Entrepreneurial School Leadership: the State of Play

The aim of this summary report is to provide an overview of the literature and policy directives which reflect, critique and are shaping current understandings of entrepreneurial school leadership and training. The starting point for the overview was a search of two key data bases for relevant journal articles, using the search terms outlined below:

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Examination of the abstracts revealed that many of the journal articles identified in this initial search were not relevant to the field of SCHOOL leadership. These were filtered out.

Citations within these articles were followed up and further journal articles, books, policy directives and projects identified. All of the sources were analysed by two Research Associates from P1. The analysis involved the identification of themes and sub-themes across the texts and these have in turn provided the structure and content of this summary. Where applicable the themes/sub-themes have been further categorised according to the four key areas of Entrepreneurial Competence: Strategic Thinking & Visioning; Team Building, Personnel Management & Development; Communication & Negotiation Skills and Financial Resources Mobilization & Optimization.

This summary is structured as follows:

1. Entrepreneurial School Leadership: Definitions
2. Entrepreneurial School Leadership: Drivers
3. Characteristics/behaviours of Entrepreneurial School Leaders
4. The challenges/constraints facing entrepreneurial school leaders
5. Training: provision and methodologies

Limitations:
We acknowledge that the sources underpinning this summary were only those accessible in English. The partners will be asked to identify key literature which has been published in their own home languages which could feed into this summary at a later date. In addition the results of the audit of provision will add detail regarding current entrepreneurial leadership training programmes in the partner countries.

Entrepreneurial School Leadership: Definitions

Entrepreneurship mainly fits contexts which are new and cannot be dealt with by means of experience or routine. Entrepreneurship is leadership in exceptional circumstances

(Czariawska-Joerges and Wolff, 1991)

Entrepreneurship: an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action, to be innovative, take the initiative, take risks, plan and manage projects with a view to achieving objectives.

Lisbon Treaty: Promoting entrepreneurship in schools and universities 2006

[.....] the predisposition to and practice of achieving valued ends by creating, taking or pursuing opportunities for change and innovation and finding new resources or utilising in new ways existing resources (financial, material and human).

(Woods et al, 2007p. 237)

Any discussion regarding the concept of entrepreneurial leadership rests on an assumption that it can in some way be ‘differentiated from other forms of leadership’ (Hentschke and Caldwell, 2007 p.146). The terminology which appears across the literature as defining this type of leadership is:

- Visionary (Hentschke and Caldwell 2007; Borasi and Finnigan 2010; Roomi and Harrison, 2011; Pihie 2014)
- Innovative (Gupta et al 2004; Currie at al 2008; Xaba and Malindi 2010)
- Risk-taking (Gupta et al 2004; Hentschke and Caldwell 2007; Borassi and Finnigan 2010)
- Problem-solving (Currie at al 2008; Borasi and Finnigan 2010)
- Creative (Currie at al 2008; Pashiardis and Savvides, 2011; Pihie 2014a)
- Networkers (Smith 2003 ; Borasi and Finnigan 2010; Scott and Webber 2015
• Resourceful (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010)
• Having a local-global perspective (Smith 2003; Scott and Webber 2013)

Woods et al (2007, 2009), in their study of the Academy Schools Programme in England have identified four distinct types of entrepreneurialism:

**Business entrepreneurialism:** achieving competitive advantage and success as defined in business culture - innovation with a *competitive mission*

**Social entrepreneurialism:** reducing disadvantage, deprivation and social exclusion - innovation with a *social mission*.

**Public entrepreneurialism:** sustaining and advancing the presence, values and aims of a public ethos, including community welfare, social justice and democratic participation and accountability - innovation with a *democratic and community-oriented mission*.

**Cultural entrepreneurialism:** advancing ideas and values that give purpose to individual and social action - innovation with a *mission to bring meaning*.

This typology provides a useful foundation for considering the multiplicity of roles that an entrepreneurial school leader may have to enact and the tensions that may be faced as a result of having to reconcile different ‘missions’. However, a key underlying feature of all of the ‘types’ identified above, is the outward-looking perspective required, a need for entrepreneurial school leaders to utilise what Pashiardis and Savvиде (2011) refer to as ‘the creative use of external networks and resources in order to aid the implementation of the school mission’ (p. 415). After examining leadership styles within primary schools in Cyprus, they identified two ‘domains of practice for successful school leadership’: Instructional and Entrepreneurial. (p.424). The domain of practice for entrepreneurial leadership stresses the need for leaders to develop relationships and networks with the wider school community.

This view is supported by the findings from the EU funded project ‘Leadership Improvement for student achievement’ (LISA). Through collaborative research undertaken with leaders in six EU countries, the project concluded that the entrepreneurial style of leadership involved:

*encouraging relations between the school and the community and parents, promoting cooperation with other organisations and businesses, discussing school goals with relevant stakeholders, utilizing appropriate and effective*
Entrepreneurial School Leadership: Drivers

As Hentschke and Caldwell (2007) state: ‘conditions of compulsory schooling have changed in ways that are encouraging more entrepreneurs to enter the field and to behave entrepreneurially’ (p. 146). The literature identifies a range of reasons to explain the necessity for school leaders to develop entrepreneurial leadership skills:

- **A rapidly changing world**

  We live in an ‘era of complexity’ where ‘the only stable factor is constant change’ and where ‘paradox, ambiguity, and uncertainty are becoming the norm’ (LISA 2009, p.9). School leaders need to be able to manage crisis, uncertainty and complexity (Pihie et al, 2014a, p. 4).

- **Increasing accountability**

  There is an ‘increasing global emphasis on accountability’ (Walker et al, 2013, p. 407), manifested at both national and international levels.

  At the national level school leaders are becoming increasingly accountable to their ‘stakeholders’ – the students, the parents, governing bodies, the community, their governments (Levin, 2003; Pashiardis and Savvides, 2011; Scott and Webber, 2013,). Some countries, for example the UK (England), also publish national league tables which compare schools on their exam performance.

  At the international level, it is the results of the OECD’s Pisa test *(the Programme for International Student Assessment)* which Governments use as a means to identify underperformance and hold school leaders accountable.

  *The Pisa tests - the Programme for International Student Assessment –have become the most influential rankings in international education, based on tests taken by more than 500,000 secondary school pupils*  
  *(BBC News, 2015)*

  *At the same time Germany was in a Pisa shock*  
  *(LISA 2009 p 4)*

  The impact of the performativity and accountability measures has led to what Currie et al (2008) refer to as ‘a quasi-market framed by performance indicators’ (p.988). Schools are often in competition with one another, with parents able to make choices over where to send their child.
• **Decentralisation**

Increasingly regional and national governments are devolving decision-making powers with respect to budgets, curriculum, staffing etc. to school leaders, recognising that individual context is important and that leaders need to make decisions based on the needs of their stakeholders.

*The logic of decentralization assumes that changes in governance are key to improved performance of schools; that local bodies are in the best position to define and make necessary changes; and that parents especially have important knowledge about how the educational enterprise should best be carried out* (Levin, 2003, p. 170-171)

The impact of this policy shift has led to an increase in expectations with regard to what it means to be a school leader (Pashiardis and Savvides, 2011, p. 414). It requires ‘increased sophistication’ (Fromm et al, 2003 p. 302) as educators will be required to understand ‘the ‘business model’ as well as the ‘education model’ of any organization’ (ibid).

• **Improved performance in teaching and learning**

One of the key drivers towards a need for a more entrepreneurial style of leadership is that the quality of teaching and learning needs to be such that it creates a ‘citizenry with a capacity to compete successfully in the global village’ (Scott and Webber, 2013, p.113). The EU Commission report ‘Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools’ (2008) identifies the need for students to be equipped with ‘the competences and motivation to make learning a lifelong activity’ (p.3); and for schools to be able to ‘respond to each pupil’s individual learning needs’ through changes to curricula, school organisation and the roles of teachers (p.5). The overarching aim is for school systems to ‘contribute to supporting long-term sustainable economic growth in Europe’ and to be able to ‘respond to the need to promote equity, to respond to cultural diversity and to reduce early school leaving’ (p.4).

This view is supported by the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurial Education who state in their final report (2014) that ‘For Europe to compete globally, we need future generations to have the mind-set and skills to be entrepreneurial in society. Europe needs citizens who are creative, socially responsible, can spot opportunities, understand and take risks, and can work in teams and solve problems. (p.7).

In short, school leaders need to equip their students for a complex and uncertain the future.
In acknowledging that entrepreneurial leadership is a distinct and therefore identifiable style of leadership, it must also hold true that it can be recognised in terms of characteristics and behaviours. Whilst some argue that entrepreneurial leaders should be defined in terms of their ‘opposition to “managerial” leaders and not in terms of a set of skills that can be learnt or taught’ (Roomi and Harrison, 2011, p.5); others (Gupta et al, 2004) ‘look at entrepreneurial leadership not as a collection of traits (i.e. who one is), but as a set of behaviours (i.e. what one does) (Roomi and Harrison, 2011, p. 5).

The following section explores the characteristics and behaviours of entrepreneurial school leaders that have been identified in the literature. These have been categorised according to the four key areas of Entrepreneurial Competence: Strategic Thinking & Visioning; Team Building, Personnel Management & Development; Communication & Negotiation Skills and Financial Resources Mobilization & Optimization.

**Strategic Thinking & Visioning**

- Driven by a vision (Smith, 2003; Hentschke and Caldwell, 2007; Borasi and Finnigan, 2010, Pihie et al 2014a)
- Outward –looking (Smith, 2003, p.318; LISA, 2009, Pashiardis and Savvide 2011). Within the global context entrepreneurs seek ongoing access to information from their own contexts and also from around the world’ (Scott and Webber 2013, p. 129)
- Risk-takers (Hentschke and Caldwell, 2007 Pihie et al 2014a, Gupta et al 2004, Woods et al 2009; Xaba and Malindi, 2010). However it is acknowledged that risk-taking in public sector organisations needs to be ‘well-calculated and prudent’ (Pihie et al 2014a, p.3) and ‘qualified’ (Currie at al, 2008, p. 1002). The reason for this is that the acceptance of failure which is typically associated with entrepreneurial behaviour, is not tolerated by the public (ibid) with respect to public service. Risk-taking therefore needs to be ‘balanced’ (ibid).
- ‘innovative’- (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010;
- Good time-management skills (Scott and Webber, 2013, p.117)
- Creative and able to recognise opportunities (Pihie et al, 2014a) rather than problems (Hentschke and Caldwell, 2007) – particularly with respect to overcoming bureaucratic structures (Currie at al, 2008, p1002)
- A good understanding of the social and political landscape (Scott and Webber, 2015)

These characteristics can be summarised in terms of Gupta et al’s concept of ‘scenario enactment’ (2004) - the ability to envision the future and create a scenario of innovative possibilities, to develop ‘various entrepreneurial opportunities and take the risks to enact the vision (Pihie et al, 2014a, p.3-4).
Team Building, Personnel Management & Development

- The ability to create a culture which fosters entrepreneurial activity amongst staff. In a study by Currie et al, 2008, they found that this could be achieved through acting as ‘change agents’ (p.1001) and ensuring distributed leadership.
- The ability to appoint key people and build a team that is committed to enacting the vision -what Gupta et al, 2004 refer to as ‘cast enactment’.
- The ability to ‘bring people on board’ (Currie et al, 2008, p.1003) – and this refers to all stakeholders. They build coalitions that knit together public and private interests’ (Currie et al, 2008, p.098)
- The ability to resolve conflict and build relationships(Scott and Webber, 2013, p.117)

Communication & Negotiation Skills

- masters at creative networking- locally, nationally and internationally (Pashiardis and Savvide,2011)
- They clearly articulate their vision (Woods et al, 2009)

Financial Resources Mobilization & Optimization.

- Not constrained by resources (Borasi and Finnigan 2010)
- The creative use of resources in order to aid the implementation of the school mission’ (Pashiardis and Savvide,2011, p. 415)
- Ready to seize opportunities (Borasi and Finnigan 2010)

The challenges/constraints facing entrepreneurial school leaders

It is important to highlight the particular challenges and constraints facing entrepreneurial leaders working within the education sector. These have been identified within the literature as having a potentially limiting effect on the ability of leaders to act ‘entrepreneurially’.

- The individualism of entrepreneurialism versus the democratic governance of schools
- The bureaucracy inherent in the public sector
- Being answerable to a range of stakeholders- students, parents, governors, sponsors, governments etc. This has the potential to impose incompatible demands on school leaders.(Currie et al, 2008)
- Performativity and accountability agendas- targets, inspections, league tables
- Working within education systems around the world where Head Teachers have limited autonomy over resources, staffing, curriculum
Overview

As the preparation and training of effective school leaders is increasingly placed high on many educational reform agendas (Bryant et al., 2013), the development of high-quality school leadership programmes is attracting increasing attention (Barber et al., 2010). However, the literature notes a dearth of research investigating best practices in the provision of entrepreneurial leadership training (Roomi and Harrison, 2011). Although educators are increasingly expected to become ‘agents for change’, they generally receive little formal preparation or training to help them effectively initiate change (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010). In their report on how different school systems build leadership capacity, Barber et al. (2010: 9) note three types of approaches used by schools to unlock and develop leadership talent:

1. Self-identification by potential leaders and informal mechanisms by which potential leaders are coached and given opportunities to develop within schools.
2. Providing opportunities for potential leaders to take courses or join programmes to build their capacity and interest in leadership.
3. Proactively guiding the careers of potential leaders so that they gain progressively greater leadership experience through new roles taken on within their schools with guidance and support.

A key theme in the literature is the diverse range of understandings of the concept of ‘entrepreneurial leadership’. For example, a survey of 131 UK higher education institutions by Hannon (2007) revealed a high degree of variability across the country in conceptualising ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘leadership’, and a similar variability in terms of design of development/training programmes. A number of authors highlight:

a. The paucity of literature on entrepreneurial leadership in general (e.g. Bagheri and Pihie, 2010)
b. A lack of investigations into how best to teach it

For example, Roomi and Harrison (2011: 9) note that “…very little attention is paid to how entrepreneurial leadership behaviours are learnt, whether they can be taught, and how this might be done.” Similarly, on a European level, the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education (2014: 4) concluded in its final report that,

*Educators and education leaders in Europe are not sufficiently trained in entrepreneurship education, which negatively impacts on the potential for entrepreneurship to become embedded in education systems.*

Although there is an increasing body of research on entrepreneurship education in general (e.g. Galloway and Kelly, 2009; Hannon, 2006; Johnson et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2007), only few studies within this work focus specially on the leadership dimension. While some studies do touch on the central role of leadership in entrepreneurship (e.g. Chell et al., 2007; Muzychenko and Zalan, 2008), there is little elaboration on how to
actually teach/learn the competency of entrepreneurial leadership (cf. Roomi and Harrison, 2011). Some argue that this might be because research is yet to establish which leadership patterns are specific to entrepreneurship (Vecchio, 2003).

Where investigations into the teaching/training of entrepreneurial leadership competencies have been conducted, these remain largely limited to ‘western’ contexts. This body of research points to a strong convergence across different locations in terms of the content of leadership training programmes (Walker et al., 2013), although national and local circumstances (e.g. national agendas, school culture etc.) may impact on the operation of leadership training programmes (see Bryant et al., 2013; Leithwood and Levin, 2008).

For example, in a comparative study of leadership preparation programmes in Canada, the USA, and England, Bush and Jackson (2002), found a shared emphasis on finance, curriculum, and external relations. Research also suggests that an increasingly common feature across leadership training programmes are university-school partnerships which support action-oriented enquiry, and provide mentoring/support structures (e.g. Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Perez et al., 2011; Piggot-Irvine, 2011). Partnerships of this kind are increasingly recognised as key to the success and effectiveness of leadership training programmes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010), allowing participants to link theory and practice (Sanzo et al., 2011). In sum, recent research strongly suggests a swing towards the involvement of academics in developing and delivering leadership training programmes (Bryant et al., 2012; Huber, 2004; MacBeath, 2011).

**Content and Delivery Methods**

A number of recent studies have documented features/characteristics of high-quality leadership training programmes more generally (e.g. Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Huber and West, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Pounder, 2011). A focus on entrepreneurial leadership aspects in this literature is less common. However, in a recent study on preparing change-agents in education, Borasi and Finnigan (2010) raise two key questions for entrepreneurial leadership training provision:

1. **What** should educators learn about entrepreneurship?
2. **How** can these learning goals be best achieved?

They propose two key elements for the design of entrepreneurial leadership training for educators:

1. Support educators to appreciate the value of entrepreneurship in terms of making them ‘agents for change’
2. Develop an understanding in educators of entrepreneurial concepts and practices

In relation to these core elements, they put forward several possible methodologies/training approaches:
Introducing conceptualisations of entrepreneurship, and examples of practice, to educators to enable them to realise the application of entrepreneurship to education. This could include:

- Focusing on specific areas of practice (i.e. visioning, decision-making, problem-solving, dealing with resources, risk-taking, networking, dealing with growth, initiating innovation)
- Getting participants to identify micro and macro-level factors in their contexts which could impact upon entrepreneurial activity
- Considering characteristics/traits of entrepreneurial educators

Introducing concrete examples of how entrepreneurial skills have made educators successful. Examples of methodologies can include:

- The use of in-depth portraits, stories, profiles (cf. Fisher and Koch, 2004; Leisey and Lavaroni, 2000), i.e. ‘entrepreneurship-in-action’
- Inviting entrepreneurial educators as guest speakers
- Getting participants to interview entrepreneurial educators of their choice

Further methodologies for training suggested in the literature include:

- The use of entrepreneurial leaders’ autobiographies, critical incidents, and structured group activities (Taliadorou and Pashiardis, 2015)
- Workshops and skill development activities that focus on particular skills such as the ability to recognise entrepreneurial opportunities i.e. ‘entrepreneurial alertness’ (Roomi and Harrison, 2011)
- Critical reflection (Densten and Gray, 2001)
- Active and experiential learning (Kempster and Cope, 2010)
- Simulations and case studies (Walker et al., 2013)

In a recent study, Roomi and Harrison (2011: 20-27) put forward a number of possible design elements for entrepreneurial leadership training programmes, including (a) the entrepreneurial mind-set, (b) influencing strategies such as coalition forming and assertiveness, (c) the ability to communicate a shared vision, (d) interpersonal and teamworking skills, (e) the ability to deal with adversity and disappointment, (f) ethics, and (g) the ability to empower and motivate an entrepreneurial team. While this is not exclusively focused on training provision for school leaders, it might well provide a useful template.

**Example of leadership training provision for school leaders focusing on entrepreneurial leadership:**

Columba 1400 Head Teacher Leadership Academy: Developing Enterprise Culture

A study by Deakins et al. (2005) reported changes in head teachers who had taken part in the Leadership Academy, including an increased willingness to develop links with local businesses and the local community, and the inclusion of enterprise activities in school development plans.

**Final thoughts**

In a meta-analysis of the published articles from the International Study of the Preparation of Principals Programme (ISPP) – a collaborative programme made up of 14 participating countries – the authors conclude that whilst there are ‘similarities in the learning needs for educational leaders across cultures’ there are important differences in how these are manifested. (Scott and Webber, 2015, p.126). As a consequence, entrepreneurial leadership training must allow for ‘the unique features of each context’ and shared experiences and common terminologies must not ‘mask significant contextual differences.’ (ibid, p.132)

**References**


Czariawska-Joerges, B., and Wolff, R (1991) Leaders, managers, entrepreneurs on and off the organizational stage Organization Studies Vol 12, No. 4


Huber SG, & West M (2002). Developing school leaders: A critical review of current practices, approaches and issues, and some directions for the future. In: Leithwood K,


Walker, A., Brynat, D and Moosung L. (20130 International Patterns in Principal Preparation: Commonalities and Variations in Pre-service programmes *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* Vol 41 No. 4


Additional sources of information:

1) Information and articles provided on the OECD Improving School Leadership web page: http://www.oecd.org/education/school/improvingschoolleadership-home.htm

2) Information and articles provided on Leadership Improvement on Student Achievement (LISA) web page http://www.leadership-in-education.eu/index.php?id=235


4) International Study of the Preparation of Principals (ISPP) http://ucalgary.ca/ispp/