



ASL – Adult Self-Learning: Supporting Learning Autonomy in a Technology-Mediated Environment

Desk analysis: Case studies on entrepreneurship and online business

IO1: An operative model for teaching-learning low-qualified adults in an online environment

Author: THREE THIRDS SOCIETY NPO



“Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency can not be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein”

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Project information

Project acronym:	ASL
Project title:	Adult Self-Learning: Supporting Learning Autonomy in a Technology-Mediated Environment
Agreement number:	2019-1-TR01-KA204-076875
Sub-programme or KA:	KA2- Cooperation For Innovation And The Exchange Of Good Practices
Project website:	http://aslerasmus.eu/
Authoring partner:	Three Thirds Society
Report version:	1.0
Date of preparation:	13.05.2020

Document history

Date	Version	Author(s)	Description
13.05.2020	1	Erika Nika	Composition of data

©ASL– Adult Self-Learning: Supporting Autonomy in a Technology-Mediated Environment 2019

Disclaimer:

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.





Executive Summary

In the framework of *“Intellectual Output 1: An operative model for teaching-learning low-qualified adults in an online environment”* THREE THIRDS SOCIETY should carry out a desk analysis focusing on their expertise which is case studies on entrepreneurship and online classes. The desk analysis is performed on the current literature by analyzing online databases and selected scientific journals, focusing on project and initiative promoted in Greece and Europe. The desk analysis is based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. Statistic data have been collected by official sources and scientific surveys.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Case study 1: EEP - The Entrepreneurship Education Project.....	4
2.1 Description of the strategy / initiative.....	4
2.2 Results of the impact measurement.....	5
2.3 Methodology of the measurement	7
2.4 Research questions	7
2.5 Using the results of the impact measurement	7
2.6 Conclusions	8
3. Case study 2: ForWeb Software – a micro company but a global business.....	9
2.1 The project	9
2.2 Results, obstacles and flows	10
4. Case studies: Greek businesses	11
5. SWOT Analysis	13
6. Conclusion	14
References	15





1. Introduction

Firstly, a case study from European Commission will be presented based on the conduction of a mapping exercise of examples of research on the impact of Entrepreneurial Education through a systematic country research in all 28 EU-Member States plus 14 Non-EU-countries. Afterwards, a second case study will be mentioned from STARTENT project, where a book was created that can be used as a source of examples and materials in the field of education for entrepreneurship in Europe and to foster entrepreneurial interest and talent among young individuals. Lastly, a summary of case studies in Greece will be reported from economia.gr which is one of the most famous economy magazines in Greece since 1934.

2. Case study 1: EEP - The Entrepreneurship Education Project

This case study report looks at the Entrepreneurship Education Project (EEP) which is collecting data on the impact of entrepreneurship interventions on undergraduates over a 10-year longitudinal study. The project was set up to provide participants with a common framework/survey for measuring the impact of entrepreneurship education in a standard and systematic way, using a theoretical framework based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). This case study report focuses on the set up of the project, the underlying theoretical framework, the focus of impact measurement and the plans for the future.

2.1 Description of the strategy / initiative

The Entrepreneurship Education Project is a global, longitudinal research initiative which collects data from university students who have taken part in an entrepreneurial course. The project is coordinated through the Means Center at Illinois State University, and the data is used and interpreted by the individual institutions contributing to the project.

The idea behind the EEP was based on the fact that there has been a great deal of research conducted in different contexts around the globe to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education. This data is collected in many different ways and provides both positive and negative results for the impacts of entrepreneurship education courses and programmes. The research team identified that a longitudinal approach that could explore many aspects of the impact on the individual in a comparable way was missing. A longitudinal survey allows for a better exploration of the pathways to becoming a long-term entrepreneur, including behavioural changes. These changes can be identified by following individuals. Following such a large cohort of students from education into their career, aims to provide a robust analysis





of the impacts of entrepreneurship education. Through this research approach, the EEP study aims to isolate the effects of the entrepreneurship education programmes on the individual and provide data-driven insights into the relationship between entrepreneurial education and the critical incidences which impact on the decisions to become 'entrepreneurial'. Therefore, the research focuses on how entrepreneurship education experiences impact students' entrepreneurial motivations and on identifying changes from being a learner to becoming an entrepreneur. Over a period of ten years (the total length of time of the research), the study will examine the extent to which identified learning outcomes translate into a student's career decision and performance as an entrepreneur.

The EEP focuses on measuring two aspects of impact on the individuals (the students):

- ⇒ The motivational processes underlying students' paths to entrepreneurship;
- and
- ⇒ The process of identity transformation from student to entrepreneur.

The project was developed in order to fill the gap in the lack of data on the long-term impact of entrepreneurial education. The design of the survey tool and the interpretation of the results use a theoretical framework based on Social Cognitive Career Theory. The tool was developed collaboratively by Dr Jeff Vanevenhoven (University of Wisconsin), Dr Doan Winkel (Illinois State University) and Dr Eric Liguori (California State University). The EEP survey, based on the tool, has been adapted and translated into several languages over the course of the project to increase its take up.

The EEP began its development phase in 2009. The first round of phase 1 collected data from students at 80 universities globally. Following two additional rounds in phase 1, the EEP reached a total of approximately 400 universities, with around 18,000 students participating in the study. The high numbers involved in phase 1 of the study made EEP one of the largest, most comprehensive studies of individual entrepreneurship education data globally. To date, phase 1 and phase 2 data collection are complete (phase 2 data is being analysed). Phase 3 is planned to take place in the near future. The original intention of EEP was to collect data on an annual basis for the duration of the 10-year project and provide robust comparable data on the longterm impact of entrepreneurship education on the individual. This goal has changed⁷⁸ due to the difficulties of running longitudinal surveys and the required commitment from collaborating universities.

2.2 Results of the impact measurement

The EEP is still in its early phases and the measurements of impact will only be available in subsequent years. Even in the first phases, due to the large amounts of data collected, analysis is still pending. Therefore, collaborating universities are being





encouraged by the lead research team to analyse their data for their own purposes. Nevertheless, there are some early indications of impact stemming from the results from the first phases. These results have been published and are presented below.

There are positive correlations between entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial outcome expectations.

The results of the first phase show that entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial outcome expectations are significantly positively correlated. Therefore, the higher the self-efficacy of an individual, the higher the outcome expectations are. This is also borne out by exploring correlations on a regional basis (North America, South America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia and Pacific).

The total exposure of an individual to entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial contextual factors positively correlate with all SCCT pillars.

The SCCT construct introduced also proves that the total exposure of an individual to entrepreneurship and the contextual factors correlate positively with entrepreneurial intentions, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial outcome expectations. There were regional variations regarding this result.

The number of courses offered by the universities is significantly positively correlated with all the SCCT pillars, but not extracurricular activities. The number of courses offered is significantly positively correlated with all the SCCT pillars: (1) self-efficacy, (2) outcome expectations and (3) goal-directed activity. The number of extra-curricular activities on offer did not positively correlate to any of the SCCT pillars.

The more a university collaborates with other institutions, the lower the motivation of students towards entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship is viewed, in this context, as being entrepreneurial and having 'entrepreneurial intent' and it is not just related to students' interest in starting up a company).

The wider environmental variables which were included in the analysis, led to the following data results: the more a university collaborates with other institutions, the lower their motivation towards the entrepreneurship of undergraduate students.

In parallel to the EEP, there are also examples of universities and regions which are building up their own studies based on EEP data. The University of Lisbon in Portugal uses EEP data to analyse its results in comparison to those from Portuguese students from other universities. The university is committed to continue evaluating the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions over a period of time.





2.3 Methodology of the measurement

The EEP research programme is designed to empirically study the underlying phenomena of the transformation from student to entrepreneur. Therefore, the work of the EEP measures the effect of entrepreneurship education at the individual level. The EEP looks at the increased motivation of students to regard entrepreneurship as a career option or way to enhance employability. Therefore, the project attempts to isolate the outcomes and impact regarding the 'pathway' to becoming an entrepreneur.

In order to understand the impact at the individual level, the project also collects data on 'ecosystem variables' which give insight into how external factors affect the student. These ecosystem variables include factors such as relations with the external environment (stakeholders, access to funding, etc.).

2.4 Research questions

In its attempt to measure impact over a 10-year period, the EEP creators defined seven pathways of potential empirical research and corresponding potential research questions which were delivered through a survey:

- ⇒ What are the relationships of an individual's inputs (individual factors) to the motivational processes underlying the pursuit of entrepreneurship?
- ⇒ What are the relationships of environmental influences to the motivational processes underlying the pursuit of entrepreneurship?
- ⇒ Will these expected relationships differ across cultures? \ Will these expected relationships differ for members of dominant and non-dominant groups?
- ⇒ Will these expected relationships differ for students who are engaged in entrepreneurship education?
- ⇒ What are the relative contributions of antecedents in explaining variance in entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and intentions?
- ⇒ What sequence structures work and why do those structures work?

2.5 Using the results of the impact measurement

Each collaborating university has a contact person who is in direct communication with the research team. This 'university collaborator' supports the university in disseminating the survey among students. S/he also collects additional information when asked by the research team.

EEP results are not made publicly available, but each collaborator receives all of the data as soon as the collection at that respective phase is completed. Universities can use the EEP data to compare/benchmark their results to achieve internal goals. The research directors strongly encourage university collaborators to work with each other and use the EEP data to develop new research projects.





The data has therefore been used by collaborating universities, but also by national governments in some cases. For example, EEP data is used as a source for a government report on entrepreneurship education in Brazil. The Canadian universities that participate in EEP have replicated the form of the study, used a number of the questions and combined the EEP work with their priorities to understand what works best in their provinces regarding entrepreneurship education. In Ecuador, the measurement tool is being adapted for the school sector.

Concerning the type of impact measured, the data is not being used to measure the effect on society and the economy at present, and the core research team is not intending to expand the research in this direction. However, links to the measurement of institutional/organisational impact could be made, even though this is not the focus of the research; members of the core research team believe that the collection of data and feedback can be expected to have an impact on the participating universities. In addition, the core research team is interested in the environmental influences at the institutional level and how they help or hinder entrepreneurial attitudes, without intending to benchmark it. This includes different aspects of the students' environment, such as the type of institution, accessibility to incubators, existence of scholarships and student support, additional courses, etc.

According to the lead researchers, the core research/project team is currently producing a new publication which will include phase 2 results and also provide new insights into the entrepreneurial activities of certain regions. EEP is hosting its first conference in 2014, which will gather collaborators and all interested parties dealing with entrepreneurship education. The results produced up until this point will be presented and discussed in the conference. In addition to the survey, the project includes a number of supporting activities which have been inspired by the EEP's work. One of these is a partnership with USABE (United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship); the two parties have created USASBE 'Launch,' a national student business model competition. The partnership with USASBE also involves the support and sponsorship of other programmes across universities in the USA.

2.6 Conclusions

The EEP can be considered unique in many aspects; it is the first effort with the aim of measuring the impact of entrepreneurship education on undergraduates that involves a 10-year longitudinal approach on a global scale.

Given the longitudinal approach and the fact that the survey touches upon students from several countries/cultural backgrounds, the methodology used by EEP can inspire other similar efforts, especially those that include samples from more than one country and/or institution. The robustness of the data is guaranteed by the adherence to strict standards in social science research. The methodology is based





on existing studies and critiqued approaches. The EEP also uses each phase to feed into the design and development of the next one. This includes a feedback loop from the collaborators into the process of research, which means that the process continuously improves. The characteristics of the project (long duration, great number of institutions and very large sample) also pose methodological challenges that have been identified even after phase 1. These challenges can offer guidance to parties that are interested in launching a similar project. The next steps taken in the EEP methodology may offer valuable examples on how to overcome such challenges.

However, the EEP is still in its early phases (phase 1 and 2). Results are only available for phase I (access to quantitative data is only available to participating universities), but in the long term, results are expected to provide evidence of the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education interventions on the undergraduates.

3. Case study 2: ForWeb Software – a micro company but a global business

Since its beginning, when it had just one product on the market it has grown steadily and currently has clients and users spread across 5 continents and approximately 500,000 visitors to its site each month (December 2010). According to André Gonçalves, ForWeb Software owner and CEO, the company's mission is *'creating user-centric Web applications with simplicity, robustness and speed as their main characteristics, which offer solutions to specific problems for some global market niches.'*

2.1 The project

The QuestionForm.com project emerged in 2007. At this time, the online software available for creating, publishing and analysing surveys and forms was all payable and not at all user-friendly. So André Gonçalves decided to create simpler software which would be free to use, less complex and based on the most up-to-date platform - Web 2.0

The tool developed facilitates the use of online surveys in a user friendly environment. It allows users who are unfamiliar with the technology to easily build an online survey and then to both collect and analyse the data. With this tool, the consumer can design questionnaires and forms that can be inserted into websites or blogs or sent via email to facilitate data collection. Tracking responses is also possible in the web application itself, so that it is easy to know exactly who responded to the survey. Moreover, the tool generates a complete report with statistics for each questionnaire or survey built, even in its free version.

QuestionForm.com was designed with the customer in mind. This is shown in the changes made following the release of the beta version, which predated the formation of the company and served mainly to showcase the product and gather





the views of future customers (the beta version was developed in four months and the testing phase lasted approximately two months).

2.2 Results, obstacles and flows

Since the beginning of the project, the main difficulty has been competing with other companies who were already well-known in the online market, such as SurveyMonkey.com, QuestionPro.com, etc.

QuestionForm.com is mainly used by free online users with limited use of the tool (in 2010, 95% were free users). However, the product is also offered for more advanced users with more features in different paid modalities (18% of the payers are using the basic modality, 50% the Plus modality, 22% the Premium modality and 10% are using a specific modality not contemplated in the website – enterprise modality).

However, despite economic globalisation, the increase in new technologies and internet usage and the growing competition, the ability of André Gonçalves to upgrade the service allowed him to increase market share and attract users in various places throughout the world. The greatest proportion of visits to the website are from South America and the main users are from Argentina and Brazil.

ForWeb Software gambled on a strategy focused on innovation and new solutions for a niche market and it also benefitted from being the first mover. In 2007, internet users had the possibility of creating, publishing and analysing surveys online for free (albeit with some limitations).

Considering the type of technology used for their product development the company was seen as one of the most promising Web 2.0. solutions by the Spanish bank 'La Caixa' and recognized as an innovative project, winning the CEIM BIC Madeira innovation award in 2008.

The company's location on a small island in the Atlantic Ocean presented some constraints such as insularity, the geographical distance from the mainland, and the small size of the territory and the market. This, together with the company's dependency on only one product, forced André Gonçalves to market ForWeb Software's services across borders.

However, there was an important flaw in the project. Although the service was already provided in different languages, i.e. the questionnaire could be built in several languages according to the country of the user (as you can see in the images below), the website and instructions were available only in two languages: English and Portuguese.

This was a limitation to the service and was seen as its greatest weakness and contrary to the overall business strategy of operating in the world market.





Therefore, looking at global trends and recognising that the tool was intended for Internet users anywhere in the world, André Gonçalves decided to invest in making the questionnaire available in other languages. He also made the decision to update the payment facilities on the website by utilising secure service arrangements, such as PayPal.

In addition, ForWeb Software has developed customized solutions for clients who visit the QuestionForm website. André Gonçalves believes that in 2011, sales of these customized solutions will overtake the main product – the surveys on QuestionForm.

Thus, we see that the success of this project since its early days was in being a world-oriented company, which is why they opted for a strategy called “Born Global”¹⁶.

It is appropriate to describe this company in terms of international entrepreneurship, i.e., a business that has gained significant competitive advantage from having selling opportunities in several countries. The main features of the business are its strong capacity for expanding business operations into other countries and the high risk environment in which it has operated since its creation.

The concept of market potential being limited by the physical boundaries of a country is increasingly outdated and unsuitable. Expanding the geographical reach of a company is now much easier not only because of the lowering of customs barriers, but also because of improved ways of managing business at a distance. There are also other drivers of the expansion and internationalisation of companies, such as economic and political factors, and social factors, such as the globalization of standards of life and consumption and a more comprehensive knowledge of foreign cultures.

The internationalisation of companies is mostly associated with the creation of partnerships or the use of information technologies as a means of disseminating their products or services. These market opportunities, especially those related to the development of information technologies (more specifically the Internet) have allowed smaller and less financially strong companies the possibility of internationalizing.

The decisive factors in the global success of ForWeb Software were the entrepreneur’s network of contacts, his knowledge of the product’s characteristics and the increased dissemination through the Internet.

4. Case studies: Greek businesses

Entrepreneurship depends on many factors, such as the personality of the entrepreneur, the form of the business but also the conditions prevailing in the external environment during its beginning. Therefore, entrepreneurship is influenced





by both the characteristics of the entrepreneur and the external environment as well as the way the company is organized. New businesses, depending on the available resources, the experience and the knowledge of the entrepreneur, will identify the existing opportunities and will exploit them in a different way. More specifically (Economic Review 2015):

- **Beekeeping Company Attiki-Alexandros Pittas:** The company was created in 1928 by Alexandros Pittas and was originally called "Honey of Ymittos", while later it was renamed as "Attica Honey" according to the origin of honey. The company currently exports to more than 80 countries and employs over 100 people, while in its 87 years of operation it has achieved many distinctions and many awards with quality and innovation.
- **Phillips Hellas:** The company developed a business in Greece in the decade of 1930s in the leading sectors of home, electronic devices and computers, with particular-most innovative, quality and reliable products. It cooperates with all commercial chains electrical and household items and has gained a large share of the domestic market.
- **ION:** The company was founded in Athens (in Neo Faliro) in 1930 by a group of people aiming to create a chocolate company. In the following years the NASKO company was created for the production of confectionery products, while after the Second World War ION merges with NASKO SA for the production of both confectionery and new quality chocolate products. The company currently belongs to the largest Greek export bio- mechanical units worldwide (China, Australia, USA, Canada and Europe), while in its three factories employ about 1,000 workers.
- **Giotis:** In 1930, Ioannis and Maria Giotis set up their company in Athens for tv production of an innovative food for the time, Anthus Orizis Giotis and Anthus Aravositou Giotis, with healthy, pure ingredients that are basic baby food for the little ones children. Production of new innovative products continued and in 1950 they introduced the famous "Fruì Zele Giotis", while in 1964 they introduced the "flour Farina Giotis" that inflates. Today is one of the largest industrial export companies exporting its products to all continents and in 30 countries.
- **Melissa Kikizas:** The company Melissa was originally created in 1925, when Athanasios Kikizas, from the Olive Village of Arcadia, opened the first food store in Athens with special big success. In 1947, Alexandros and Grigoris Kikizas created the first factory in Athens "Kikiza Selected Pasta Brothers Industry" (VEZAK) for the purpose of implementation of new innovations and processing in the food industry. Today it is one of the largest innovative and exporting industrial companies, employing over 200 employees, while producing and exporting its products to more than 35 countries.





- **Athenian Brewery:** The Athenian Brewery was created in 1963 and is the largest beer production and marketing company in Greece, part of the Heineken N.V. It's one of the largest innovative and modern companies, employs over 900 employees, while producing and exporting its products to more than 11 countries.
- **Interamerican:** Interamerican was created in 1969 in the field of private insurance. Today belongs to the large Dutch insurance group ACHMENA. It is a modern company which employs over 370 employees.
- **SATO A.E .:** SATO (ENTOS) was created in 1964 with the transformation of the company "Metallon Hellas OE " and is active in the furniture market. Today it is one of the largest innovative and modern companies, employs over 110 employees, while producing and exporting its products in many European and Arab countries.
- **Aluminum of Greece:** Aluminum of Greece was founded in 1960 by the French Pechiney (Pesine) in Boeotia and aimed at the utilization of bauxite in Central Greece and in the para- aluminum casting. Since 2005 it belongs to the Mytilineos group and is the only factory in the production, processing and distribution of aluminum in Greece, employing over 1,100 employees.

5. SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to analyze the internal and external environment of a business, when the company must make a decision about the goals it has set or to achieve them. The SWOT acronym is derived from the English words: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

Therefore, according to the objective of this Intellectual Output and the case studies that were presented above, a SWOT Analysis will be presented in order to contribute to the production of a shared operative model on:

1. Barriers and opportunities
2. Competencies for trainers
3. Digital technologies
4. Impacts for low-qualified and low-skilled adults

In all categories of our SWOT Analysis we focused on businesses and especially on online business environments.

Strong points could be mentioned:

- Easy navigation through the website and many available facilities
- Specialized staff
- Distinctive website





- High gross profit margins, as the company does not only refer to the national market but also to the global
- New ways to encourage repetitive visits

Weaknesses could be mentioned:

- Competitors can immediately offer the consumer something identical or existing competitors can change their entire costing system.
- Limited costs to set up an online portal (low entry barriers)
- Limited pricing flexibility
- High labour costs

Opportunities could be mentioned:

- Continuous and growing demand for online shopping
- New technologies to improve the user experience
- Emerging new markets that are untapped
- More effective Marketing tactics

Threats could include:

- Global economic crisis
- Possible tax changes that could affect the business
- Possibility to upgrade users' browser software

6. Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, several organizations and businesses have conducted researches in order to distinguish and analyze case studies of successful businesses and projects that focus on entrepreneurship. Among all case studies that are available, for our desk analysis we chose to present an example of an initiative that is implemented worldwide and has to do with entrepreneurship education, a small company that accomplished to be global using online technologies and presentation of companies in Greece that are the most successful for many years.

These examples show the possibilities that individuals have if they want to become entrepreneurs. In most cases, successful examples act as driving motivation for potential entrepreneurs to take the risk and proceed with the founding of their enterprise. Especially, the economic crisis that made the situation very difficult for several countries drove people to self-employment. Moreover, technology is a major





factor regarding the development of online businesses which is a popular way of running a business according to the needs of the job market.

As a result, it is important, especially for low-qualified adults, to have the opportunity to be educated in entrepreneurship and be qualified to run a business. This can be achieved through the organization, promotion and implementation of adult-learning programmes according to adults' needs.

References

- Svilen Kunev, Kostas Galanakis, Paraskevi Gkiourka (2011). "Case studies book on entrepreneurship and innovation & on business creation and management". ResearchGate
- Economic Review (2015). Issue of May. www.economia.gr, Athens.
- Karagiannis, A. D., Korres, G. & Zarifis, A. (2001). Entrepreneurship and Development. Athens: Pedagogical Institute.
- Entrepreneurship Education: A road to success (2015). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

