

Comparing the Impact of the Quality of Entrepreneurship Education on the Decision to Continue Education: Slovenia and Romania

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Entrepreneurship and management education are important for the development of entrepreneurs' knowledge and skills. In the era of globalization and continuously changing business environments, the need for continuing education is becoming essential. However, the entrepreneur's decision about whether to continue education depends on the quality perception of past education. The aim of this paper is to study two countries: Slovenia and Romania and find out if entrepreneurship education is satisfactory and qualitative, and what is the relationship between education quality and education continuation. Multi-item measures were used, questionnaire data were gathered from two samples obtained in Slovenia and Romania, measurement scales were tested, and differences between the two countries were assessed by comparing means and regression analysis coefficients. We have found out that in both countries education content, the quality of the process and the satisfaction with education tend to be the most important elements that predict the participants' decision about whether or not to continue education. The results show that room and equipment adequacy are important but only in Romania. Finally, we present some further findings and make some recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The development of knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs can be in a large extent dependent on entrepreneurship and management education. In our time, characterized by the processes of globalization, the rise of information and communication technology, and continuously

changing business environments, the need for continuing education is becoming even more important than before. Education of entrepreneurs is becoming increasingly needed for assuring a higher probability of a new venture success (Postigo et al. 2003). When entrepreneurs think about whether or not to continue education, they may make their decisions depending on the basis of their satisfaction or quality perception of past education. In this paper, we compare the satisfaction and quality of entrepreneurship education between two countries: Slovenia and Romania, and assess the relationship between education quality and education continuation in both countries.

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The focus of the paper is, hence, entrepreneurship education, which can be defined as structured, formal conveyance of entrepreneurial knowledge; entrepreneurial knowledge meaning the concepts, skills, and mentality individual business owners use during the course of starting and developing their growth-oriented businesses; and entrepreneurial learning meaning the active and cognitive processes individuals employ as they acquire, retain and use entrepreneurial knowledge (Young 1997). Entrepreneurs, to be able to solve emerging problems and to increase business results of their enterprises, need to learn continuously through self-directed learning, as well as through formal education and training. However, in order to make the decision of whether to continue education or not, entrepreneurs may first rethink their past experiences with entrepreneurship education.

EDUCATION SATISFACTION, QUALITY, AND CONTINUATION

Overall satisfaction is defined as an emotional reaction to a product or service experienced (Spreng et al. 1996), while quality means meeting the customer requirements (Oakland 1993). In the context of services of management or entrepreneurship education participants may evaluate the educational experience (1) in general terms by their overall satisfaction and in terms of their assessment on how good their overall requirements have been met, and (2) in specific terms by evaluating different elements of education quality such as the lecturer, the content, the process, and the facility.

In spite of very different traditions and structures of adult and continuing education in the world, it seems that the relation between adult education and work and labor market is becoming very important. All countries have very large adult education needs, extending to all fields such as general and vocational, formal and non-formal. The state and

social partners priority themes include education for the labor market and education related to employment and vocational training, but the state should include among its priorities the study of the system, policy, and educational needs, and the updating of adult education (Jelenc 1996, 447).

Entrepreneurs acquire knowledge by engaging in formal education and by taking part in courses related to different fields of interest, which are important for managing the business. The success factors include perseverance (building confidence and self-esteem), commitment to the enterprise, and positive attitude and approach. Developers of qualifications and training programmes for post-secondary education and training of entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs should (Labuschagne et al. 2001, 17): (1) identify and integrate the outcomes from existing subjects in the field of economic and management sciences that relate to the success factors of entrepreneurs; and (2) supplement these outcomes with case studies, experiential exercises and practical activities that will enable learners to integrate the knowledge and skills obtained in these training of entrepreneurs and apply these skills and knowledge in an entrepreneurial environment. The content-related techniques or methodologies that influence the success of the entrepreneurship training are case studies, simulations and business plan executions. Materials such as a study guide, time schedules and facilitator guidelines that could improve the evaluation are used as they make more information available to the evaluator. The latter must be knowledgeable in the field and have experience in business and entrepreneurship training (Pretorius 2001, 14).

The majority of researches have explored the contents of education – what entrepreneurs need to be successful, but training organizations want to get the answers to questions about the quality of their training programmes as perceived by their clients. If the results of such evaluations are disappointing, the training organization can modify its policy and programmes. The main method to collect the data is a closed questionnaire sent or distributed to the participants of the training. Mulder (2001, 323), for example, prepares the questionnaire that consists of eight blocks of questions. Within the group of general questions one is about the general satisfaction on the training project as a whole. The questions about the objectives of the training project include questions about the level to which certain objectives are of importance within the project. These objectives related questions are aimed at: (1) attaining a learning result (knowledge, skills, attitudes); (2) improving a changed work

behaviour in the work situation; and (3) supporting change of the organization; (4) other factors are personal factors, training programme factors, organizational factors and transfer conditions.

Other scholars also addressed different dimensions important for the evaluation of education quality. In the study of Hill et al. (2003, 16–18) four themes emerged in relation to what students perceived quality education to be. In the order of importance to the student group, these themes are: (1) quality of the lecturer (delivery in the classroom, feedback to students during the session and in assignments, relationship with students in the classroom); (2) student engagement with learning (the students valued a curriculum that was related to their worlds but broadened their horizons); (3) social/emotional support systems (the students found support from college support systems, their peers and families); and (4) library and IT resources. In the study of Louw et al. (2001, 44) the quality of the MBA programme loaded on five factors: (1) value of the MBA programme and personal expectations of graduates (six items); (2) coursework material (four items); (3) quality of lecturers (three items); (4) learning methods (three items); and (5) interpersonal and leadership skills (two items). In sum, education may be evaluated in terms of satisfaction and perceived quality of the lecturer, education content, environment, materials, methods, learning processes, and results (knowledge acquisition, skill training).

Loyalty means a positive evaluation as well as non-random continuous purchases, usually of product brands (Mowen 1995). Oliva et al. (1992) tried to explain why investments in a service fail. In their study they supported the predictions that the satisfaction-loyalty relationship could be linear and non-linear, depending on the customer involvement. Despite a possibility of non-linearity, in the entrepreneurship education research general positive relationships between education satisfaction and continuation (loyalty) were found, particularly on the basis of samples from Slovenia (Antončič and Hvalič Erzetič 2001; 2003; Antončič et al. 2003).

Besides the above-mentioned findings from Slovenia, notable entrepreneurship research works were completed in Romania as well – mostly on entrepreneurial education (Scarlat 2001; 2003; Scarlet and Simion 2003).

In this paper we explore similarities and differences between Slovenia and Romania in entrepreneurship education satisfaction/quality and loyalty, as well as in testing the hypothesis of the positive relationship between education satisfaction/quality and education continuation.

METHODS

In this section the methodology (variables and measurement, sample and data collection, and analysis) is presented.

Variables and Measurement

Independent variables are satisfaction and perceived quality of education. First, the satisfaction level was not assumed to be uni-dimensional as proposed by Westbrook (1980) who used only one five-point Delighted-Terrible Scale. Antončič and Hvalič Erzetič (2001) discovered that measuring satisfaction with entrepreneurship education on a single six-point scale ranging from 'very satisfied' to 'very unsatisfied' results in a very skewed answer distribution, which may not be usable for the analysis with continuous variables. Therefore, satisfaction was measured with eight items on seven-point semantic differential scales answering a question about the respondent's general feeling about the education they engaged in (anchors: very dissatisfied-very satisfied, terrible-delighted, very dissatisfied-not at all dissatisfied, not at all satisfied-very satisfied, unfavorable-favorable, unpleasant-pleasant, I didn't like it at all-I like it very much, frustrated-contented). These items were adapted from Crosby and Stephens (1987), Eroglu and Machleit (1990), and Spreng et al. (1996).

The quality of education was measured with a 17-item scale that was developed as an extension of a 3-item service quality scale of Taylor and Baker (1994). Measurement items were added by taking into consideration different elements of the educational service such as an overall assessment of quality and the fulfillment of expectations, the education content, the evaluation of the lecturer, the appropriateness of materials or handouts and audiovisual aids, the adequacy of room and equipment, and the usefulness of acquired knowledge.

The dependent variable – education continuation was measured as the respondent's intention to continue his or her education in the future in terms of his or her expressed loyalty to the educational programme and provider. Five questions were adapted from Bettencourt (1997), and Zeithaml et al. (1996): (1) saying positive things, (2) recommend to people, who are thinking about education, (3) encourage friends and relatives to engage in this education, (4) consider this education provider as a first choice, and (5) engage more in education from this provider in next years. A seven-point Likert-type scale was used with anchors from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

The control variables data was collected about the respondent's education type (degree, non-degree), age, gender, length of work experience, education level, and industry.

Data Collection and Sample

The data was collected from Slovenian and Romanian practicing and potential entrepreneurs, as well as non-entrepreneurs, who engage in degree and non-degree management education and training. A structured questionnaire was administered mainly via classroom distribution to conveniently selected groups of participants.

96 Answers were received from 128 respondents from Slovenia and 135 respondents from Romania (see also table 1). Our sample shows that in Slovenia there are 22.8% respondents who educate themselves at the post-graduate programme, in Romania these are 64.9%. In Slovenia 40.2% of respondents educate themselves at a college/university programme, in Romania 29.8%. Only 1.6% of respondents in Slovenia and 1.5% in Romania educate themselves at a secondary/high school programme. At a non-degree education level, 17.3% in Slovenia and 21.4% in Romania have participated in workshops and seminars that lasted more than 1 week, 18.1% in Slovenia and 22.9% in Romania took one day seminars.

The age of respondents is mostly spread between twenty to fifty years. 58.3% of respondents in Slovenia and 72.3% in Romania are more than 20 and up to 30 years old, 22.0% in Slovenia and 23.8% in Romania are more than 30 and up to 40 years old and 12.6% in Slovenia and 3.1% in Romania are more than 40 and up to 50 years old. In Slovenia 4.7% of them are over 50 years old and 2.4% are up to 20 years old. In Romania only 0.8% are up to 20 years old, no one is over 50 years old.

56.8% of respondents in Slovenia are female and 43.2% are male. In Romania 45.4% are female and 54.6% are male. 53.5% of respondents in Slovenia and 71.5% in Romania are single. 40.2% of Slovenian and 27.7% of Romanian respondents are married, of whom 6.3% and 0.8% are divorced or widowed. The respondents have various professions but most of them are economists.

The education level of the sample is as follows: in Slovenia 50.8% of respondents have a secondary or high school diploma, 31.7% have a college or university degree, 15.1% have a vocational school. In Romania 70.8% of respondents have a college or university degree, 26.9% of them have a post-graduate degree and 1.5% have a secondary or high school diploma.

TABLE 1 Sample characteristics

	Slovenia	Romania
<i>Number of responses</i>	128	135
<i>Age</i>		
up to 20 years old	2.4%	0.8%
more than 20 and up to 30 years old	58.3%	72.3%
more than 30 and up to 40 years old	22.0%	23.8%
more than 40 and up to 50 years old	12.6%	4.7%
over 50 years old	4.7%	0.0%
<i>Gender</i>		
female	56.8%	45.4%
male	43.2%	54.6%
<i>Marital status</i>		
single	53.5%	71.5%
married	40.2%	27.7%
divorced	6.3%	0.8%
<i>Education</i>		
vocational school	15.1%	0.0%
secondary/high school	50.8%	1.5%
college/university	31.7%	70.8%
post-graduate	2.4%	26.9%
<i>Work experience</i>		
5 years or less	50.4%	62.5%
more than 5 and up to 10 years	12.4%	23.4%
more than 10 and up to 20 years	21.5%	11.7%
more than 20 and up to 30 years	12.4%	2.3%
<i>Industry</i>		
customer services	11.8%	27.8%
production of industrial goods	10.8%	11.1%
engineering and research	6.9%	12.2%
consulting business service	13.7%	12.2%
retail trade	10.8%	11.1%
wholesale trade	3.9%	13.3%
<i>Entrepreneurial maturity</i>		
practicing	16.9%	26.3%
prospective	18.6%	36.1%
maybe will establish own firm	48.4%	33.6%
will not establish own firm	15.4%	4.1%

The length of work experience is spread from zero to thirty years, but most of the respondents have had a work experience of: five years or less – Slovenia 50.4% and Romania 62.5%, more than five and up to ten years – Slovenia 12.4% and Romania 23.4%, more than ten and up to twenty

years – Slovenia 21.5% and Romania 11.7%, and in Slovenia 12.4% and more than twenty and up to thirty years – Slovenia 12.4% and Romania 2.3%.

The sample consists of 16.9% practicing entrepreneurs in Slovenia and 26.3% in Romania. 18,6% of respondents in Slovenia and 36,1% in Romania will start-up their own business, 48.4% in Slovenia and 33.6% in Romania will maybe establish their own business, whereas 15.4% of respondents in Slovenia and 4.1% in Romania do not intend to establish their own business. The most of practicing entrepreneurs in Slovenia (10.5% of respondents) have had their own business more than five and up to ten years (in Romania 3.3%), the most of practicing entrepreneurs in Romania (7.4% of respondents) have had their own business more than two and up to five years (in Slovenia 0.0%) and the same percent in Romania (7.4%) have had their own business less than one year (in Slovenia 3.2%). Most of potential (prospective) entrepreneurs (in Slovenia 6.5% and in Romania 9.8% of respondents) will establish their own business in less than one year, 3.2% in Slovenia and 6.6% in Romania will establish their own business in one year, 8.9% in Slovenia and 19.7% in Romania in two to three years.

The respondents come from different industries, but in Slovenia the majority of them (13.7%) operate in consulting and business services (in Romania 12.2%); in Romania the majority of respondents (27.8%) come from customer services (in Slovenia 11.8%).

Analysis

The means of all items were compared between the two countries by assessing their values and performing t-tests. Multi-item scales of satisfaction, quality and education continuation (loyalty) were checked for their convergent validity by using exploratory factor analysis and the Cronbach Alpha reliability measure.¹ The education quality construct was assessed for dimensionality by using exploratory factor analysis, resulting in three distinct quality dimensions: (1) quality of education content and process, (2) quality and usefulness of acquired knowledge, and (3) quality and adequacy of room and equipment. For satisfaction, the three quality dimensions and education continuation construct a single item that was computed as the mean of all items. This was done in order to reduce the number of variables for a subsequent analysis. The key hypothesis was tested by using regression analyses with two country-based groups of data.

TABLE 2 Education satisfaction items – mean values

Satisfaction (1–7)	Mean (Std. Error of Mean)	
	Slovenia	Romania
Very dissatisfied–Very satisfied	4.97 (0.12)	4.92 (0.12)
Terrible–Delighted	4.99 (0.12)	5.18 (0.12)
Very dissatisfied–Not at all dissatisfied	5.25 (0.14)	5.51 (0.13)
Not at all satisfied–Very satisfied	5.00 (0.13)	4.87 (0.13)
Unfavorable–Favorable	5.22 (0.12)	5.29 (0.12)
Unpleasant–Pleasant	5.53 (0.11)	5.60 (0.13)
I did not like it at all–I liked it very much	5.22 (0.13)	5.42 (0.11)
Frustrated–Contented	5.33 (0.12)	5.45 (0.13)

FINDINGS

Education Satisfaction, Quality, and Loyalty Levels

The mean values for all education satisfaction, quality, and loyalty items are shown in table 2. Most of them were found not to be different between Slovenia and Romania. T-test statistical differences (at 0.05 level) were discovered only for three quality items. The item ‘knowledge, which is acquired, will be very useful in my work’ was rated higher in Slovenia (4.8) than in Romania (4.2). The mean of the item ‘The equipment in the room, in which education was performed, is totally adequate’ was found higher in Slovenia (5.0) than in Romania (4.6). The item ‘The education content was adequate’ also received a higher rate in Slovenia (5.3) than in Romania (5.0).

When means were compared between the two country groups at the construct and dimension level, no differences were found, except one – the acquired knowledge quality dimension was found higher in Slovenia (5.0) than in Romania (4.7; see table 5).

The Education Continuation Predictability

The results of the multiple regression analysis, which tested the relationship between education continuation (loyalty) and its predictors (education satisfaction, and three quality dimensions) are shown in table 6. Adjusted R-squares of the multiple regression models were found high in both countries (Slovenia 0.60, Romania 0.65) indicating that almost two thirds of variance in loyalty can be explained by satisfaction, con-

TABLE 3 Education quality items – mean values

Rate the following statements about the education that you engaged in:

Item (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree)	Mean (Std. Error of Mean)	
	Slovenia	Romania
I believe that the general quality is low.	2.64 (0.14)	3.14 (0.17)
Overall, I consider it excellent.	4.59 (0.14)	4.60 (0.14)
My expectations were fulfilled.	4.85 (0.12)	4.75 (0.14)
In general, it was very useful.	5.31 (0.12)	5.10 (0.13)
Knowledge, which I acquired, will be very useful in my work.	5.32 (0.11)	5.01 (0.14)
Knowledge, which I acquired, is directly related to my work.	4.75 (0.14)	4.16 (0.16)
I will use knowledge, which I acquired, in my work.	5.41 (0.12)	5.07 (0.15)
The room, in which education was performed, is totally adequate.	4.93 (0.15)	4.84 (0.16)
The equipment in the room, in which education was performed, is totally adequate.	5.03 (0.14)	4.63 (0.17)
The education content had very good logical structure.	5.11 (0.11)	5.02 (0.14)
The education content was adequate.	5.32 (0.11)	4.97 (0.13)
The lecturer conveyed the subject matter in an interesting manner.	5.28 (0.11)	5.53 (0.13)
The lecturer communicated the subject matter clearly.	5.49 (0.10)	5.53 (0.13)
I am very satisfied with the lecturer.	5.39 (0.12)	5.46 (0.12)
Audiovisual aids were utilized very well.	5.04 (0.13)	4.70 (0.17)
The materials were prepared very well.	5.05 (0.13)	4.93 (0.14)
The quality of education provided by this organization is generally poor (1) or excellent (7)?	5.26 (0.10)	5.50 (0.10)

tent/process quality, acquired knowledge quality, and room and equipment adequacy. This is in support of the overall hypothesis on the relationship between satisfaction/quality and loyalty.

However, in the Slovenian sample coefficients of only half of the regression elements were found significant (satisfaction: standardized coefficient 0.20, and content/process quality: st. coef. 0.65). In the Romanian sample the coefficients of satisfaction (st. coef. 0.30), content/process quality (0.38), and room/equipment adequacy (0.21) were significant, whereas the acquired knowledge quality coefficient was low (0.07) and non-significant. These results are also in some support of the

TABLE 4 Education continuation/loyalty items – mean values

Evaluation of the statements about education you have taken part in:

Item (1 – strongly disagree, 7 – strongly agree)	Mean (Std. Error of Mean)	
	Slovenia	Romania
Saying positive things about it.	5.25 (0.11)	5.01 (0.13)
Recommend to people who are thinking about education.	5.34 (0.12)	5.27 (0.14)
Encourage friends and relatives to engage in this education.	4.91 (0.14)	5.15 (0.15)
Consider this education provider as a first choice.	4.92 (0.14)	4.73 (0.14)
Engage more in education from this provider in next years.	4.70 (0.14)	4.66 (0.16)

TABLE 5 Education construct and dimension means

Construct or dimension	Mean (Std. Error of Mean)	
	Slovenia	Romania
Satisfaction	5.11 (0.11)	5.31 (0.10)
Quality		
• content and process	5.11 (0.09)	5.15 (0.12)
• acquired knowledge	5.15 (0.11)	4.75 (0.13)
• room and equipment	5.00 (0.13)	4.73 (0.15)
Loyalty	5.03 (0.11)	4.98 (0.13)

overall hypothesis on the satisfaction/quality-loyalty relationship, with a difference between the two countries in the impact of room/equipment quality on loyalty, which was found in Romania, but not in Slovenia. In both countries, the content/process quality, as the most important, and satisfaction were found the strongest predictors of education continuation (loyalty).

When unstandardized coefficients were compared between the two samples, we discovered that relative impacts of three predictors differ between the two countries (more than two standard error difference). Content and process quality seems to have a stronger impact on loyalty in Slovenia (unstandardized coefficient 0.80) than in Romania (unst. coef. 0.42), whereas the impact of satisfaction and room/equipment quality can be considered stronger in Romania than in Slovenia (unst. coef.: satisfaction – Romania 0.39, Slovenia 0.22; room/equipment – Romania 0.17, Slovenia –0.05).

TABLE 6 Regression analysis results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>Slovenia</i> (constant)	0.219	0.434		0.504	0.615		
Satisfaction	0.223	0.095	0.202	2.350	0.020	0.457	2.190
Quality							
• content and process	0.795	0.113	0.648	7.042	0.000	0.400	2.500
• acquired knowledge	-0.027	0.069	-0.026	-0.394	0.694	0.761	1.314
• room and equipment	-0.053	0.053	-0.062	-1.009	0.315	0.900	1.111
<i>Romania</i> (constant)	-0.504	0.389		-1.294	0.198		
Satisfaction	0.386	0.088	0.297	4.408	0.000	0.602	1.660
Quality							
• content and process	0.418	0.106	0.379	3.956	0.000	0.298	3.351
• acquired knowledge	0.096	0.068	0.095	1.416	0.159	0.612	1.634
• room and equipment	0.173	0.065	0.206	2.674	0.009	0.462	2.165

Note: Column headings are as follows: (1) B; (2) standard error [1–2 unstandardized coefficients]; (3) beta [standardized coefficient]; (4) *t*; (5) sig.; (6) tolerance; (7) VIF [6–7 collinearity statistics].

Other Findings

Other findings based on our data are summarized as follows:

- Underlying reasons for engagement in education. The first reason, why entrepreneurs decided for education, is that they wanted to get a higher degree: 54.7% of Slovenian respondents, whereas 50.8% of the Romanian sample wanted to gain knowledge in a new area. The acquisition of knowledge in a new area is the second reason in Slovenia (46.1%); the second reason for entrepreneurs in Romania (41.7%) is that they want to learn how to do business in a fast growing firm. This is the third reason in Slovenia (23.4%). The third reason in Romania is that entrepreneurs wanted to get a higher degree (40.2%).
- Main areas of education in the Slovenian sample: 57.8% of entrepreneurs educate themselves in the entrepreneurship area of education, 19.5% in marketing and sales and 18.8% in finance; in Romania: 32.6% in computing, 25.8% in marketing and sales, and 19.7% in management.
- Opinion about the necessity of education: 61.9% of respondents in Slovenia and 56.5% in Romania think that entrepreneurs must educate themselves more than once a year, whereas 38.1% respondents

TABLE 7 Other results

	Slovenia	Romania
<i>Education satisfaction</i>		
very satisfied	10.9%	10.1%
satisfied	67.2%	67.4%
a little satisfied	18%	15.5%
a little unsatisfied	3.1%	3.9%
unsatisfied	0.8%	3.1%
<i>Education continuation</i>		
yes	59.4%	61.4%
probably yes	33.6%	25.8%
maybe	7.0%	10.6%
probably no	0.0%	1.5%
no	0.0%	0.8%
<i>Education type</i>		
degree	68.5%	96.2%
non-degree	35.4%	44.3%
<i>Reasons for education</i>		
get higher degree	54.7%	40.2%
renew knowledge	6.3%	28.0%
get knowledge in new area	46.1%	50.8%
learn about fast growing firm	23.4%	41.7%
inform about news in the world	7.0%	22.0%
<i>Reasons for education continuation</i>		
get higher degree	44.6%	44.3%
renew knowledge	22.3%	36.1%
get knowledge in new area	55.4%	49.2%
learn about fast growing firm	30.6%	41.8%
inform about news in the world	35.5%	23.8%

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in Slovenia and 40.5% in Romania think that they must educate themselves at least once a year.

- Overall satisfaction with education: 10.9% of respondents in Slovenia and 10.1% in Romania say that they are very satisfied with education, 67.2% of respondents in Slovenia and 67.4% in Romania are satisfied with education, 18.0% in Slovenia and 15.5% in Romania are a little satisfied with education, 3.1% in Slovenia and 3.9% in Romania are a little unsatisfied, and only 0.8% of the respondents in Slovenia are unsatisfied with education, whereas in Romania this holds true for 3.1% of respondents.
- Overall education continuation: 59.4% of entrepreneurs in Slovenia and 61.4% of respondents in Romania say that they will definitely

TABLE 7 (continued)

	Slovenia	Romania
<i>Area of education</i>		
marketing and sales	19.5%	25.8%
finance	18.8%	13.6%
entrepreneurship	57.8%	2.3%
management	5.5%	19.7%
computing	11.7%	32.6%
<i>Area of education future</i>		
marketing and sales	33.6%	38.6%
finance	31.9%	21.3%
entrepreneurship	43.7%	13.4%
management	19.3%	29.1%
computing	26.1%	26.8%
<i>Education necessity</i>		
more than once a year	61.9%	56.5%
at least once a year	38.1%	40.5%
not necessary	0.0%	3.1%

continue their education, 33.6% in Slovenia and 25.8% in Romania say that they will probably continue education and 7.0% in Slovenia and 10.6% in Romania will maybe continue education. In Romania 1.5% say that they will probably not continue education.

- Reasons for education continuation. The first reason for education continuation is gaining knowledge in a new area (55.4% of entrepreneurs in Slovenia and 49.2% in Romania think so). 44.6% of respondents in Slovenia and 44.3% in Romania will continue with education to get a higher degree, 35.5% in Slovenia will continue because they wish to be informed about news in the world and 41.8% of respondents in Romania want to learn how to do business in a fast growing firm.
- Main areas of future education in Slovenia: 43.7% of entrepreneurs will educate themselves in an entrepreneurship area, 33.6% in marketing and sales, and 31.9% in finance. Main areas of future education in Romania: 38.6% of entrepreneurs will educate themselves in marketing and sales, 36.2% in an entrepreneurship area and 29.1% in management.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper we have provided evidence on the existence of positive relationships between education satisfaction elements and education con-

tinuation by conducting a cross-cultural study in two countries (Romania and Slovenia). We have found out that education content and process quality as well as education satisfaction of participants tend to be the strongest predictors of their subsequent decision to continue education in both countries. Room and equipment adequacy may be also important, but our findings showed this result only for Romania. Surprisingly, we did not find support for the impact of the quality of acquired knowledge on education continuation. Since the calculated correlations between the quality of acquired knowledge and continuation were significant and not very low both in Slovenia (0.34) and in Romania (0.55), a lower regression coefficients than expected may be due to the fact that satisfaction and quality dimensions were correlated, even though we did not encounter bigger problems of multicollinearity in regression analyses.

An interesting finding of our research is that content and process quality tends to have a stronger impact on education continuation in Slovenia than in Romania, whereas the impact of satisfaction and room/equipment quality plays in Romania a stronger role in the decision to continue education than in Slovenia. This finding leads to an important conclusion for education providers in management and entrepreneurship education. In order to maximize the retention of participants and probably improve also business results, education providers in Slovenia need to pay attention to content/process issues such as excellence, fulfillment of expectations of participants, well prepared materials, and the selection of the lecturer, who needs to satisfy participants in general, as well as convey the subject matter in an interesting and clear way. Romanian education providers may like to consider taking a somewhat different approach, that is, they need to try to satisfy the participants in general, as well as to provide an adequate education environment in terms of the room in which education is performed and the equipment that is used.

In this study we provided some evidence on the cross-cultural validity and comparability of the measures of education satisfaction, quality, and continuation, as well as pointed out some differences between management and education participants in the two countries. In Romania the key reason for participants to engage in education was a will to acquire new knowledge, while in Slovenia, very disappointingly, it tended to be a decision to get a higher degree. In the decision to continue education participants from both countries give the leading role to new knowledge

acquisition as well as consider continuing education a necessity, which we generally consider a positive sign for both countries. An interesting difference emerged in the consideration of a future area of education. In Slovenia the entrepreneurship area may be the most prominent (followed by marketing and sales, and finance), whereas in Romania marketing and sales may be the leading area, followed by computing and general management.

The study has some limitations. The samples used were not random and not ideally matched across the two countries. Measures were based on perceptions and intentions and not on the actual behavior of participants, which would require a longitudinal study design.

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The study was conducted in management and entrepreneurship education in two countries; a future research may further validate the results of this study in other countries and contexts. Despite some limitations we provided some interesting conclusions, which are important in understanding the relationship between education satisfaction and quality as predictors of education continuation, as well as in managing education contents and processes.

NOTES

- 1 All Cronbach Alphas were very high indicating a very good reliability: for satisfaction (8 items) – Slovenia 0.96, Romania 0.95, for continuation (loyalty) (5 items) – Slovenia 0.92, Romania 0.94, and for quality dimensions: content/process (6 items) – Slovenia 0.89, Romania 0.94, knowledge acquisition (3 items) – Slovenia 0.83, Romania 0.80, and room/equipment adequacy (2 items) – correlations: Slovenia 0.78, Romania 0.80.

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