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## Intrapreneurial Characteristics of NGOs in Turkey

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### **Abstract:**

*Entrepreneurship is defined as an innovative activity performed by utilizing available resources. Entrepreneurial activities carried out in an existing business defined as intrapreneurship. In recent years, intrapreneurship practices have become an important issue for public and private-sector institutions in development and implementation of new ideas. It is believed that non-governmental organizations also need intrapreneurship practices in order to achieve success, reach their goals and in order to be able to sustain their activities, like profit-oriented enterprises, they need to carry intrapreneurship characteristics. Based on this point, the Corporate Entrepreneurship Assessment Instrument (CEAI) scale, developed by Hornsby, Kuratko and Zahra (2002), has been adopted to Turkish and measured whether the intrapreneurship activities exists in non-governmental organizations.*

**Keywords:** *Intrapreneurship, Corporate Entrepreneurship, Non-governmental organizations, NGOs, Turkey*

### **1. Introduction**

Intrapreneurship is an emerging and attractive concept for institutions to be able to compete and succeed. One of the first definitions of this concept was made by Gifford Pinchot in 1985. Pinchot (1985) defined intrapreneurship as “innovation in an existing business”. The concept of intrapreneurship has attracted interest of researchers for the last 30 years and numerous studies on this concept have been conducted (Kuratko et al., 1990; Covin et al., 1999; Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999; Zahra & George, 2002; Dess et al., 2003; Hornsby et al., 2002; Ford et al., 2010). Intrapreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship concepts are used interchangeably, corporate entrepreneurship is defined as the entrepreneurial behaviour shown by existing organization. Corporate entrepreneurship is a strategy which organizations can implement to be more innovative. On the other hand, intrapreneurship, could also be used as an opportunity for the employees who want to use their entrepreneurial capability (Sciascia et al., 2006, De Jong & Wennekers, 2008). Intrapreneurship is about the implementation of innovations in organizations. (Amo, 2010). The importance of implementing different methods and processes in the globalized world and the necessity of creating a difference in a highly competitive environment have encouraged researchers to work on intrapreneurial activities that will create positive impact on organizational performance. Researchers have named the factors that affect intrapreneurship under various headlines. The most prominent of these five factors have been reported to be the management's support for intrapreneurship, organizational structure, risk taking, time availability, rewards and research availability (Kuratko et al., 1990).

### **2. Conceptual Framework**

The concept of intrapreneurship (corporate entrepreneurship) refers to improve innovation within the organization and at the same time increasing corporate success through the creation of new ventures by employees within the organization (Kuratko et al., 1990). Kuratko et al. (1990) defines the intrapreneurship “as autonomous strategic behaviour of the employee to exploit a given business opportunity”, so an intrapreneur is someone who develops new ideas within an organization and makes those ideas effective, productive and profitable for them. At the same time, the intrapreneur is the person who is working in an institution, assuming responsibility for implementing any business idea within the organization (Pinchot, 1985; Pinchot & Pellman, 1999). Intrapreneur leads the change through his/her innovations within the institution and contributes to the success of the organization (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991). It has been pointed out by some researchers that the concept of "corporate" usually refers to large companies, whereas intrapreneurial activities are very important for all types of business (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001). The concept of intrapreneurship also describes organizational restructuring process, which is expressed as doing things in an untraditional way in order to take advantage of the opportunities. (Vasper, 1990; Covin & Slevin, 1989). Intrapreneurship is also considered as strategic renewal, reorganization and organizational change in the related literature, and is also refers to the tendency of an organization to pioneer and initiate business ventures (Sharma & Chrisman, 2007; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990).

In order for intrapreneurial activity to be developed within the organization, business ideas need to be evaluated and implemented within the framework of a business plan. The goal here is not just to create a new idea, but to launch an initiative. Such a structure can only be created with effective management support. In this regard, the management should first encourage the employee in order for intrapreneurial activity to take place. Management support includes facilitating the company's entrepreneurial activities and supporting these activities (Pearce et al. 1997). Management support can be provided by motivating, guiding and mentoring employees having new ideas as well providing the necessary resources and encouraging employees to work with other departments to develop their projects. Another dimension is autonomy (work discretion), which can be defined as taking responsibility for business-related decisions and being free to use different methods. With the autonomy, employees become free to make decisions related with their own work and they can be more effective. Since the person responsible for the decision making and the work to be done is the same, decision making process will be shorter and more accurate results will emerge. The third dimension is rewards. The important point here is to use an appropriate reward system for the organization, because an accurate reward system increases the willingness of employees to take risks in the intrapreneurial activities (Hornsby et al., 2002). In a well-functioning rewards system, employees who perform their duties well and show high performance should be empowered and appreciated by managers. The fourth dimension is time availability that is related to reduce workload and allow more time for employees. That will help them to create new ideas for intrapreneurial activity. The final dimension is organizational boundaries. For an entrepreneurial environment, organizational boundaries should not be too strict and restrictive. Morris and Kuratko (2002) consider the system, structure, principles and methods as an obstacle for the intrapreneurial activities. It is believed that many written rules and methods constitute an inflexible organizational structure which would prevent the emergence of intrapreneurial activities. Intrapreneurship has a critical importance since it will increase productivity in the long run. Therefore, the aforementioned dimensions give an insight on how to evaluate innovative activities, create an entrepreneurial climate and control the intrapreneurial activities (Kuratko et al, 1993).

Establishment and management of the intrapreneurial climate is an important field of study, which will provide enterprises to renovate entrepreneurial practices (Hornsby et al., 2002). Kuratko (1990) describes the main reasons why institutions attach greater importance to intrapreneurship is that enterprises need to make necessary changes and improvements; not to lose innovative employees, to avoid stagnation, recession and insufficiency of traditional methods. Decision making strategies, methods and practices of institutions, with intrapreneurial characteristics, are seen as a risk taker, innovative and proactive (Stopford & Baden-Fuller, 1994).

In an organization, by changing the usual ways of planning and doing business in an activity that includes risk taking and innovation is called intrapreneurial behavior. With this behavior, it is possible to keep entrepreneurial enthusiasm alive, nurture creativity, motivate employees, increase success of the business, make development continuous, and meet the demands of external stakeholders (İçerli et al., 2011).

Intrapreneurship not only deals with businesses and institutions operating in certain sectors but also deals with the economy as a whole and can be suitable for all kinds of businesses. In other words, it is suggested that entrepreneurship practices can be implemented in profit organizations as well as public and non-profit organizations. This is because, intrapreneurship can affect an economy through productivity gains, creation of new industries and best business practices (Thornberry, 2001; Covin and Miles, 1999).

Individuals and communities in a society need solidarity with other individuals to be more effective in relation to their various interests. Due to this need, individuals gather in non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations convey the problems, needs and demands of the society with the help of their members and create public opinion. Non-governmental organizations formed by the different individuals who come together for the same purposes cause the emergence of many NGOs in the society (Kongar, 1991). In this sense, non-governmental organizations, are voluntary organizations, working for the benefit of society not for profit, contributing to the development of democracy, acting separately from the government, influencing the political will and creating public opinion (İbrahim & Wedel, 2007). Non-governmental organizations, which work on different social problems and become increasingly important in society, are defined as informal organizations based on voluntary membership aimed at influencing politics and serving the public (Keyman, 2006). Non-governmental organizations function parallel or alternative to government policies regarding the issues of education, social welfare and employment by creating projects. They provide resources, implement the projects and bring up individuals who have a participatory and collectivist culture and help them to claim their needs through the public opinion created (Güneş, 2004). Individuals who are members of non-governmental organizations have attitudes such as participating in decision making process, influencing the selection of management, expressing their thoughts and co-managing. For this reason, non-governmental organizations are schools of democracy that improve their members' democratic mentality and thus cause settlement of democratic values in the society (Keane, 1993). The Civil Society Development Center Association (CSDCA), which has been established in 2004 in this regard, is one of the institutions that carry out the most comprehensive works on NGOs in Turkey. The Civil Society Development Center Association aim to contribute non-governmental organizations, which carry out rights-based activities such as gender, child and human rights, cultural rights, youth rights, environmental rights and rights of people with disabilities as well as contributing to the institutionalization of NGOs in these areas. In addition, this association improve cooperation among NGOs, increase their role in decision making process, and ensure that NGOs become democratic and participatory within themselves (Yaşama Dair Vakfi, 2014).

In developed societies, non-governmental organizations are also seen to be more effective and widespread because civil society emerges in an urbanized environment where urban identities and free markets emerge (Keyman, 2004). When the developed countries are examined, it is observed that the civil society activities are mainly concentrated in the fields of education, environment, health and rights. Civil advocacy work is being carried out to ensure sustainable social peace, within and between countries in particular. These works are usually focused on the areas of human rights, women's rights, gender equality, children's rights, consumer rights, environmental protection, war on poverty and education for all. Improving of civil society and strengthening of social capital is

possible with the proliferation of social entrepreneurs seeking solutions to the social problems of society in those fields. Social entrepreneurs are the people who are aware of the social problems that arise in their communities and who try to solve these problems with a creative and courageous approach instead of accepting the defeat (Fukuyama, 1999). Intrapreneurship in non-governmental organizations is possible when entrepreneurs become members of them, sensitive to the society needs and try to produce innovations according to those needs.

Non-governmental organizations in Turkey become more effective for the last two decades. Despite their growth and improvement, however, they are being criticized in many issues such as institutionalization, participation, capacity and transparency (Yaşama Dair Vakfi, 2014). Non-governmental organizations, similar to businesses, also need management practices and activities in order to be successful. At this point, it can be said that non-governmental organizations also need intrapreneurial practices. The dimensions used in this study are the management support, autonomy, rewards, time availability and organizational boundaries as established by Hornsby, Kuratko and Zahra (Hornsby et al., 2002). When the characteristics of the institutions are evaluated in terms of these dimensions, it is believed that it is possible to obtain information about the institution's intrapreneurial activity.

### 3. Research Method and Objectives

This study, which was conducted with non-governmental organizations operating in Turkey, is important in terms of understanding the perceptions of managers, about the intrapreneurial environment. In addition, findings of this study are important for the development of the concept of intrapreneurship. It is also aimed to contribute to the literature on the non-governmental organizations which became rather important in recent years.

In this study, the concept of intrapreneurship was investigated within the scope of non-governmental organizations in Turkey. Non-governmental organizations that produce quick and effective solutions to the problems in the society, that are now called the third sector, are regarded as non-profit structures established by people who aim to serve collective services in areas where the public service is inadequate (Keane, J., 2003). In this respect, it is believed that intrapreneurship will provide new ideas that will be beneficial both for the organization and the community. Although it is believed that intrapreneurship will increase profit in businesses, for NGOs it will help them to be effective according to their mission (Herzlinger, 1995).

There have been many classifications related to intrapreneurship in the literature; however, it is observed that they mainly focus on 5 dimensions. These dimensions are the management support, autonomy, rewards, time availability and organizational boundaries (Kuratko et al., 1990). The Corporate Entrepreneurship Assessment Instrument (CEAI), which was developed to measure these dimensions and to measure the effectiveness of internal organizational factors that affect innovative activities and behaviors by Kuratko, Montagno and Hornsby (1990), was used in this study. The scale includes the dimension of managerial support for intrapreneurship, autonomy, rewards, time availability and organizational boundaries. It was aimed to measure intrapreneurship with 54 items under these dimensions. There are open-ended questions about the structure of the NGO in the second part of the questionnaire. In both non-governmental and profit organizations, it is important to investigate the perception of the managers in order to understand the intrapreneurial spirit of the organization. For this purpose, we have included the perceptions of the managers of NGOs.

This research was conducted at the institutional level in order to investigate the intrapreneurial activity and intrapreneurship in non-governmental organizations. There are numerous NGOs in Turkey. According to current statistics, there are a total of 126730 NGOs, including associations, foundations, trade unions, public official's unions, employer unions, chambers and cooperatives. Approximately 110 thousand out of 130 thousand NGOs are associations (Yaşama Dair Vakfi, 2014). While selecting the non-governmental organizations to be investigated, various classifications were examined and foundations that were granted tax exemption, by the council of ministers, were investigated. The tax-exempt foundations need to operate in the fields of health, social, education, scientific research and development, culture and environmental protection and afforestation, and to ensure that these activities are open to the public and to reduce the burden of public service to the state and should not be specific to a certain region or a certain population. In addition, the tax-exempt foundations are audited by the Revenue Administration according to the criteria of their assets and annual income ([www.gib.gov.tr](http://www.gib.gov.tr)).

The scope of the research constitutes 261 foundations operating in various provinces. Among the tax-exempt foundations, 143 out of 261 are operating in Istanbul and 61 are operating in Ankara; and, foundations are generally operating in major cities in terms of income and development in Turkey. Questionnaire used in the study was submitted to the related institutions by researchers via electronic mail and telephone. However, only 49 participants had completed questionnaires in full. The research is a preliminary study and the results cannot be generalized. However, it may give an idea to those who plan to conduct research in this field.

### 4. Data Analysis and Findings

In the questionnaire, the intrapreneurship scale was scored between 1 "Strongly disagree" and 5 "Strongly agree". The data were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 21.0 package program. Independent samples t-test and correlation analysis were used to determine the relationship between the dimensions of the scale and the presence of intrapreneurship in the organization.

The internal consistency of the scale was tested with the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient of the intrapreneurship scale was 0.81. It is accepted that the scale is reliable when the Cronbach's Alpha value is between 0.60 and 0.80 (Sipahi et al., 2008, Kalaycı, 2006). Accordingly, the intrapreneurship scale can be regarded as reliable. Reliability coefficients of the dimensions were ranging from 0.57 to 0.64.

The non-governmental organizations were examined according to the criteria such as how long they have been active, how many members they have, the breadth of their activity in Turkey and the number of board members. According to the results of the items

about the characteristics of the organizations in the questionnaire, of 49 non-governmental organizations included in the survey, 58% has been operating for less than 20 years and 42% has been operating for more than 20 years. Of these organizations, 62% had 1000 or more members, whereas 38% had less than 1000 members. Of them, 53% was active in more than or equal to 5 cities in Turkey, and 47% was operating in less than 5 cities. It was also observed that the majority of the NGOs in this 47% was only active in the city which they have been established. Considering the classification according to the number of board members of the NGOs, 62% had 5 or fewer board members, and the rest had more than 5 board members.

Intrapreneurship scale's mean score show us the presence of intrapreneurial activity in an organization. Accordingly, mean of a scale is found to be 3.30 and means of dimensions of a scale scores range through 3.03 and 3.68. The highest mean score is 3.68 in organizational boundaries dimension and 3.64 in managerial support dimension. As can be understood, the non-governmental organizations in Turkey demonstrate the intrapreneurial characteristics (mean scores > 3) but since the high mean values are not observed, the presence of intrapreneurship cannot be ensured. In other words, it can be assumed that they are at an early stage in terms of their intrapreneurial characteristics due to lacking institutionalization.

The independent samples t-tests was used to examine whether intrapreneurship in NGOs differs according to various characteristics and it was determined that there were no statistically significant differences in terms of active years, number of members and number of cities of the organization. However, there was a significant difference in terms of the number of board members ( $p = 0.008$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The intrapreneurial characteristics in NGOs with 10 or more board members were higher compared to others ( $\mu_{1-10} = 3.19$  and  $\mu_{10}$  and over = 3.40). Considering the differences according to the dimensions, it was observed that there was a significant difference in all dimensions except the time availability dimension ( $p_{\text{management support}} = 0.04$ ,  $p_{\text{autonomy}} = 0.029$ ,  $p_{\text{organizational boundaries}} = 0.002$ ,  $p_{\text{rewards}} = 0.04$ ).

|                         | Intrapreneurship | Management Support | Autonomy         | Rewards          | Time Availability | Organizational Boundaries |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Active Years            | -0,130<br>0,406  | -0,193<br>0,214    | -0,156<br>0,318  | 0,350<br>0,822   | -0,024<br>0,881   | 0,229<br>0,140            |
| Number of Members       | 0,156<br>0,319   | 0,111<br>0,478     | 0,140<br>0,372   | 0,235<br>0,130   | 0,195<br>0,210    | -0,218<br>0,160           |
| Number of Cities        | 0,103<br>0,512   | 0,084<br>0,593     | 0,153<br>0,329   | -0,036<br>0,821  | 0,197<br>0,205    | -0,125<br>0,424           |
| Number of Board Members | 0,400**<br>0,008 | 0,435**<br>0,004   | 0,333**<br>0,003 | 0,310**<br>0,043 | 0,313             | -0,469**<br>0,002         |

Table 1: Correlation analysis between institutional characteristics and intrapreneurship

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Relationship between dimensions of intrapreneurship and institutional characteristics were analyzed by applying correlation analysis. As a result of the correlation analysis, it was found that there was a positive but weakly correlated relationship between intrapreneurship and the number of board members in the organization ( $r = 0.400^{**}$  and  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, management support, autonomy and rewards dimensions had positive but weak correlations with the number of board members. Organizational boundaries dimension, however, had a negative correlation with the number of board members. And, there was no relationship between intrapreneurship and the number of board members in terms of the time availability dimension.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out in NGOs in Turkey and is important in terms of investigating the presence of intrapreneurship, as well as understanding the perceptions of managers about the intrapreneurial environment in an organization. According to the results obtained in the research, it can be said that NGOs have intrapreneurial characteristics. It is observed that the management particularly facilitates and supports intrapreneurial activities within the organization. In addition, in line with the findings obtained, it is concluded that the organizational boundaries are stretched and the appropriate structure for the members is tried to be established.

Investigation of characteristics of the non-governmental organizations and their intrapreneurial activities revealed interesting results. It was observed that the number of active years, number of members and the number of cities of the NGOs or the breadth of their activities, do not lead to a significant difference in terms of intrapreneurial characteristics and have no significant relationship with intrapreneurship dimensions either. Stems from the management structures of the NGOs, it can be said that the number of board members have statistically significant relation between intrapreneurship and its dimensions. The board members, responsible for executive activities, adopt innovative and creative criteria. This made a difference though their support on new project ideas and entrepreneurial activities of the members of NGOs. Also, they do not criticize the mistakes emerged in the activities, give freedom to practice on their own decisions, eliminate obstacles encountered in activities and support for expressing ideas in an autonomous structure without being strictly adhered to rules and procedures. This has made a difference about intrapreneurial activities. In the NGOs with higher number of board member's manager's perception of intrapreneurship is observed to be higher. There is no significant difference and correlation in the time availability dimension in terms of the number of board members. Time availability is not a concern because being a member of an NGO is on people's own will and they are ready to allocate their time.

This research is a preliminary study. It is not possible to generalize the results considering the number of the participants and activity

fields of NGOs. This study provides an insight the researchers for who plan to carry out research on intrapreneurship in non-governmental organizations.

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