category is 45%. 17% of student fathers is employed in public sector and 20,5% is employed in private sector. 29,5% of the fathers is self-employed, and 23,5% of them is retired. The rate of the occupation of the father specified in the category of other is 9,5%.
- The proportional distribution of the number of entrepreneurs in the student families, who established and currently run their own businesses is stated as follows; 12,5% of the students have more than 5 people , 49,5% have between 1–4 persons, whereas the ratio of students who do not have any entrepreneur in their families is 38,0%.
- The distribution of number of entrepreneurs outside the families but within the close circle of the students, who established and still run their own businesses is as follows; more than 15% of the students have 5 or more such people; 53,5% have between 1–4 persons, whereas the ratio of students who do not have any entrepreneur in their close circle is 32,5%.

In the scope of the research, answers given by the queried students of state and private universities to the question of "Where do you want to work after graduation?" is given comparatively in Table I. and it is examined in terms of professional ideals. Students

attending at the private university prefer to work in private sector in the first rank (48,0%) and to set up their own business in the second rank (28,0%). On the other hand, 44,0% of the students attending at the state university, again prefer to work in private sector in the first rank while 33,0% prefer to work in public institutions in the second rank. The ratio of public institutions among the occupational preferences of students attending at the private university is only 10,0%. These results demonstrate that entrepreneurship tendencies of the students at private university is relatively more dominant than those of the students at state university, however, the students at both universities prefer being employed in the private sector at the first place to setting up their own businesses.

Table I. Professional preferences of students after graduation

Universities	Professional Preferences					Total
	Public Institutions	Private Sector	Family Business	Academic	Own Business	
Private University	10 10,0%	48 48,0%	9 9,0%	5 5,0%	28 28,0%	100 100,0%
State University	33 33,0%	44 44,0%	- -	4 4,0%	19 19,0%	100 100,0%
Total	43	92	9	9	47	200

While knowledge, experience and business idea appear as sufficient conditions at the level of setting up their own businesses for entrepreneurs, capital becomes the required condition depending on the economic instability in developing countries like Turkey. Therefore, it can be stated that students, whose families have low income, prefer to have a regular job like working in the public institutions in order to ensure themselves in terms of security and continuous income. In addition, provisioning of social securities such as health, retirement, which are provided in systematic and reliable structure to the employees in public institutions, can be considered as a factor in these preferences. At this point, the family incomes of the students queried in the scope of the research are given comparatively as per the type of university they attend in Table II.

Table II. Average monthly income of student's families

Universities	Average Monthly Income					Total
	Lower than 400 \$	400-800 \$	801-2,500 \$	2,501-4,000\$	More than 4,000\$	
Private University	- -	7 7,0%	26 26,0%	32 32,0%	35 35,0%	100 100,0%
State University	1 1,0%	16 16,0%	60 60,0%	14 14,0%	9 9,0%	100 100,0%
Total	1 0,5%	23 11,5%	86 43,0%	46 23,0%	44 22,0%	200 100,0%

As seen in Table II, the families of 35% of the students attending at the private university have an average monthly income above 4,000 \$; while 32,0% of those have an average monthly income between 2,500-4,000\$. Only 9,0% of the students attending at the state university have families with an average monthly income of 4,000\$ or above. The families of a major part of these students (60%) have an average monthly income ranging between 801 and 2,500\$. As a consequence, the average monthly incomes of the student families at the private university are higher when compared to the families of the students at the state university. This demonstrates that the students at the private university are in a more advantageous position in terms of the start up capital required for entrepreneurship when

compared to the students at the state university, as well as that this advantage appears as an important factor in determining the entrepreneurship tendencies of the students.

Having put forth the post-graduation occupational preferences of the students at private and state universities, it is important to determine the factors affecting the preferences of the students who plan to set up their own businesses (46,5%) and those that do not have such intention (53,5%), in order to explain within the scope of which factors the entrepreneurship tendencies differentiate. These factors are presented in Table III and Table IV in terms of their levels of priority (1 being the most important factor)

Table III. Dispersion of factors does affect the preferences of the students who don't want to set up their own business

Levels of Priority	The obligation to provide subsistence for the family	Can not dare to by myself	Not to be sure about business idea	Lack of marketing, management, etc. skills	To be at fault for support	Being afraid to be unsuccessful	Being afraid to take financial risks	Lack of Capital
1	7	7	20	2	5	5	23	38
2	7	10	11	10	12	10	33	14
3	10	16	15	5	15	12	12	22
4	8	17	18	4	25	17	10	7
5	13	15	18	12	22	9	9	10
6	10	20	19	15	14	16	9	4
7	10	13	6	37	12	15	8	6
8	42	9	-	22	2	23	3	6
Total	107	107	107	107	107	107	107	107

Table IV. Dispersion of factors does affect the preferences of the students who want to set up their own business

Levels of Priority	Earning lots of money	Being independent	To escape from family pressure	To enjoy taking risk	Making my own decisions	To test myself	Doing something for my family	To be taken seriously
1	16	36	-	6	29	2	2	1
2	18	25	1	15	24	1	5	5
3	19	18	1	11	23	10	5	6
4	19	5	6	17	8	13	16	10
5	9	5	7	12	1	30	16	12
6	8	2	5	16	5	18	21	18
7	2	1	13	12	3	11	24	27
8	2	1	60	4	-	8	4	14
Total	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93

When Table III is analyzed, the first rank for the students for not preferring to set up their own businesses is stated as the "**Lack of capital**" with a ratio of 35,5%, while the second rank is expressed as "**Being afraid to take financial risks**" with a ratio of 30,8%. "**The obligation to provide subsistence for the family**" is evaluated as the least significant factor in terms of not preferring to set up own businesses (39,3%). The students determined the first priority for their preference to set up their own businesses as the options of "**being independent**" with a ratio of 38,7%, and "**to take own decisions**" with 31,2% (Table IV).

The high ranks of both options in terms of ratios can be directly related with the entrepreneurship tendencies of the students that prefer to set up their own businesses. Since the most important characteristics of entrepreneurship are being independent and to be able to take own decisions.

Another indicator of a country's level of development in terms of social realm is the increase in the number of woman entrepreneurs. Provided that entrepreneurship is encouraged through solving the problems related to woman entrepreneurs, and even those of woman managers, it can be said that economic progress will come in turn, in parallel with this social progress.

It has been considered in the presumptions of the research that there might be occur an important difference between sex and the professional preference following the graduation. Thus, as seen in Table V, while 16,9% of the female students plan to set up their own businesses, this ratio increases up to 28,8% in male students. Furthermore, it is also observed that the tendency of the female students to become academicians (6,7%) is higher than that of the male students (2,7%). Nevertheless, both female (47,0%) and male (45,0%) students determined their first priority in terms of their professional preferences as to work in the private sector.

Table V. Professional Preferences of Students According to Their Sex

Sex	Professional Preferences					Total
	Public Institutions	Private Sector	Family Business	Academic	Own Business	
Female Students	18	47	3	6	15	89
	20,2%	52,8%	3,4%	6,7%	16,9%	100,0%
Male Students	25	45	6	3	32	111
	22,5%	40,5%	5,4%	2,7%	28,8%	100,0%
Total	43	92	9	9	47	200
	21,5%	46,0%	4,5%	4,5%	23,5%	100,0%

An interesting situation appears when the education levels of fathers and professional preferences of students are compared. 30% of the students, whose fathers are primary school graduates, and 28,6% of the students, whose fathers are secondary school graduates, prefer to establish their own businesses. The most important factor in this situation is that 35,0% of the fathers graduated from primary school, and 57,1% of the fathers graduated from secondary school are entrepreneurs themselves having their own businesses. The percentage of the fathers, who graduated from university and set up their own businesses is 24,2%, whereas there is none among the fathers with a doctorate degree, who established his own business. This demonstrates that the education profile of the entrepreneurs in Turkey usually concentrates at the level of primary and secondary education.

The entrepreneurship tendencies of the students attending at private and state universities, as well as their general opinions regarding entrepreneurship are presented in a comparative manner in Table VI, according to the answers provided to a total of 14 statements prepared in Likert type.

According to the findings obtained, it is discerned that the students at the private university, who are observed to have a higher tendency for setting up own businesses (28,0%), and the students attending at the state university (19%) have rather close tendencies towards entrepreneurship as well as similar viewpoints on entrepreneurship. While 53,0% of

the students attending at the private university think that being an entrepreneur provides higher living standards for the person, this ratio is 61,0% among the students at the state university. On the other hand, 77.0% of the students at the private university and 79,0% of the students at the state university expressed their disagreement to the statement that a person setting up own business is successful. Whether entrepreneurship is a congenial characteristic inherited through birth or not is a topic that has been discussed for years. However, the end point achieved in this discussion is that people may have some sorts of skills but it is necessary to uncover these skills. In this context, 65% of the students at the private university and 60% of students at the state university expressed that they do not agree with the statement of *"entrepreneurship is a congenial characteristics inherited through birth and cannot be learned later"*. Another statement on which both students of the universities shared a common opinion is the option which reads *"The most important factor to set up own business is money"*. 73.0% of the students at the private university at and 61,0% of the students at the state university replied that they agreed to the given statement.

At the last part of the 14 options prepared according to the Likert type, the students were asked to evaluate 4 statements, in order to determine their views on the subjects of entrepreneurship and being an entrepreneur in Turkey. The students at the private university, with a ratio of 68.0%, and the students at the state university with that of 62.0% expressed that they do not agree with statement of *"I believe that to become an entrepreneur in Turkey is so easy"* The opinions of the students in this regard can be seen as a reflection of the entrepreneurship activities and current situation of the small enterprises in Turkey. Hence, according to the report, "Entrepreneurship in Turkey", published by TUSIAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) (2002), it is stated that the number of entrepreneurs is low in Turkey as well as the number of those who established firms do not exceed 5 persons in 100 adults.

Displaying a conscious approach towards the important role of entrepreneurship in contributing to the national economy, the students answered that they agreed with the statement of *"I believe that the increase in the number of entrepreneurs in Turkey will contribute the national economy"*, with a ratio of 82.0% and 83.0% respectively. The students at both types of universities found the entrepreneurship training provided in Turkey is insufficient (students at the private universities with a ratio of 67,0% and those at state universities with 75,0%).

Table VI. Opinions of students about entrepreneurship

OPINIONS OF STUDENTS ABOUT ENTREPRENEURSHIP	Universities	Definitely do not agree		Do not agree		No idea		Agree		Absolutely agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
		Being an entrepreneur provides higher living standards for the person	Private Uni.	3	3,0%	22	22,0%	22	22,0%	42	42,0%
	State Uni.	1	1,0%	19	19,0%	19	19,0%	46	46,0%	15	15,0%
A person setting up own business is successful	Private Uni.	35	35,0%	42	42,0%	16	16,0%	5	5,0%	2	2,0%
	State Uni.	32	32,0%	47	47,0%	15	15,0%	5	5,0%	1	1,0%
I believe that a person who set up own business will face with a lots of difficulties and risk.	Private Uni.	4	4,0%	4	4,0%	8	8,0%	35	35,0%	49	49,0%
	State Uni.	1	1,0%	2	2,0%	12	12,0%	41	41,0%	44	44,0%
Entrepreneur is a person who has fail in business before being successful.	Private Uni.	6	6,0%	42	42,0%	27	27,0%	20	20,0%	5	5,0%
	State Uni.	5	5,0%	33	33,0%	30	30,0%	21	21,0%	11	11,0%

Entrepreneurship is a congenial characteristics inherited through birth and cannot be learned later	Private Uni.	25	25,0%	40	40,0%	15	15,0%	17	17,0%	3	3,0%
	State Uni.	16	16,0%	44	44,0%	16	16,0%	21	21,0%	3	3,0%
The most important factor to set up own business is money	Private Uni.	-	-	16	16,0%	11	11,0%	45	45,0%	28	28,0%
	State Uni.	4	4,0%	21	21,0%	14	14,0%	35	35,0%	26	26,0%
I am very keen to be an entrepreneur.	Private Uni.	4	4,0%	8	8,0%	15	15,0%	46	46,0%	27	27,0%
	State Uni.	8	8,0%	8	8,0%	26	26,0%	35	35,0%	23	23,0%
I prefer to set up my own business instead of working for other institutions.	Private Uni.	3	3,0%	13	13,0%	6	6,0%	23	23,0%	55	55,0%
	State Uni.	5	5,0%	15	15,0%	15	15,0%	28	28,0%	37	37,0%
It is really difficult for me to become a successful entrepreneur	Private Uni.	34	34,0%	33	33,0%	23	23,0%	8	8,0%	2	2,0%
	State Uni.	20	20,0%	45	45,0%	24	24,0%	7	7,0%	4	4,0%
I can be an entrepreneur just about after retirement.	Private Uni.	42	42,0%	33	33,0%	14	14,0%	7	7,0%	4	4,0%
	State Uni.	40	40,0%	37	37,0%	20	20,0%	1	1,0%	2	2,0%
I believe that to become an entrepreneur in Turkey is so easy	Private Uni.	22	22,0%	46	46,0%	20	20,0%	11	11,0%	1	1,0%
	State Uni.	23	23,0%	39	39,0%	16	16,0%	18	18,0%	4	4,0%
I believe that become an entrepreneur in Turkey just set on a chance.	Private Uni.	11	11,0%	55	55,0%	20	20,0%	10	10,0%	4	4,0%
	State Uni.	12	12,0%	48	48,0%	24	24,0%	12	12,0%	4	4,0%
I believe that the increase in the number of entrepreneurs in Turkey will contribute the national economy	Private Uni.	2	2,0%	4	4,0%	12	12,0%	52	52,0%	30	30,0%
	State Uni.	1	1,0%	5	5,0%	11	11,0%	55	55,0%	28	28,0%
I don't believe that entrepreneurship training provided in Turkey is sufficient	Private Uni.	5	5,0%	12	12,0%	16	16,0%	42	42,0%	25	25,0%
	State Uni.	3	3,0%	8	8,0%	14	14,0%	41	41,0%	34	34,0%

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research it is determined that the opinions of students from state and private universities on entrepreneurship and their evaluations regarding entrepreneurship in Turkey are not necessarily different, however, occupational trends for post-university graduation demonstrate differentiations. In this context, the most important factors emerge as the requirement for capital to set up own business, the working status of the father and the average monthly income of the family. Hence, the element of capital which emerges as the required condition for entrepreneurship activities comes forth as an important obstacle to set up their own businesses for the students at state universities, whose income level is low below that of the students at private universities. Students who plan to set up their own businesses and do not have capital constraints, on the other hand, come forth with traits of independence and self-decision making, which can be considered as a reflection of entrepreneurship. There is no doubt that the concept of entrepreneurship and its implementations are among the reflections of the dramatic change brought about by the information society and the globalization age that we live through. Entrepreneurship has an important function in a developing country like Turkey in the transfer of economic resources from low level productivity areas to high level productivity areas. Therefore, entrepreneurship activities are to be supported in Turkey and these activities are required to be disseminated among the young population, who make up 40% of the total population. For the dissemination of entrepreneurship activities among the youth in Turkey, first of all it is

required to set up a clear and straightforward vision in this regard, as well as the immediate elimination of bureaucratic obstacles regarding the establishment, operation and termination of firms; reorganization of the tax system; creation of a cultural environment to support entrepreneurship; universities being the foremost, the development of entrepreneurship programs and courses in all educational institutions, and political sustainability and stability regarding all these areas.

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