

### Design entrepreneurship and sustainability: a study focusing on an educational program

*Elif Kucuksayrac*

This paper aims to map the relationship between design entrepreneurship and sustainability by focusing on an educational program on entrepreneurship and its participants, who are industrial design students. Schumpeter (1982) defines entrepreneurship as a mechanism to create changes in the system through innovation and states that entrepreneurs are the agents of creative destruction. And entrepreneurs, Drucker (2007) defines as individuals who search for systematic innovation and the exploitation of opportunities to create economic value. Entrepreneurship, although influenced by various personal and external factors, can be and is being encouraged, developed, controlled or influenced within the contexts of a governmental aid or development programme (Walsh and Clement, 2004). According to Suokas (2004), to encourage entrepreneurship and to commercialize innovation and research is the new third task of universities besides education and research, as it benefits the whole society. Fuad-Luke (2009) cites entrepreneurship with its strong bonds to activism and suggests to allude entrepreneurial artefacts along with protest, service, propositional, and demonstration artefacts, which are proposed by Thorpe and Walker, regarding to the practical works on design for sustainability. Likewise, listing different actors within production-consumption system, Vezzoli and Manzini (2008) state that companies and enterprises play a central role in social learning process towards sustainability, as they embrace most of the resources in terms of knowledge, organisation and capacity for initiative, where possibilities of environmental and social interventions should also match up with economic efficiency and competitiveness. Following these, this paper explores the relationship between design entrepreneurship and sustainability, through a study with the industrial design students who participate in the educational program on entrepreneurship, which is run by Istanbul Technical University (ITU) in collaboration with 'Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Ministry of Trade and Industry' (KOSGEB). The 66-hour program is open to ITU students from all fields in both undergraduate and graduate levels. The aim of the program is to develop a business plan and at the end of the program, selected plans that promise innovation are supported economically as well. This year, seven students (five undergraduate and two graduate students) of Dept. Industrial Product Design are attending to the program, which in total has fifty participants. In the study, firstly, the motivation and business plans of the industrial design students, who participate to the program, were explored for concerns on design for sustainability through an interview and questionnaire. The results of the undergraduate students' were compared with the results of their fellows', who formed a control group. Following that, a presentation on design for sustainability was made to the participants, and they were expected to reevaluate their business plans and to analyze the changes. This second part of the study was designed as a quasi-experimental study, where the presentation can be considered as the treatment.

#### References

- Drucker, P.F.**, 2007. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and Principles*. Harper & Row: New York.
- Fuad-Luke, A.**, 2009. *Design Activism*. Open University Press: London.
- Suokas, T.**, 2004. "From Passion to Profitability" in *Cumulus Working Papers*, eds. Sotamaa, Y., Eija S., Lantto, J. University of Arts and Design: Helsinki.
- Schumpeter, J.A.**, 1982. *The Theory of Economic Development*. Transaction Publishers: New Jersey.
- Vezzoli, C. and Manzini, E.**, 2008. *Design for Environmental Sustainability*. Springer-Verlag, London.
- Walsh, I. and Clement, M.**, 2004. "Design Processes and Design Education in Entrepreneurship" in *Cumulus Working Papers*, eds. Sotamaa, Y., Eija S., Lantto, J. University of Arts and Design: Helsinki.