

The Relationship between the University Atmosphere and the Spirit of Entrepreneurship among Students of Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University of Iran

Azarchehr Sehat

Department of Educational Management, Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that attempts to educate students who enjoy having the flair for creativity and entrepreneurial spirit are favored by all managers and trustees of any education system. Many researches have been conducted on the factors influencing the formation of entrepreneurship and the mechanism to teach it. However, education is not the only influencing factor. Educational environment and their prevailing atmosphere are among those factors that have a major effect on the process. One of the key concepts of Educational centers environments is their being open or closed. University students' perception of the university environment has impacts on the result of the efforts by teachers, staff, and community. This study aimed to identify the relationship between the atmosphere and the spirit of entrepreneurship. The study is an applied survey in nature. To investigate the relationship, two questionnaires were used to measure the atmosphere and entrepreneurial spirit. After completing the questionnaires and discarding the incomplete questionnaires, the data were inserted into the SPSS software and the T-student test was used to compare and contrast the data and to answer the question whether the entrepreneurial spirit in the students who considered the university atmosphere as closed is different from those who considered it as open. The results showed that students who evaluated the university atmosphere as open had higher entrepreneurial spirits than those who perceived it as closed.

KEYWORDS: Organizational atmosphere, Entrepreneurial spirits, Public environment, Education system.

INTRODUCTION

Researches on the subjects highlight the fact that the educational processes and programs can turn a potential entrepreneur to an active entrepreneur by changing the outlook and attitude and equipping them with the knowledge and special skills. This means that the entrepreneurial spirit of people, which is inherent and instinctive, can also be considered as an acquired issue.

Universities as the main elements of the education system and as a fundamental part of the society should pay a special attention on entrepreneurship. Graduates from the universities should be dynamic and creative students with the knowledge that can collect the information from various sources and with their creative efforts to start business and republish sources. Different views of curriculum and performance evaluation systems all emphasize the fact that for ensuring the effectiveness of system operations, system inputs may not just be sufficient and other factors need to be considered carefully [2]. For example, in order to confirm the efficiency of an educational system, it does not suffice to just prepare the materials needed for studying, rather, emphasis on other factors including hidden curriculum, educational center culture, managers' performance, beneficiaries' satisfaction and lots of others should be included. There is no doubt that these issues can affect on the students' concepts [3]. So this study aimed at finding the relationship between the university atmosphere and the spirit of entrepreneurship among students and the researcher tried to find if there is any relationship between the university atmosphere and the students' spirit of entrepreneurship in this regard, the effect of its being open or closed is also studied. In an open atmosphere, the participation and performance of management and administrative staff are dramatically different from a close atmosphere. In an open atmosphere, administrators and educational managers always try to establish a social, secure, and creative atmosphere to fulfill responsibilities from the staff members and guarantee the active participation of the students. This study examines the issue of whether maintaining such a strategy would have a positive impact on the entrepreneurial spirit among students [3,4,5,6,7].

Entrepreneurship: Definitions and Concepts

Hitherto, many different definitions of entrepreneurship have been presented. One of the definitions of entrepreneurship is that it is a process during which an entrepreneur with new and creative ideas and identifying new opportunities and mobilizing resources create businesses, new companies, and growing enterprises which is combined with the risks but often result in introducing a product or providing a service to the community [4]. Japan was the first country to begin promoting the entrepreneurial culture at the high school level. The first

*Corresponding Author: Azarchehr Sehat, Department of Educational Management, Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran. E.mail: a_sehat85@yahoo.com

Institute began working in Tokyo in 1956. In 1958, the Japanese Ministry of Education proposed a plan to implement, enforce, and promote a culture of entrepreneurship named as "economic sacrificing groups". Based on such a plan, students from high school level were taught on working on the entrepreneurship while being in school and looking for a profit and how to free their country of the industrial reliance on the other countries. Gradually, the entrepreneurial issue was drawn in universities. There are now more than 250 entrepreneurial institutions in Japan [5]. Despite the fact that the entrepreneurship issue came into existence in the 1970s and in some developing countries it attract attention in the 1980s, it was not until the third development plan that we paid attention to entrepreneurship. Even in academic environment, except for very rare cases, nothing has been done on the issue. The unemployment and its worse conditions in the 1980s led to preparing the third development plan addressing the entrepreneurship. In the last development plan, entrepreneurship has been proposed in the Ministries of Science, Research and Technology, Health and Medical Education, Agriculture, Industries and Mines and Metals and Jihad Daneshgahi Institute due to their related activities [8,9,10,11,12].

Universities atmosphere: Definitions and Concepts

When speaking about the atmosphere, people would consider it as the atmosphere surrounding the earth impacting their lives. In daily conversation in organizations, words such as tense atmosphere, ill-intentioned atmosphere and chaotic atmosphere are repeatedly used. However, their scientific concept is used less and the research methods are less revealing. The atmosphere is literally defined as "something which surrounds other thing" but the scientific definition brought about different definitions. Hovi and Miskel defined the educational atmosphere as "the organizational atmosphere is a broad term referred to the teachers' perception of the environment that they are working and are influenced by the formal or informal organizations, individual personality and leadership. Goodarzi on the definition of organizational climate states that: 'the organizational climate is a quite viable characteristic of an organization that will differentiate an organization from other organizations by considering the fact that :

- 1) It implies a collective perception about the organization in terms of dimensions such as independence, autonomy, trust, integrity, support, identity, recognition and equality
- 2) It is generated by interactions between members
- 3) It is used as the basis for changing a position
- 4) It reflects the values, norms, attitudes and perceptions of organizational culture
- 5) It serves as an effective source for shaping the behavior [12].

3-2 - School organizational atmosphere theory

Various theories have been presented on organizational atmosphere. The most relevant theory to educational environments was provided by Halpin and Craft. Halpin and Craft's studies of the 1962 on schools are the best-known conceptualization and measurement of organizational climate (atmosphere). They introduced the organizational climate theory for teachers. Based on their definition in which the climate is experienced by people in the organization, they assume that these people's perceptions are a valid source of data. They found that teachers had different feeling for their schools and the concept of spirit cannot be a good indicator for this feeling. Halpin and Craft found that the social climate of the school was a combination of the two major factors: the principal's leadership and teachers' interactions. The interactions of a group of teachers in a school are similar to the geographic environment of an area and the principal's leadership style was considered as the atmosphere. The combination of the principal's leadership and the teacher's behavior creates the organizational climate. Halpin and Craft introduced six primary schools atmosphere such as closed atmosphere, open atmosphere, independent atmosphere, paternal atmosphere, familiar atmosphere and controlled atmosphere.

4 – Hypotheses:

This study enjoys having a main hypothesis and five sub-hypotheses. By considering the research objectives, the main hypothesis of the research is as follows:

- there is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' entrepreneurship spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.

Regarding the main hypothesis of the research, the sub-hypotheses are:

- 1) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' seeking success spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.
- 2) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' entrepreneurship spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.
- 3) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' seeking independence spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.

- 4) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' taking risk spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.
- 5) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' creativity spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.
- 6) There is a significant relationship between an individual's perception of the university atmosphere and students' internal control spirit at Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Research type

Researches can be categorized into different classification based on their purpose and also methodology. Regarding their purposes, they are divided into theoretical and applied research, therefore, our research is a kind of applied research based on the purpose and it is a descriptive study. In this study, the results can be generalized using a group of people to give their feedback on a questionnaire for a specific topic [13].

2. Data gathering tools

As with most survey research, a questionnaire was used for data gathering in this study. The study used closed –type questionnaires. And the term "atmosphere of the school" is meant to be the students' perception of the general environment of the university. This perceived image is the result of the formal and informal organization, management type and staffs' personality. A researcher-made questionnaire with 24 questions was used to ask about the students' perception on the closed and open atmosphere of the universities based on Halpin and Craft standard questionnaire. As stated, it is a closed-type questionnaire and in order to categorized people into close or open atmosphere perception, the average scale from the Likert 5-scale was removed, in other words, when asking students to express their ideas on the atmosphere of the universities as being closed or open, they were asked to chose from the 4 options of "very high", "high", "very low" and "low" which made it easy to classify people. In order to identify students seeking entrepreneurial spirit, 5 aspects of success seeking, independence, risk taking, innovation and internal control were used [10] which were assessed after using a questionnaire with 35 questions.

3- Population

Sample of the study comprised all students at Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University in Tehran at undergraduate level. In order to obtain samples from the population, the following equation (1) is used.

$$n = \frac{Z_{(\frac{\alpha}{2})}^2 \bar{p}(1 - \bar{p})}{d^2} = \frac{Z_{(\frac{\alpha}{2})}^2 pq}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}{0.07 \times 0.07} = \frac{0.96}{0.0049} \cong 196 \quad (1)$$

Where "d" stands for sampling error, "z" is the normal variable corresponding to the confidence level of $1 - \alpha$, "P" is estimated proportion of the given attribute and "q" is equal to 1-P. In similar studies, if the "P" value is not available, it will be equal to 0.5 in which the variance maximum amount is 0.25 and the sample would be the largest. In this study, "P" equals to 0.5, sampling error is 7% and the sample size is 196 with respect to the data [10,11,12,13,14].

To ensure the interoperability of the results of the statistical population, Sample respondents were selected from among the members using a multi-stage probability sampling technique. In multi-step process, the population is divided into different sub categories and these categories will also be divided into some other classifications and depending on the statistical population of the research and also the researcher goal can be continued. In this study, gender and students' major in the university were used to be split into smaller categories.

4. Data analysis

After completing the questionnaires, they were entered into SPSS software. Based on the responses at this stage, six questionnaires due to being incomplete were removed and the procedure and data analysis were done using 190 numbers. To evaluate the hypothesis, mean difference test was used to compare the two groups. In this test, the groups' mean was assumed to be zero (H0 hypothesis is normally conflicting with the research hypothesis), then, by using the mean and variance of opinions given by the sample responses, t-student test was used and the null hypothesis was tested [14].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1- Descriptive Statistics that considered in Tables 1-3

A) Respondents' gender

Table1: respondents' gender

Educational degree	Frequency	percentage
Female respondents	99	52.11%
Male respondents	91	47.89%
Total	190	100%

As it can be seen from the table, the number of male and female in the study is roughly similar.

B) Respondents' academic years of studying

Table2: Respondents' academic years of studying

Academic years	Frequency	Percentage
Freshman	15	7.89%
Sophomore	48	25.26%
Junior	69	36.32%
Senior	58	30.53%
Total	190	100%

As the table shows, the number of the first year students was fewer than the others, as they were not quite familiar with the atmosphere, so their relatively few numbers are not important.

C) Respondents' perception of university atmosphere

Table 3: Respondents' perception of university atmosphere

Percentage	Frequency	perception of university atmosphere
54.21%	103	Perceiving university atmosphere as closed
45.79%	87	Perceiving university atmosphere as open
100%	190	Total

From the given table above, the number of students who voted for the closed atmosphere is higher than the other group.

2 - Inferential statistics

A) The main hypothesis

Likert scale was used in this study. In this study, the respondents expressed their views on a range of options, from "very high" to "very low" based on the given ranges. For the quantifying the answers, to a number of digits such as 1,2,3,4 and 5 were given to "very low", "low", "average", "high" and "very high", respectively. Using this we can see the entrepreneurial spirit of the students. To evaluate the effect of factors on the two groups, the mean difference test was used. In this case, the independent variable was the university atmosphere that has created two distinct groups and the dependent variable is the entrepreneurial spirit of the students. As a result, the H_0 and H_1 are defined as below:

$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2$	the entrepreneurial spirit of the students who considered the university atmosphere as open is similar to those who considered it closed
$H_0 : \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$	the entrepreneurial spirit of the students who considered the university atmosphere as open is not similar to those who considered it closed

In this study, to assess the accuracy of the assumptions, the obtained upper and lower limits of the scale were used. In Independent Samples Test, if the obtained upper and lower limits are both positive, the mean difference of the two groups is greater than zero and the mean of the first group is larger. If both are negative, it means that the two group mean is less than zero and the second group mean is greater than the first.

If one of them (Based on tables 4-7) is positive and the other is negative, the difference between the two groups is not significant and it should be said that the two variables measured are equal with each other. SPSS output for this hypothesis are:

Table 4: the descriptive data of the groups

perception of university atmosphere	Frequency	Mean	SD
Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	2.86	.648
Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	3.36	.508

Table 5: the result of the testing research main hypothesis

	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Test results	-6.042	186.994	.000	-.67337	-.34188

As indicated in the table, the Sig level is less than 0.05, therefore, the H0 is rejected and H1 is confirmed. In other words, it can be claimed that the entrepreneurial spirit of those who perceived the university atmosphere as open was not similar to others who considered it as closed. Besides, upper limits and lower limits are both negative. So we can say the difference between the two groups is less than zero and the mean of the first group is lower than the second group. It can be argued that the students who perceived the university atmosphere as open have higher entrepreneurial spirit than those who considered it as closed.

B) Sub-hypotheses testing

The sub-hypothesis evaluated the relationship between the components of the entrepreneurship spirit and individual perceptions of the university environment. All hypotheses were summarized in a table. SPSS output for the sub-hypotheses are as follows.

Table 6: descriptive statistics for each group

		Number	Mean	SD
Success seeking spirit	Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	2.70	.948
	Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	3.21	1.173
Seeking independence spirit	Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	3.44	1.265
	Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	3.71	1.160
Risk taking spirit	Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	3.06	.765
	Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	3.46	1.209
Innovation spirit	Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	2.35	1.348
	Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	3.70	1.090
Internal control spirit	Students who perceived university atmosphere as closed	103	2.66	1.224
	Students who perceived university atmosphere as open	87	2.71	1.034

Table 7: the result of testing research main hypothesis

	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Success seeking spirit	-3.242	164.805	.001	-.817	-.199
seeking independence spirit	-1.554	188	.122	-.626	.074
Risk taking spirit	-2.778	188	.006	-.687	-.116
Innovation spirit	-7.504	188	.000	-1.707	-.996
Internal control spirit	-.008	188	.994	-.329	.326

As it is witnessed from the table, the sig. value for the second and fifth factors is higher than 0.05, so for these two factors the H0 is confirmed and the H1 is rejected. In other words, it can be claimed to be the spirit of

independence and internal control environment of those who perceived the university atmosphere as open was similar to others who considered it as closed. Also, the upper limit is positive and lower limit is negative which confirm the results.

Conclusion

In this study, after determining how the students perceived the university atmosphere, the relationship between entrepreneurial spirit and university atmosphere was evaluated. The main hypothesis of the study was assessed (the relationship between students' perceptions of university atmosphere and entrepreneurial spirit) using the mean test difference of the two groups. Test results showed that there is a significant relationship between the perceived university atmosphere and entrepreneurial spirit of students and. To better understand the relationship between these two, the components of entrepreneurship in terms of sub-hypotheses were tested separately. The relationship between each of the five dimensions of entrepreneurial spirit (success seeking spirit, independence seeking spirit, risk-taking spirit, the innovation spirit and the spirit of internal control) with the perceived university atmosphere was conducted using the mean test difference of the two groups. The results showed that, both the independence seeking spirit and the spirit of internal control didn't have any relationship with the perceived university atmosphere.

REFERENCES

1. Adeyemi, K.S., 2006. Opportunities for Entrepreneurship in Nigeria'. A Handout.
2. Mousavi bazargani, S.J., 1999. Determining the standards and rules for entrepreneurs educational programs in Iran based on comparative studies of similar programs worldwide, Master Thesis, Industrial Management organization.
3. Ginzberg, E., S.W. Ginburg, S. Axelrads and J.L. Herma, 1951. Occupational Choice. New York: Columbia University.
4. Okojie, J.A., 2008. Policy Framework And Strategy For Entrepreneurship Development For Nigerian Universities'. A Paper Presented at the National Sensitization Workshop On Entrepreneurship Development in Nigerian Universities Organized by National Universities Commission, Abuja, 21 May.
5. Oluwole, T., 2003. A Synopsis of Disciplines and Careers. Akure, Ondo State,s Nigeria. Orteeyz Ltd.
6. Nandan, H., 2009. Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship, Prentic-Hall of India Privat Limited, New Delhi, India.
7. Osibanjo, O., 2006. Concept of Entrepreneurship. A Paper Presented at the Workshop On Entrepreneurship and Innovation for 200 – Level students in University Of Ibadan , Jan. 18.
8. Yakubu, M.A., 2000. Guidance and Counselling. Beginner's Guide. Jos, Nigeria. Deka Enterprises (Nigeria).
9. Zabihi, M.R. and A.R. Oghadasi, 2006. Entrepreneurship from Theory to Practice, First Edition, Jahan farad publication, Mashhad, Iran.
10. Ahmadpour Dariani, M., 2005. Entrepreneurship: Definitions, theories and models, sixth edition, Pardis publications, Tehran, Iran.
11. Ahmadpour, M. and M. Azizi, 2004. Entrepreneurship, First Edition, Mehrab Ghalam Publishing Institute, Tehran, Iran.
12. Goodarzi, A. and V. Gaminian, 2002. Principles and theories of organizational climate, Jahad Daneshgahi Publications of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.
13. Delawar, A., 2008. Research Methods in Psychology and Education, seventh edition, Viraiesh publication, Tehran, Iran.
14. Momeni, M. and A. Faalghaiumi, 2007. Statistical analysis using SPSS, First edition, Ketabeno Publication, Iran.