

Rediscovering Sustainable Entrepreneurship Education Through Entrepreneurship Practices

Education for sustainable development has been recognized as an essential component of quality education and lifelong learning, as emphasized by UNESCO (2017) within the Education 2030 framework. All educational institutions, from early childhood to higher education, are encouraged to integrate sustainability issues by developing learning objectives focused on behavior and action, particularly through entrepreneurship. Sustainable entrepreneurship education has gained increasing attention in the research community (Landstrom & al., 2021; Thananusak, 2019), with a dominant focus on the impact of education on students' skills, personality traits, and entrepreneurial behaviors related to sustainability (Nabi & al., 2017; Sharma & al., 2020). However, while previous studies have largely examined the effectiveness of educational processes and outcomes in operational terms—such as entrepreneurial intention, venture creation, or skills development, there remains a gap in assessing affective indicators, including emotion, passion, sense of responsibility, engagement, and entrepreneurial mindset (Nabi & al., 2017).

Addressing this gap, recent research suggests that values, beliefs, and paradigms play a crucial role in shaping sustainable entrepreneurs by serving as motivational drivers for mobilizing and applying skills (Biberhofer & al., 2019; Kyrö, 2015; Leicht & al., 2018). Furthermore, transformational education has been identified as key to fostering deep intrapersonal change necessary for achieving the vision of the agenda 2030 (Giangrande & al., 2019). In line with these perspectives, this study explores the extent to which sustainable entrepreneurship education fosters a mindset transformation among key program stakeholders, including learners, teachers, and coordinators.

A qualitative multiple case study methodology based on ethnographic approaches was employed to address this research question. The study examined four sustainable entrepreneurship programs implemented at the primary education level, collecting various sources of data to analyze their impact. The decision to focus on primary education responds to calls within the research community for expanding entrepreneurial education beyond higher education contexts (Champy-Remoussenard & Starck, 2018; Nabi & al., 2017) and aligns with Levesque & al.'s (2022) argument that fostering entrepreneurial mindsets in children increases the likelihood of sustainable societal change.

Our findings reveal that sustainable entrepreneurship education provides a framework for learners to experience vertical growth by developing a growth-oriented (Dweck, 2006) and beneficial mindset (Buchanan & Greig, 2021). This transformation includes two key dimensions: first, the belief that intelligence and abilities are malleable and can be developed through effort, deliberate practice, and effective strategies; second, the adoption of a more compassionate, inclusive, and interconnected perspective, which supports a vision of collective transformation toward a more sustainable world. These findings contribute to the literature on entrepreneurship education by highlighting the importance of mindset development and transformation as a key outcome of sustainable entrepreneurship education, thus advocating for a broader consideration of affective and cognitive dimensions in educational impact assessments.