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ART-CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BULGARIAN TRADITIONAL CRAFTS ARISING FROM IT

Abstract: Modern society faces a problem – the loss of cultural and historical traditions and arts. Entrepreneurship provides an answer and can find a solution to this challenge. Using the full potential of the entrepreneurial process will keep Bulgarian folklore and make it attractive to the younger generation.

Key words: entrepreneurship, model, art, artisanship

Introduction

The art-culture entrepreneurship is gaining popularity among certain public circles. This is the entrepreneurship of the people of culture and art. Some sectors of Bulgarian culture have started to use this economic phenomenon to carry out their activities and to secure themselves financially. It is expected this process to take on an important role in Bulgarian cultural life. The existing trends from Europe and America in this area will be transferred to Bulgaria. The first phases of art-culture entrepreneurship are developing or have already been developed among some of the Bulgarian cultural circles.

Art entrepreneurship is a new concept for Bulgarian economic life. It is becoming increasingly important for artists from all over the world. The upturn in the development of the theory and practice of Art entrepreneurship is forthcoming. Many of the possible uses of this specific type of entrepreneurship remain unused.

The aim of the present study is to reveal one of the possibilities of Art entrepreneurship, related to social life. The opportunity is in the context of European policies for stimulating and preserving national traditions and culture. In this aspect, the connection between Art entrepreneurship and traditional Bulgarian folk crafts through ICT tools and tools is presented.

In order the purpose to be achieved, the following tasks are displayed:

- Exploring and tracking the link between entrepreneurship and folk crafts.
- Transferring the link to interactive technologies to strengthen and develop it.
- Explaining the experience of other European countries as a “good practice” to be implemented in Bulgaria.
- Presenting the practical perspectives for utilization of the new trends in entrepreneurship and their social significance for the Bulgarian society.

The subject of the survey is “good practices” in the sphere of Art entrepreneurship.

1. Entrepreneurship in the cultural sphere and its relation with the Bulgarian crafts – is it existing?

Entrepreneurship in the present has become a “favorite” concept and a high priority term in the private and public sectors. The themes for entrepreneurial activity are widely used and the emphasis of the development of the European economy is on them. Overexposure of the concept leads to the mistake of its confusion with traditional business and small business. What is entrepreneurship?

“Dynamic process of knowingly searching and realizing the identified opportunities by carrying out an self-sufficing and independent activity at risk and taking responsibility for carrying out actions and obtaining the resulting monetary or personal remuneration”¹

Types of entrepreneurial activity are various and diverse. The intertwining of components from various economic activities, in more and more entrepreneurial activities, gives us reason to assert that this is an intercomplex process. Leaders, however, remain the “traditional” types of entrepreneurship. With the progress of economic life, there is already a talk of feminine, social, global, virtual entrepreneurship.

The field of entrepreneurial activity is expanding in recent years with a new type of art entrepreneurship. This is a particular type of entrepreneurship that encompasses arts and culture. The economic activity is in the fields of music, theater, fine arts, cinema and others. The Art management is a confirmation of the entry of the economy into culture and arts.

However, we believe that art is not the exact term for this kind of entrepreneurship. The reason is the limitation of the term “art”. According to the Talking Dictionary, it is: art, fine art. This means that it does not cover the whole aspect of culture. We believe that in order to broaden the scope of the term, it is necessary to specify the term. The perimeter of specific entrepreneurial activity in the fields of culture and art is very large. Culture encompasses the spiritual values and achievements of mankind. Art refers to human activity, which uses artistic means to recreate reality.

Therefore, a collective term is needed to show the full range of actions that take place in this particular business initiative. We will use the term Art-cultural entrepreneurship. It is an entrepreneurial activity that manifests itself in different areas of the creative process and in the final stage there is a product of particular value. In some cases, material revenue is acquired in a short time, but in others the price of the work increases with the passage of certain time periods. Art-cultural entrepreneurship is a particular economic activity that is inherent in a large dose of risk and uncertainty. In this case, entrepreneurial activity is characterized by creativity, talent and creative abilities. This kind of entrepreneurship is determined by the entrepreneur-developer.

Art-cultural entrepreneurship is realized in two directions. The first one is “management” – a production activity in art and culture. Independent form of economic activity. The second one is an independent form of business activity – creators as self-employed persons or owners of micro-enterprises carry out economic activity. The directions have been known to the world public for many years. Their future dimensions will expand and the parameters and options will become richer and wider.

For example, forms of funding are updated to technical developments and current trends. Crowd-funding allows artists to raise funds for their projects.

The way of development of Art-cultural entrepreneurship is in its beginning. The Bulgarian art-culture entrepreneurs are now starting to follow it. They can benefit from experiences, practices and approaches from more advanced countries.

Many young artists with potential and abilities fail to get their realization. Their creativity and potential are not becoming public. The large percentage of these Bulgarian artists is interested in the field of traditional Bulgarian crafts, arts and culture. Part of traditional crafts is threatened by extinction. It becomes more difficult to keep them, because there is no one to exercise them. The beauty and jewelry produced by Bulgarian craftsmen may soon be just a memory and be taught only in textbooks. There are still masters who create and work in areas of traditional Bulgarian folklore such as carving, icon painting, drawing of mosaic and glass, embroidery. There are also crafts, which are not exercised with few exceptions. For example,

¹ **Hristova, V., I. Stoyanov.** Entrepreneurship - theoretical foundations and practical dimensions. Veliko Tarnovo: A and B, 2015, p. 18.

painted carts – only few people are involved in this craft. People with an interest in artisanal professions lose confidence in the realization of their production, cannot get into the markets or reach them, cannot support their families. We do not claim that all artists in these areas are failing to realize and win. On the contrary, the successful Bulgarian traditional folk crafts give hope that there is a future in this field. Successful examples for this are in woodcarving and icon-painting. The problem is that in other areas there are no such successes and the creators are discouraged. The lack of security and hope deny them and they begin to ensure their lives with other activities.

A social problem in front of Europe is the demolition of national and authentic arts, professions and crafts. The EU is increasingly devoting resources and support to solving this problem. There is another problem – young artists do not have the opportunity to realize and start a self-employed activity (in less attractive business sectors).

We have identified needs in society that we summarize into two categories:

- Public need to preserve national cultural traditions and folk crafts.
- Independent realization of people with potential and talent in traditional Bulgarian crafts.

The question about the relationship between Art-culture entrepreneurship and the identified problems arises? We have said that this kind of entrepreneurial activity covers the whole range of culture and art. Traditional Bulgarian crafts and arts are part of the business activity in Art-culture entrepreneurship. We believe that the solution to this challenge is precisely in the entrepreneurial process, using all the entrepreneurial possibilities, forms and interactions.

Bulgarian crafts can be a means of personal realization, self-employment / micro-business and are a source of financial means. The potential of profitability of traditional Bulgarian crafts is high. Demand in developed countries of such works is at a level that allows material benefits for the people who make them.

All processes, stages, functions of entrepreneurship, referred to the problem presented, may be helpful in solving it. Put in another way – the processes of Art-culture entrepreneurship are a solution to the problem. Separate fragments of the entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial forms are a key to overcoming the dysfunctional momentum.

However, there are a number of limitations and barriers for those who wish to be involved in the craft sector. Such obstacles are:

- Difficult access to markets and appearances.
- Limited social contacts at a professional level.
- Hard access to specialized services.
- Limit of initial capital.

In some European countries, measures for increasing of employment via preserving the cultural heritage has been taken – for example, Hungary. The question remains, is it possible to find an approach or practice to solve so many social and economic challenges at the same time?

2. A model for solving social problems based on Art-culture entrepreneurship?

We believe that traditional crafts are an opportunity for social inclusion, realization of independent economic activity, inclusion of people from risk groups, preservation of authentic culture.

How can the authentic Bulgarian culture be preserved?

The answer is very easy – making it an economic and business activity that generates income for those who deal with it.

The model is based on art-cultural entrepreneurship as a leading type of entrepreneurial activity. This is so because the traditional crafts and the work resulting from them are leading. The subjects of entrepreneurship are people who create – craftsmen / artists.

In the model, two more types of entrepreneurial activity – the social and the virtual – occupy an important place.

The social one is because an attempt to solve a socio-social issue is made. The model itself will not generate revenue. Revenue will come from the individuals involved. The model will allow people to be active from anywhere in the country without restrictive modes. The condition is that they will try to realize themselves in the sphere of traditional Bulgarian crafts and arts. In this way, individuals with difficulties will get a chance for expression and an opportunity for self-realization.

The virtual one is because the main platform and model that will give the opportunity are typical of this kind of entrepreneurship.

The main tool for implementing the proposed model is the creation of interactive 3D galleries with support sections.

Interactive galleries through digital and software achievements will give young artists access to expression. The galleries will allow artists to make their own exhibitions. The software platform will present and promote them. 3D visualization will allow customers / users to get a true picture of the works. There are several electronic galleries in Bulgaria, which are rather electronic shops and are not popular. Digitization will make such a platform type preferable and up-to-date. Optimization of the electronic platform would be achieved by “hanging” the big trading portals. Based on ICT Acquis, it is possible to create a product that caters to artists in the art culture. Modules for support, advice, and help are also needed. The modules will play a role of coaching / mentoring from distance (done electronically).

Who will implement it?

Still, the creators for whom the model is designed have no means. An important role is played by the non-governmental sector. Associations that work to preserve Bulgarian culture and arts. Such organizations are: associations of craftsmen, community centers, foundations, etc. Support can also be provided by the public sector – institutions working in this field. We believe that an organization cannot cope by itself. The reason is the lack of capacity and financial potential. Entrepreneurship provides a solution to this case – creating an entrepreneurial network to realize the model in a real environment.

As we have said, the entrepreneurial model has no equivalent in Bulgaria. From where then will the foundation on which to create the platform emerge? A number of European countries have introduced similar practices, although they do not serve the area we are dealing with. For example, in Italy the digitalization of art is becoming more and more relevant. Leading museums and galleries in Milan and Florence use digital technologies to present art to a wider range of stakeholders. Why not adapt these practices to solve the problem? Transnational cooperation and the transfer of good practice is a way to overcome the lack of capacity and competence.

Creating such galleries is not a cheap process. Where can we get money from? Entrepreneurship makes it possible to provide funds. There are two main forms of funding: structural funds and theft.

Providing financial resources and creating interactive 3D should follow a few basic steps. The development of the model should respect the principles and stages of creating an innovative product. The modeling and putting into use of the model is by uploading the interactive gallery on the Internet and providing access to it through browsers.

The proliferation of the model, respectively reaching more users, will be done through multiplication, network marketing, hanging to major electronic traders and electronic optimization.

The model that we offer is theoretical (presented in the Figure below). Implementation in real environments may cause barriers or mistakes. Avoiding these disruptions will be achieved by creating a working product and utilizing the potential of all stakeholders. Methods for generating solutions and alternatives should be heuristic and quantitative methods. An example of the model for starting art-cultural entrepreneurship through virtual instruments by people working in the field of traditional crafts and arts is presented in figure 1.

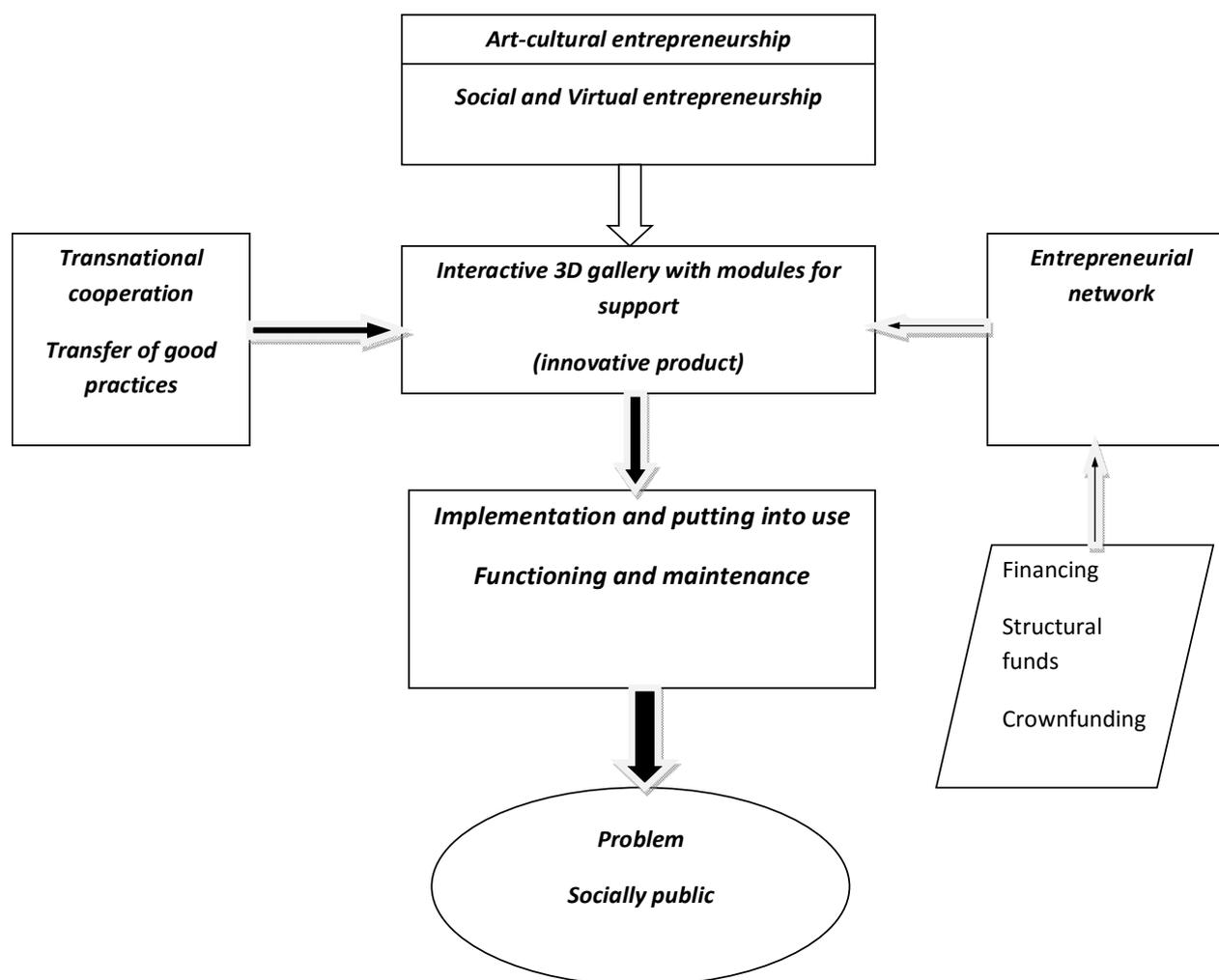


Figure 1. Entrepreneurial model in Art-cultural entrepreneurship

-  strong relationship
-  weaker relationship
-  standard relationship

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that entrepreneurship, besides receiving income for the persons exercising it, is also a process for solving social and public issues. Combining the entrepreneurial process with the achievements of technical and information science is a response to many issues that do not seem insoluble. Some seemingly excluded processes such as digital technologies and craftsmanship can come into a mutually beneficial symbiosis that builds on the entrepreneurial process.

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