

FORMATION OF EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AND UNITS IN PARALLEL DISTANCE LEARNING IN INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The actual processes taking place in education under the influence of changes in the environment and particularly by the business lead to fundamental changes in the forms and ways of carrying out the educational process. One of these forms is the distance education in its various modifications, dictated both by the nature of the training itself, and the subject area in which it will be realized. Over the last decade we have witnessed a paradigm shift under the influence of the development of information and communication technologies, which has impact on all spheres of public life, especially in science and education. There is a triad which connects the type of training, the form of its realization and the subject area, in which the acquired knowledge will be realized. The type of training is fundamental and attendant, the form can be full time or correspondence training with alternative distance education and subject area is business realization in market economy. Distance education proves to be a new modern modification which allows it to be not an alternative but an addition to the basic form and as a parallel learning.

Keywords: parallel learning, entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Distance learning has many options and variations which more or less differ from each other [2,3,6]. However, the main types are two and include synchronous and asynchronous distance learning.

Synchronous distance learning is significantly closer to the classic one since all activities are performed synchronously from a distance, but in real time. On the basis of different types of communication and first of all - the Internet, the students establish contact in a definite time both with the teacher, and with each other. This contact is established almost as in ordinary classes with the difference that individuals are geographically remote [4, 7].

The schedule in asynchronous distance learning is much more flexible because there is no need for a student at a certain time to be in an on-line connection with the teacher. Assignments can be sent in different ways. Asynchronous learning allows the learner to set his/her own schedule associated with his/her training. It is the asynchronous form which appears to be particularly useful, not to say - the only one in parallel education in which a second degree or qualification is acquired simultaneously with the first one.

Distance learning is not identical neither with full time nor with correspondence learning. It may be related to the acquisition of educational qualification level or in parallel obtaining a second specialty, along with full-time or part-time form of education.

Distance learning means individual approach which is less expensive than other forms of training. It gives each trainee an opportunity to apply an own approach fully consistent with his/her capabilities and needs.

There are some common features between the attendant and distance forms of education. In both cases, the teacher develops a curriculum, reads lectures in an online mode, holds seminars and video conferences, answers questions, examines the tasks, and controls the time frames established for the course.

A distance learning technology can be accomplished in different ways. Sources of educational information can be printed training materials or video materials. Their delivery can be by post or via e-mail. Another feature is that all these modes can operate simultaneously [5].

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

In modern marketing systems is the development and improvement of the entrepreneurial activity, undertaken by individuals, companies and organizations focused on the production and sale of goods and services as well the making of maximum profit is of particular importance. With its innovation, the entrepreneurial activity overcomes inertia and orients the old technologies in new directions.

The entrepreneur is synonymous to the profit motivation, irrespective whether he/she is identified with the owner or one is the owner and another the developer. He/she is the initiator of combining the three basic factors of production - labor, land, capital and prepares the arrangements for the work process, the process of creating wealth. The contractor manages, controls and supervises the business. He/she takes the most important decisions related to the effective functioning of the company and the guidelines for future development. The entrepreneur aims to produce new products, to apply a new technology and to introduce a new organization. He/she takes risks because not only the profit but also the recovery of costs incurred by him/her is not guaranteed. He/she might gain a lot, nothing, or he might lose everything. He/she is responsible for the correct by taken decisions, their accuracy and speed of implementation. Economic agents-sellers and buyers,

employers, employees, creditors and debtors continuously operate in an environment which determines the content and focus of their actions.

The activities of entrepreneurs are influenced by various factors such as economic, legal, socio-cultural, technological, geographical, institutional, and technology-organization environment.

Entrepreneurs must provide for changes in public expectations. Therefore, they should carefully examine the environment in which they operate, in order to grasp the trends in its development and to adapt to a new environment. The problems of entrepreneurship - economic, financial, organizational, social, psychological and moral make it necessary to seek approaches, methods and tools to evaluate and minimize the activity risk. Entrepreneurs operate in a competitive and dynamic environment in which there is no guarantee for success. The highly competitive environment forces the developer to anticipate future changes and to maximize the possibilities of the environment through innovative solutions in technology and organization.

Entrepreneurship is the process of forming and achieving objectives of the enterprise / company by key management functions, which increases the role of the management system. This meaning is reinforced by the influence of factors such as market conditions, competition, economic and financial crisis and the complexity of relationships with other companies and institutions, as well as with the tax and credit system.

PRECONDITIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF SPECIALIZATION IN INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is one of the eight competencies of Europeans, declared by the European Union. Key competencies are the dynamic multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for personal realization and development. They should be formed by the end of education or training and should be the basis for lifelong learning. There is a growing interest and need for entrepreneurship training in educational institutions due to changes in the economy, the social environment of business, both nationally and internationally since the accession of Bulgaria to the EU.

In this direction, is the decision of the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism to promote the development of parallel forms and postgraduate training in “Entrepreneurship” at institutions of higher education and the development of entrepreneurship centers.

Also, the adoption of the principles of market economy in the development of the national economy, the formation of a new structure of the productive sectors, the processes of globalization and European integration, economic development and the economic crisis, sets new requirements for greater flexibility of managers under the new conditions and determines the need for knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship. All this motivates the professionals, preparing for the management of the national economy and its particular sectors, to seek an opportunity to expand their skills in the field of general management and entrepreneurship specific for certain sectors and subsectors.

The entrepreneurship gives people an opportunity for orientation and realization in accomplishing their own business as directed by the recent changes in legislation and normative regulation of the institutionalization of these forms for realization of business. There is a need to supply adequate forms of training to conform both to the content requirements for learners and the proposed forms of technical training. They should allow reconciliation of the basic training with that of entrepreneurship, which appears to be an upgrade of knowledge received in a basic specialty as well as any activity which shall be geographically remote from the basic training institute.

Restructuring the economy and a particular industry involves increasing the share of small and medium enterprises, which constitute the backbone of the economy. This requires the acquisition of parallel knowledge, both for developing one's own business and for management skills. From different fields of entrepreneurship, the industrial enterprise is of greatest significance. It involves a combination of knowledge and skills in a particular subject area of production and managerial knowledge related to organizational and business development. This requires along the general direction of learning to develop modules that reflect the specific subject area (sector or group).

All these preconditions determine the need for parallel, especially distance and combined forms of

education. There are many universities and centers that teach or perform pre-qualification courses in entrepreneurship based on the Ordinance on state requirements for the organization of distance learning in higher education.

Distance learning bachelor and master degrees can be organized only by the higher schools established under the terms and procedure of the Higher education act and Program accreditation for the relevant professional field, a specialization in regulated professions (medicine, pharmacy, etc.) or a scientific specialization. This form of training is evaluated according to criteria developed by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation under the Higher Education Act. Activity that is associated with obtaining professional qualifications by persons who receive, possess or have received a degree in other professional fields can be realized in the line of parallel and postgraduate training in its various forms – full-time, part time, evening and distance learning.

The lack of parallel distance learning is due to the fact that there are many difficulties related to the organization of teaching, because students and teachers are divided (selected) by location, but not necessarily in time and the created distance is compensated through technological means such as audio, video, computer and communication technologies and means, but also due to lack of preparation related educational materials and resources for its implementation.

In the field of parallel and postgraduate training, there are separate modules in the field of economic sciences, which are too narrow and modified without having complex characteristic. They only cover separate functions of government. This determines the need for a project reflecting in a complex-sectoral way the knowledge and skills in the field of entrepreneurship in certain industrial sectors, creating high students mobility. In the first stage is developed educational documentation, including curriculum, training programs and vocational training characteristics of the learners in the specialization Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship at the organizational unit carrying out parallel education.

The curriculum is developed in accordance with the basic requirements for students to acquire knowledge and skills in the subject area, in this case - entrepreneurship. It is consistent with the acquisition of pro-

fessional qualification corresponding to the professional field “Administration and Management” (code 345); Major “Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship” (code 3450212) for the acquisition of the qualification of “Corporate Manager” (code 345020) - according to the classification of The Ministry of education and science (MES) and MLSP.

The curriculum includes 9 subjects (Table 1), which chronologically follow the acquisition of relevant knowledge and provide input output connections of training within semesters in “Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship”[1, 8].

The form of control is basically a test. There is also specialized practice in the form of control on continuous assessment. The final stage of qualification is a thesis on a particular problem in an entrepreneurial real object.

The course content in separate disciplines aims to form gradually and consistently the appropriate knowledge and skills of students in realizing their future activity, while an upgrade is done simultaneously with the main subject, parallel to the entrepreneurship.

The discipline “Economics of entrepreneurial activity” is intended to clarify the most important

Table 1.

№	Semester and subject	Form of control	Workload		
			Total	Lectures	Laboratory Classes
1	2	3	4	5	6
	I SEMESTER		90	60	30
1	Economics of entrepreneurial activity	T	45	30	15
2	Normative regulation and control of entrepreneurial activity	T	45	30	15
	II SEMESTER		90	60	30
3	Management of entrepreneurial activity	T	45	30	15
4	Organization of industrial entrepreneurial activity	T	45	30	15
	III SEMESTER		110	50	60
5.	Business planning, entrepreneurial networks and strategies	T	40	25	15
6.	Entrepreneurial risk management	T	40	25	15
	Specializing practice	CA	30	-	30
	IV SEMESTER		105	70	35
7	Analysis of production and economic activity	T	45	30	15
8.	Psychology of entrepreneurial activity	T	30	20	10
9.	E-Business in entrepreneurship	T	30	20	10
	Diploma theses (paper)	Diploma thesis defense	20	20	-
	Total	9+1 (T+CA)	395	240	155

Note: T-test; CA-continuous assessment

concepts and categories in the economy of entrepreneurial activity and it helps to improve the economic culture of people realizing business. A successful business requires both a good idea and a good entrepreneur and in this respect there are certain trends and norms that contribute to shaping the model of the potential entrepreneur.

The discipline “Economics of entrepreneurial activity” provides scientific knowledge about the original motivation of the entrepreneur to start a business and for his/hers high self-confidence and achievements need to succeed in an entrepreneurial venture. The successful entrepreneurs need knowledge and entrepreneurial skills for effective communication, understanding the mechanisms and forms of business management, knowledge and skills in investment, financing, tangible, intangible and current assets, productive realizational costs, labor productivity, prices and pricing, the ability to persuade people to follow their ideas, etc. Studying the discipline “Economics of entrepreneurial activity” students receive comprehensive knowledge and practical experience required in the daily activities of entrepreneurs in the industrial business. The acquisition of theoretical knowledge combines with practical experience in the field of entrepreneurship in small and medium businesses, product policy, finance, capital, and all aspects of business.

The discipline “Normative regulation and control of entrepreneurial activity” is intended to give students knowledge of applying the normative regulation and control in the entrepreneurial activity. Trainees acquire knowledge related to the nature of law and legal fields, legal norms and their application in entrepreneurial activity. The regulation is considered in the aspects of developer relations with the external environment and his/hers impact on the internal environment. Contractors and relations with state and local authorities of the state power are included in the regulation of relations with the external environment. This is a fundamental part of building relationships of the entrepreneur, discussed in terms of the membership of our country in the EU. The normative regulation places the entrepreneur as a major figure among businessmen, according to his/hers objectives, which defines relations with the government, contractors and staff. Learning the discipline should give students opportunities to get their bearings to the

normative regulation of other organizational and management disciplines, as well as their immediate realization in practice.

The discipline “Organization of industrial entrepreneurship” provides scientific knowledge of the original motivation of the entrepreneur to start a business, for high self-confidence and achievements needed to succeed in an entrepreneurial initiative. The successful entrepreneurs need knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to understand the mechanisms and forms of business organization, types, forms and methods of organizing the production process as a basis for the formation of the enterprise and building the manufacturing process in space and time for operative production planning and control, work organization and technical standardization, working conditions and payment, complex organization and efficient use of raw materials, material and energy resources in the entrepreneurial venture, organization of production relations, production infrastructure, financial activities, labor management organization, etc. Studying this discipline, students acquire comprehensive knowledge and practical experience required in the daily activities of entrepreneurs associated with the organization and management of industrial business, by developing and approving the internal regulations for the activity. The tasks in this course contribute to the accumulation of practical experience in the field of entrepreneurship in small and medium businesses.

To have a successful business, entrepreneurs should get acquainted with the characteristics of entrepreneurial activity, approaches and forms of starting their own business as well with problems and prospects of entrepreneurial management. In this direction the discipline “Management of entrepreneurial activity” gives insight into the place and role, specific characteristics and requirements of small and medium businesses, entrepreneurial process and management style, management and business development, marketing, planning, financial problems, management of production and personnel, product realization, information security, etc.. Trainees receive comprehensive knowledge and practical experience required in the daily activities of entrepreneurs related to the management of industrial business. Practical tasks for the discipline “Management of entrepreneurial activity”

contribute to the accumulation of practical experience in the field of entrepreneurship in small and medium businesses.

Studying the discipline “Analysis of the manufacturing business” students are introduced to the approaches, principles and methods for assessment of market and financial situation, qualitative analysis and quantitative methods for factor analysis of costs, revenues, profits and profitability. The discipline should provide knowledge and practical skills in the analysis as a function of economic management, building prerequisites for the realization of basic management functions, visualizing his/her action by them, the methods and means of entrepreneurial business venture analysis, the available information base and its security as we should distinguish the various configurations of this analysis depending on the features of organization and analytical work in the entrepreneurial ventures. All parameters and managing capital assets should be learned.

The discipline provides practical guidelines, which are realized by applying different methods of analysis. With the modules of laboratory classes for the discipline “Analysis of manufacturing business”, students acquire certain theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of analysis. They are taught to think, to analyze facts and information, to develop options, to evaluate and compare them and on this basis to take the most effective decision, by developing management thinking. By means of tests, case studies, assignments and use of modern methods and techniques of business analysis, like SWOT analysis, the balanced scorecard method and others, students are taught to develop a comprehensive economic analysis for the needs of the entrepreneurial venture management.

The discipline “Business planning, entrepreneurial networks and strategies” provides knowledge and skills in business planning and entrepreneurial strategies as tools in the management of small and medium businesses. Trainees are introduced to basic entrepreneurial strategies in a market economy and the decisive elements of successful entrepreneurial management.

The discipline “Management of entrepreneurial risk” aims to familiarize students with technology issues and entrepreneurial risk management. There are the following types of risks: organizational, strategic, technical and technological risks, security and safety risks,

risk related to observing the legal requirements, commercial, financial, real risks, etc. Although the focus is on market risk, students acquire knowledge about the liquidity and credit risk, as well as capital adequacy.

The discipline “Psychology of entrepreneurial activity” familiarizes students with the nature of economic, employment and social psychology of labor as integral elements of entrepreneurial activity, organizational culture, strategy and policy, the communication process and obstacles that occur.

The course “E-Business Enterprise” contributes for students to be aware and to gain practical knowledge and techniques in order to use modern computer and communication tools in business management.

The training content of each discipline is balanced so as to avoid any repetition, and the other hand to maximize the use of already accumulated knowledge of the previous disciplines. In distance learning the compulsory minimum of attendance is supplemented by the interactive trainer-trainee relationship. The high level of training is provided by the relevant forms for independent work, practical training and teamwork.

Forms for organizing the training in Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship, according to the content and nature of the training material provides for the use of both traditional and new forms of training in compliance with the specifics of training, namely:

- Full-time parallel training with the relevant classes in the curriculum and provision of technological materials in paper and electronic form.
- Combined full-time and distance learning - including the first level of learning materials and resources for distance education, namely teaching and methodological materials on paper and their electronic versions.
- Distance learning with attendance periods under the “Regulations of the state requirements for organizing distance learning” (SG - 99/2004) corresponds to the second level of learning, namely, multimedia and interactive materials in an electronic form, partially with third level associated with training and assessment through the use of a distance education system with guaranteed high-speed Internet access.
- Part-time parallel distance learning – organizationally this form includes only the introduction attendance and control of knowledge.

The forms of organization provide for students from different professional field and for those who have acquired bachelor's or master's degrees in professional fields different from the specialization "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship", an opportunity for learning.

The main advantages of parallel distance learning compared to the rest are that this training is carried out in a convenient place at a convenient time and at a comfortable rate. The distance learning is a mixture of interactive self-study and intensive consulting verification support of the student trained in this specialization. Training is entirely provided with educational-methodical materials on paper and in an electronic form. It is organized in a non-attending form; students receive a set of teaching materials for training and self-training as well as the case studies and tests for forming the semestrial part of the school discipline assessment. The teacher - student communication is provided by parallel use of classical (mail, fax, phone, e-mail communication) and Internet-based technologies.

Distance education in its development passes through several stages based on different models: a model based on the application of printing technology known as a model of correspondence; the application of printed, audio and video technology known as multimedia; a model based on the application of telecommunication technologies for providing opportunities for synchronous communication and a model of Internet-based distance learning, which is implemented by various means of communication and provision of content, used by the global network.

CONCLUSIONS

The social needs and development analysis of the educational system and its methods and forms of education show that there is a necessity for a new qualification related to entrepreneurship. It is advisable its acquisition to be achieved by obtaining the basic qualification in the relevant educational- qualification level of higher education. This form of qualification is equally applicable and suitable both for students in full-time and in correspondence form of training. Its advantages are not only in terms of combining the processes of education or work, training and education, but in expanding the scope of training and activation of its individual elements.

The organization of specialization "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship," fills a need, both of the business and of those who practice or will practice the occupation of an entrepreneur in its various modifications.

Specialized training in Industrial business and entrepreneurship is carried out through a system of interdependent disciplines which form in the parallel distance education students the necessary management and social skills for applying entrepreneurial practices at different levels of government. The successful and dosed curriculum, supported by the relevant training and methodological materials units, contributes to the obtaining of both theoretical and methodological training of the students and develops creative thinking, entrepreneurial spirit, a high degree of social responsibility and a tendency to accept a reasonable risk.

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