

Perceptions and Practices of Preschool Educators Regarding Entrepreneurship Education in Morocco

Abstract

Entrepreneurship education has attracted growing interest due to its potential to foster essential transversal skills from early childhood, such as creativity, autonomy, and initiative. In the Moroccan context, despite the integration of certain transversal competencies into preschool curricula, entrepreneurship education remains insufficiently explicit and poorly formalized. This study aims to analyze preschool educators' perceptions, pedagogical practices, and training needs regarding entrepreneurship education in Morocco. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted with 334 preschool educators working in institutions affiliated with the Moroccan Foundation for Preschool Education. The questionnaire was structured around three dimensions: (1) educators' general perceptions of entrepreneurship education, (2) pedagogical prerequisites for its integration into preschool education, and (3) training and support needs. The results indicate a strong overall endorsement of entrepreneurship education among educators, while revealing that its integration into pedagogical practices remains largely implicit. The findings also show that educators' prior experience is associated with greater awareness of the need to adapt teaching methods and strengthen programmatic support, whereas the main obstacles identified relate to institutional and structural constraints. These results highlight the importance of clarifying the entrepreneurial competencies to be developed from the preschool level and of strengthening educator support through explicit curricular frameworks, targeted training, and appropriate resources, in order to promote a coherent and sustainable integration of entrepreneurship education in the Moroccan context.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship education ; preschool education ; educators' perceptions ; pedagogical practices.

Introduction

Early childhood represents a decisive stage of development, as it corresponds to the period during which fundamental skills and dispositions are constructed and serve as the foundation for children's future development (Andrejeva & Usca, 2023). At this age, children demonstrate a high learning potential, making early childhood a strategic phase for the acquisition of transversal skills such as creativity and initiative.

The importance of this developmental stage is further confirmed by several international studies, notably those conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development,(OECD, 2020) which emphasize that high-quality preschool education constitutes a major lever for children's future development. When children benefit from structured and stimulating educational programs, their developmental trajectories are more likely to foster creativity, which in turn strengthens essential competencies such as psychological resilience, emotional regulation, and autonomy—key components of holistic (Blau, 2021; Von Suchodoletz et al., 2023) In this regard, Seikkula-Leino (2023) highlights that activities encouraging creativity, initiative, and intellectual curiosity are particularly relevant at this age, as they align with children's natural modes of learning, a perspective already emphasized in earlier work (Seikkula-Leino, 2011)Together, these contributions

underline that early childhood constitutes a particularly favorable period for the development of entrepreneurial dispositions as well as for the acquisition of essential foundational knowledge. To further support this view, other scholars emphasize the importance of integrating innovative pedagogical approaches. Among these, entrepreneurship education emerges as a promising pathway, enabling young children to develop civic, collaborative, and creative competencies.(Sarikaya & Coşkun, 2015).

From this perspective, researchers emphasize that entrepreneurship education should not be limited to introducing children to economic concepts, but rather should aim to foster the development of essential personal dispositions. It is based on the construction of traits and attitudes such as autonomy, a sense of responsibility, optimism, and perseverance(Suzanti & Maesaroh, 2017).

Accordingly, entrepreneurship education can be integrated from early childhood into school curricula through a variety of age-appropriate activities (Chojak, 2024; Kaya-Capocci, 2022).Within this framework, scholars identify key competencies to be developed at the preschool level and argue that entrepreneurship education constitutes a meaningful educational project that supports the development of these competencies.These observations are further supported by several studies highlighting that competencies such as a sense of responsibility, creativity, and initiative can be cultivated from an early age, provided that children benefit from meaningful interactions with adults and from diverse learning situations.(Dadan Suryana, 2015) .These elements inevitably raise a central question : Is entrepreneurship education integrated explicitly or implicitly into curricula, both at the international and national levels, particularly in the Moroccan context ?

A preliminary analysis of international curricula shows that some countries have opted for an explicit integration of entrepreneurship education. This is notably the case in Scotland, often presented as a structured example. The *Curriculum for Excellence*(The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 2009)specifies that the development of “skills for learning, life and work,” including entrepreneurial skills, should accompany learners from preschool through higher education. This orientation is grounded in key competencies such as initiative, cooperation, and informed risk-taking, which had already been emphasized in earlier research (Deuchar,2004) Similarly, Finland has gradually strengthened the legitimacy of entrepreneurship education through its explicit integration, particularly within the *National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care*(Raappana & Peuhkuri, 2025). Sweden has also incorporated the entrepreneurial approach across its preschool education system since 2009, by placing children in learning environments that promote the development of entrepreneurial attitudes. However, the implementation of this approach remains complex, notably due to the diversity of interpretations given to the concept by teachers and the absence of a unified curricular (Ehrlin et al., 2015).

In this regard, it is important to emphasize that entrepreneurship education does not aim to transmit economic knowledge at this age. Rather, entrepreneurial learning in early childhood does not rely on specific instructional materials but on activities adapted to children’s developmental needs. Nevertheless, despite the growing interest in this approach, the literature highlights the lack of a clear and commonly accepted conceptual framework within

the scientific community, which helps explain the diversity of practices observed.(Seikkula-Leino et al., 2023).

This diversity of approaches and the absence of a unified framework at the international level invite reflection on how entrepreneurship education is integrated within the Moroccan context, particularly in preschool curricula. In this regard, Morocco has introduced an entrepreneurial culture within its educational policies. However, this initiative has not been fully operationalized and has not been translated into clearly defined objectives. As a result, its implementation varies from one actor to another, with each interpreting it according to their own perspective.(Hassi, 2016) .

With respect to entrepreneurship-oriented programs at the international level, several initiatives aim to develop children's entrepreneurial competencies, such as the *Entrepreneurial Kids* project in Poland (Chojak, 2024) and the *DéfiOS Entreprendre* program in Canada).(Eynaoud et al., 2024).

This gap highlights the absence of a dedicated framework for early childhood education and reveals a significant shortcoming in the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Morocco. Despite the presence of transversal competencies such as creativity, initiative, and collaboration within the preschool curricular framework, entrepreneurship education is not addressed explicitly in the Moroccan context (MEN, 2018).

In this regard, it appears relevant to examine preschool educators' perceptions and pedagogical practices related to entrepreneurship education, in order to identify the obstacles and facilitating factors, as well as the training and resource needs required for a more explicit and coherent integration.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address the following research questions :

- What are Moroccan preschool educators' perceptions of entrepreneurship education ?
- To What extent do the pedagogical practices they implement reflect entrepreneurial intentions or dimensions?
- What factors hinder the explicit integration of entrepreneurship education into preschool educators' pedagogical practices?

2- Methodology

2.1 Participants

The empirical data for this study were collected in Morocco from a sample of 334 preschool educators working in institutions affiliated with the Moroccan Foundation for Preschool Education (FMPS). Participation in the study was voluntary, and data were collected through an online questionnaire. The participants exhibited diverse professional profiles in terms of teaching experience, with a predominance of educators holding a bachelor's degree, followed by those with a high school diploma.

2.2 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire designed to explore preschool educators' perceptions, pedagogical practices, and needs regarding entrepreneurship education. It included a series of items aimed at measuring the main variable, namely educators' perceptions of entrepreneurship education, as well as complementary variables related to pedagogical practices, training needs, desired resources, and perceived obstacles.

The questionnaire was structured around three main dimensions: (1) educators' general perceptions of entrepreneurship education, (2) pedagogical prerequisites for its integration into preschool education, and (3) training and support needs. This structure was intended to progressively capture educators' representations, implementation conditions, and the levers required for an effective integration of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level.

Table 1: Items related to preschool educators' general perceptions of entrepreneurship

Dimension	Type of question	Question	Objective of the question
General perceptions of preschool educators regarding entrepreneurship education	Closed-ended question	Do you think that entrepreneurship education is an essential competence to be developed among preschool children?	To examine the importance attributed by educators to entrepreneurship education at the preschool level.
	Closed-ended question	Do you wish to encourage children to develop an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age?	To measure educators' willingness to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among children.
	Closed-ended question	Have you already integrated entrepreneurship education into your pedagogical practices?	To assess the degree of appropriation and implementation of entrepreneurship education in classroom practices.
	Closed-ended question	In your opinion, can entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on children's future career paths?	To measure educators' perceptions of the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education.
	Closed-ended question	Do you wish to encourage children to develop an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age?	To assess educators' willingness to promote entrepreneurial attitudes.

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137 **Table 2:** Items related to pedagogical prerequisites for the integration of entrepreneurship

Dimension	Type of question	Question	Objective of the question
	Closed-ended question	Have you already integrated entrepreneurship education into your pedagogical practices?	To verify the actual integration of entrepreneurship education in classroom practices.

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Multiple-choice open-ended question	What types of additional resources do you need to integrate entrepreneurship education into your pedagogical practices?	To identify required pedagogical resources.
Multiple-choice open-ended question	In your opinion, what are the main obstacles hindering the implementation of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level?	To identify perceived barriers to the integration of entrepreneurship education.

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143 3- Results

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145 3.1 Frequency Analysis

146 Table 3 presents a descriptive analysis of preschool educators' responses in terms of
 147 frequencies and percentages across the different dimensions of the questionnaire. It highlights
 148 the general trends related to educators' perceptions, pedagogical practices, and training needs
 149 concerning entrepreneurship education. This analysis provides an overall overview of the
 150 collected responses.

151 **Table 3. Descriptive analysis (frequencies and percentages) of preschool educators'**
 152 **responses by dimension**

Dimension	Question	Response question	Frequency	Percentage
General perceptions of preschool educators regarding entrepreneurship education	Q1. Do you think that entrepreneurship education is an essential competence to be developed among preschool children?	Yes	258	77,50%
		No	66	19,80%
		I dont know	9	2,70%
	Q2. Do you wish to encourage children to develop an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age?	Yes	270	80,80%
		No	54	16,20%
		I dont know	10	3,00%
	Q3. In your opinion, can entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on children's future career paths?	Yes	260	77,80%
		No	52	15,60%
		I dont know	22	6,60%
	Q4. Do you wish to encourage children to develop an entrepreneurial spirit from an early age ?	Yes	275	82,30%
		No	41	12,30%
		I dont know	18	5,40%
	Q5. Do you think that the integration of entrepreneurship education should be	Yes	230	68,90%

Pedagogical prerequisites for the integration of entrepreneurship education	more strongly supported by preschool curricula?	I dont know	86	25,70%
	Q6. Have you already integrated entrepreneurship education into your pedagogical practices?	Yes	236	70,70%
		No	98	29,30%
	Q7. Do you think that preschool children are ready to engage with concepts related to entrepreneurship?	Yes	258	77,50%
		No	66	19,80%
		I dont know	9	2,70%
	Q8. Do you think that introducing activities aimed at developing an entrepreneurial mindset requires changes in current teaching methods?	Yes	230	68,90%
		I dont know	86	25,70%
		No	18	5,40%
	Q9. What types of activities do you most frequently use with children in the classroom?	Oral expression activities	256	76,60%
		Collaborative activities	255	76,30%
		Role- playing activities	222	66,50%
		Activities foresting initiative	180	53,90%
		Activities requiring a sense of responsibility	196	58,70%
Training and support needs	Q10. Would you like to have specific tools or training to support children in developing an entrepreneurial mindset?	Yes	230	68,90%
		No	18	5,40%
		I dont know	86	25,70%
	Q11. If training were offered, which aspects would you like to develop to help children build an entrepreneurial mindset?	Creative and innovative activities	245	73,40%
		Development of autonomy-related skills	199	59,60%
		Innovative projects involving children	185	55,40%
	Q12. What types of additional resources do you need to integrate entrepreneurship education into your practices?	Specialized pedagogical manuals	258	77,20%
		Collaboration with entrepreneurs	206	61,70%
		Games and tools to stimulate creativity	180	53,90%
		Additional support resources (webinars, round tables, etc....)	77	23,10%
		Human resources and partnerships with entrepreneurial actors	206	61,70%
	Q13. In your opinion, what are the main obstacles hindering the implementation of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level ?	Lack of appropriate pedagogical resources and tools	218	65,30%
		Overloaded pedagogical program	166	49,70%

154 **3.1.1 General perceptions of preschool educators regarding entrepreneurship education**

155 The results related to preschool educators' general perceptions indicate a largely positive
156 endorsement of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level. Specifically, 77.5% of
157 educators consider entrepreneurship education to be an essential competence to be developed
158 among preschool children, and 77.8% believe that it can have a positive impact on children's
159 future career paths. This favorable perception is accompanied by a strong willingness to
160 encourage such competencies, as 80.8% of respondents report their intention to foster an
161 entrepreneurial mindset from an early age, a proportion that increases to 82.3% when
162 referring explicitly to encouragement at the preschool level.

163 However, when these positive perceptions are considered in relation to perceived institutional
164 support, a certain discrepancy emerges. Although more than three quarters of educators
165 acknowledge the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship education, only 68.9% believe
166 that its integration should be more strongly supported by preschool curricula, while 25.7%
167 report uncertainty regarding the existence of such support. This contrast suggests that, despite
168 strong adherence to the principles of entrepreneurship education, a proportion of educators
169 remains uncertain about its explicit inclusion within curricular orientations, pointing to a lack
170 of institutional clarity or visibility in this regard.

171 **3.1.2 Pedagogical prerequisites for the integration of entrepreneurship education**

172 The results related to pedagogical prerequisites indicate that entrepreneurship education is
173 already partially integrated into classroom practices, as 70.7% of preschool educators report
174 having incorporated, in one way or another, dimensions related to entrepreneurship education
175 into their pedagogical practices. This integration is consistent with the widely shared
176 perception that preschool children are capable of engaging with concepts related to
177 entrepreneurship, an opinion expressed by 77.5% of respondents. These findings suggest that
178 educators recognize both the pedagogical feasibility and the developmental relevance of
179 entrepreneurship education at the preschool level.

180 However, when these results are examined in relation to teaching modalities, it appears that
181 this integration occurs primarily through existing pedagogical practices rather than through
182 explicitly structured approaches. Indeed, a majority of educators (68.9%) believe that the
183 development of an entrepreneurial mindset requires changes in current teaching methods,
184 indicating that the practices implemented are perceived as insufficiently adapted or
185 formalized. This perception is further reinforced by the types of activities most frequently
186 used in the classroom, which are mainly oriented toward oral expression activities (76.6%)
187 and collaborative activities (76.3%), followed by role-playing activities (66.5%). Although
188 activities fostering initiative (53.9%) and a sense of responsibility (58.7%) are also present,
189 their more moderate frequency suggests that entrepreneurial competencies are developed
190 implicitly through transversal pedagogical approaches rather than within an explicitly
191 entrepreneurial framework.

3.1.3 Training and support needs

The results related to training and support needs highlight a substantial demand for professional support among preschool educators. Specifically, 68.9% of respondents express a desire to have access to specific tools or training to support children in developing an entrepreneurial mindset, while a non-negligible proportion (25.7%) remains uncertain, which may reflect a lack of visibility regarding existing training opportunities or institutional expectations.

A closer analysis of training needs shows that educators primarily favor concrete pedagogical approaches adapted to children's age. Thus, 73.4% wish to develop competencies related to the implementation of creative and innovative activities, 59.6% express interest in fostering children's autonomy, and 55.4% emphasize the development of innovative projects actively involving children.

Furthermore, the resources considered necessary to support the integration of entrepreneurship education confirm this pragmatic orientation. Educators primarily identify the need for specialized pedagogical manuals (77.2%), as well as human resources and partnerships with actors from the entrepreneurial ecosystem (61.7%). Games and tools aimed at stimulating creativity are also frequently mentioned (53.9%).

Finally, the analysis of perceived obstacles reveals a strong consistency between the needs expressed and the barriers identified. The lack of appropriate pedagogical resources and tools emerges as the main obstacle (65.3%), followed by the workload associated with the pedagogical program (49.7%) and the lack of educator training (48.5%). This convergence indicates that the integration of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level is mainly hindered by structural and institutional constraints rather than by a lack of adherence or motivation on the part of educators.

3.2 Association analysis of variables

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis of associations between the expressed need for specific tools and training and preschool educators' perceptions of entrepreneurship education. This analysis aims to examine the relationships between educators' endorsement of this approach and their recognition of its benefits. Associations were tested using the chi-square (χ^2) test.

Table 4. Analysis of associations between the need for tools and training and perceptions of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level (χ^2 test)

	Q5: Perception of entrepreneurship education as an essential competence to be developed at the preschool level.			Q8: Initiation of children to an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age			Q10: Positive impact of entrepreneurship education on children's future careers		
	χ^2	ddl	p	χ^2	ddl	p	χ^2	ddl	p
Q11 :Need for specific tools and training to support children in developing an entrepreneurial mindset	16,2	4	0,003	45.3	4	<.001	19.3	4	<.001

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226 The results of the chi-square (χ^2) test presented in Table X reveal statistically significant
227 associations between preschool educators expressed need for specific tools and training to
228 support the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among children (Q11) and their
229 perceptions of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level. Specifically, a significant
230 relationship is observed between Q11 and the perception of entrepreneurship education as an
231 essential competence to be developed from preschool onwards ($\chi^2 = 16.2$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.003$).
232 This association is even stronger with educators' endorsement of initiating children into an
233 entrepreneurial mindset at an early age ($\chi^2 = 45.3$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). In addition, the results
234 indicate a significant association between the need for training and the perception of a
235 positive impact of entrepreneurship education on children's future career paths ($\chi^2 = 19.3$, $df =$
236 4 , $p < .001$). Overall, these findings suggest that the more educators recognize the importance
237 and long-term benefits of entrepreneurship education, the more they express a heightened
238 need for pedagogical tools and appropriate training to ensure its effective implementation at
239 the preschool level.

240 Table 5 presents the results of the analysis of associations between the prior integration of
241 entrepreneurship education into pedagogical practices and the perceived conditions for its
242 implementation at the preschool level. It examines the relationship between educators'
243 experience with entrepreneurship education and their perceptions of required pedagogical
244 adjustments and institutional support. Associations were analyzed using the chi-square (χ^2)
245 test.

246 **Table 5. Analysis of associations between prior integration of entrepreneurship**
247 **education and perceived conditions for its implementation at the preschool level (χ^2 test)**

	Q16: Perceived need for changes in current teaching methods to introduce activities aimed at developing an entrepreneurial mindset			Q18: The integration of entrepreneurship education should receive stronger support within preschool curricula		
	χ^2	ddl	p	χ^2	ddl	p
Q4: Previous integration of entrepreneurship education within pedagogical practices	7,85	1	0,005	20.6	2	<.001

The results of the chi-square (χ^2) test presented in Table X highlight statistically significant relationships between the prior integration of entrepreneurship education into educators' pedagogical practices (Q4) and their perceptions of the conditions required for its development at the preschool level. A significant association is observed between Q4 and the perception that introducing activities aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial mindset requires changes in current teaching methods ($\chi^2 = 7.85$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.005$). Similarly, a highly significant relationship is found between prior integration of entrepreneurship education and the perception that entrepreneurship education should be more strongly supported by preschool curricula ($\chi^2 = 20.6$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that educators who have already experimented with integrating entrepreneurship education into their practices are more aware of the limitations of existing pedagogical approaches and express a stronger need for institutional and curricular reinforcement to promote the development of an entrepreneurial mindset from the preschool level.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal a largely positive endorsement of entrepreneurship education among preschool educators, both in terms of its importance as an essential competence and its perceived long-term positive impact on children's future trajectories. This favorable perception aligns with previous studies emphasizing early childhood as a strategic period for the development of transversal skills such as creativity, autonomy, and initiative (Andrejeva & Usca, 2023; OECD, 2020). At this age, children demonstrate a high learning potential, and stimulating educational experiences can foster the emergence of fundamental entrepreneurial dispositions, in line with the natural learning processes characteristic of early childhood (Seikkula-Leino, 2011). The findings thus confirm that Moroccan preschool educators share, at the level of representations, a vision that is consistent with international orientations regarding entrepreneurship education from the preschool level onward.

However, this strong adherence to the principles of entrepreneurship education is accompanied by a certain lack of clarity regarding its institutional and curricular positioning. Although a majority of educators recognize the importance of entrepreneurship education, a non-negligible proportion remains uncertain about the effective support provided by preschool programs. This observation echoes analyses highlighting the absence of an explicit and structured integration of entrepreneurship education within Moroccan preschool curricula, where transversal competencies are present but not formally linked to a clearly identified entrepreneurial approach (Hassi, 2016). Such a lack of institutional clarity may contribute to heterogeneous implementation practices that rely heavily on individual educators' initiatives, a phenomenon also observed in other educational contexts (Ehrlin et al., 2015).

The results further show that entrepreneurship education is already partially embedded in educators' pedagogical practices, mainly through activities promoting oral expression, collaboration, and, to a lesser extent, initiative-taking and a sense of responsibility. This partial integration confirms that educators mobilize pedagogical approaches compatible with the development of entrepreneurial dispositions, which is consistent with the work of Suryana (Dadan Suryana, 2015) emphasizing the importance of interactions and diversified learning situations from an early age. Nevertheless, the more moderate frequency of activities

explicitly related to initiative and autonomy suggests a partial understanding of the core competencies associated with entrepreneurship education. This finding reinforces the idea that entrepreneurship education at the preschool level is addressed more implicitly and transversally than as an intentional and structured pedagogical approach, thereby confirming the absence of a shared conceptual framework highlighted by (Seikkula-Leino et al., 2023).

The analysis of associations between variables indicates that educators who have already integrated entrepreneurial dimensions into their pedagogical practices are more aware of the limitations of current teaching methods and more likely to express the need for enhanced programmatic support. These results suggest that field experience plays a central role in raising awareness of the specific requirements of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level. This observation is consistent with international contexts, such as Finland and Sweden, where the explicit integration of the entrepreneurial approach has been accompanied by in-depth reflection on pedagogical methods and curricular frameworks (Raappana & Peuhkuri, 2025). In the Moroccan context, however, this growing awareness appears to be constrained by the lack of clear orientations and dedicated institutional mechanisms, which limits the formalization of pedagogical practices.

Finally, the expressed needs in terms of training, pedagogical tools, and human resources highlight that the main barriers to the integration of entrepreneurship education do not stem from a lack of educator commitment, but rather from structural and institutional constraints. The demand for training focused on creative activities, the development of autonomy, and the implementation of innovative projects confirms that educators are seeking concrete and age-appropriate approaches, in line with recommendations from the literature (Chojak, 2024; Kaya-Capocci, 2022). This finding also echoes the analyses of (Hassi, 2016) which emphasize that the absence of formalized frameworks and dedicated resources constitutes a major obstacle to the operationalization of an entrepreneurial culture within the Moroccan education system.

Overall, this study highlights a gap between strong adherence to the principles of entrepreneurship education and its still largely implicit integration within preschool pedagogical practices. It underscores the importance of clarifying the entrepreneurial competencies to be developed from early childhood and of strengthening educator support through explicit curricular frameworks, targeted training, and appropriate resources. In this respect, the findings make a relevant contribution to reflections on the operationalization of entrepreneurship education at the preschool level in the Moroccan context, while also engaging with international debates on the integration of this approach at an early age.

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