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Reseacrh Article

Can We Undertake Entrepreneurship from the Educational Sciences?

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Abstract

This article examines the persistent tension between the academic vocation of Educational Sciences and their entrepreneurial potential, particularly in African contexts where educational challenges and graduate employability issues are pressing. It aims to explore the epistemological foundations, concrete forms, and social implications of educational entrepreneurship, using a qualitative, theoretical, and reflective approach. Drawing on conceptual frameworks from scholarly literature and illustrative examples such as EdTech platforms (Khan Academy, Eneza Education, OpenClassrooms), the study highlights transferable competencies derived from Educational Sciences—pedagogical engineering, project management, critical analysis—and the conditions for converting educational capital into entrepreneurial capital. It identifies several typologies of educational entrepreneurship (social, technopedagogical, institutional, community-based) and emphasizes structural obstacles to overcome, while proposing actionable levers such as the creation of pedagogical incubators, the valorization of student projects, and the strengthening of dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Ultimately, the article advocates for a reconfiguration of Educational Sciences training, positioning it as a driver of innovation, professionalization, and social transformation.

Keywords: Educational Sciences, educational entrepreneurship, pedagogical innovation, educational capital, professionalization.

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Introduction

In an African context marked by profound social, economic and cultural changes, educational issues are taking on a new dimension. Educational systems, long focused on classical academic transmission, are now challenged by demands for transformation, adaptation and innovation (Dagué, 2024a, 2025a; Dagué et al., 2025; Dagué & Mahamat, 2025; Focksia & Dagué, 2025; Mahamat & Dagué, 2025b, 2025a; Mekondion et al., 2025; Nambé et al., 2024). Faced with the rise in unemployment among young graduates, the precariousness of professional pathways and the need to strengthen local development capacities, education can no longer be limited to a function of social reproduction (Mekondion & Dagué, 2025). It is called to become a lever for change, a vector of empowerment, even a catalyst for entrepreneurial initiatives.

In this context, a fundamental question arises: can Education Sciences, traditionally perceived as an academic field dedicated to the analysis of pedagogical practices and educational policies, also contribute to the emergence of entrepreneurial dynamics? In other words, can education be thought of not only as a training space, but also as a fertile ground for social innovation, value creation and economic initiative?

This issue is part of a broader reflection on the articulation between educational knowledge, transversal skills and market dynamics. Several authors have highlighted the

need to overcome the simplifying dichotomies between academic training and entrepreneurship. Verzat (2015), for example, questions the polysemy of the «entrepreneurial spirit» and calls for a conceptual clarification of educational purposes. Similarly, Sarasvathy (2001) proposes an effectual approach to entrepreneurial action, based on contingency, creativity and experiential learning, which resonates with the constructivist principles of education (Löbler, 2006).

Entrepreneurship education is not limited to the acquisition of technical skills or the simulation of economic activities. It involves a transformation of pedagogical postures, a reconfiguration of teacher roles, and a redefinition of educational purposes. Champy-Remoussenard et al. (2025) emphasize that this education involves reflection on the values, representations, and professional practices of educational actors. It also brings together knowledge from sociology, management sciences and social psychology (Verzat et al., 2021), making it an interdisciplinary field by excellency.

In African societies, this dynamic takes on a particular connotation. Bitubi (2024) shows that educational entrepreneurship can become a tool for social transformation by mobilizing local resources, valuing endogenous knowledge and promoting inclusion. Abdelnour & Lambert (2014), in a cross-analysis of self-employment and home ownership, highlight the political logics underlying the «self-enterprise», which can be reinterpreted from an educational perspective. Far from being a simple transfer of Western models, entrepreneurial education in Africa must be thought in its cultural, historical and institutional specificities.

The objective of this article is therefore to explore the foundations, forms and implications of entrepreneurship from Educational Sciences. It is a question of understanding how educational devices can promote the emergence of an entrepreneurial culture, how curricula can integrate transversal skills such as creativity, initiative-taking and uncertainty management (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), and how educational institutions can be transformed into spaces of innovation (Clark, 1998).

To do this, we adopt a qualitative methodology with theoretical contribution based on an in-depth documentary analysis, a critical perspective of existing works, and a conceptual modeling of the links between education and entrepreneurship. This approach makes it possible to cross-check the contributions of French-speaking (Le Pontois, 2021; Mégret, 2022; Meige et al., 2019) and English-speaking literature (Kuratko, 2005; Neck & Greene, 2011; Pittaway & Cope, 2007), while taking into account the specificities of the African context.

In the end, it is not a matter of advocating for an instrumentalization of education at the service of the market, but to think of education as a space for empowerment, development of autonomy and construction of meaningful projects. Far from the diktat of performance, entrepreneurship education can become a vector for social justice, recognition of talents and valorization of atypical paths (Verzat & Toutain, 2015). It invites us to rethink the purposes of schools, to redefine the roles of teachers, and to open new perspectives for educational sciences.

In order to respond to the issue raised and to demonstrate that Educational Sciences can constitute a relevant foundation for entrepreneurial initiative, our reflection will be articulated around four main axes. We will start with an analysis of the epistemological foundations of Education Sciences, by questioning the nature of the knowledge produced in this field, their purposes and their potential for social transformation. Then, we will propose a clarification of the forms of educational entrepreneurship, by mobilizing concrete examples and theoretical frameworks to identify the concepts, typologies and challenges. In a third step, we will identify the transferable skills and educational capital that can be mobilized from Education Sciences, likely to be valued in entrepreneurial projects. Finally, we will discuss the obstacles and levers to educational entrepreneurship in an African context, highlighting institutional, cultural and political barriers, while highlighting opportunities and perspectives for action.

Epistemological Foundations of Education Sciences

The Sciences of Education constitute an interdisciplinary field that studies educational phenomena in their theoretical, practical and social dimensions. They encompass several sub-disciplines such as pedagogy, didactics, sociology of education, psychopedagogy, history of education and the evaluation of educational policies. According to Jean Houssaye (2000), this field is characterized by a constant tension between three poles, notably: knowledge, the teacher and the student forming what he calls the «pedagogical triangle». This tension, far from being an obstacle, reveals the richness and complexity of the educational field, where each actor is bearer of meaning and transformation.

The nature of the knowledge produced in Educational Sciences is plural. We distinguish between critical knowledge, which allows questioning educational norms and practices from a reflexive posture (Meirieu, 1996); practical knowledge, which aims to improve pedagogical devices and classroom interactions; and professional knowledge, who accompany the training of teachers, educators and educational staff. This knowledge is not neutral: it is situated, contextualized and often action-oriented. They are part of a logic of social transformation, as underlined by Mialaret (1997), who defends a vision of the Sciences of Education as a tool for democratization and development.

In the African context, and more particularly in Chad, this plurality of knowledge takes on a strategic dimension. The educational challenges are numerous: limited access to education, territorial inequalities, lack of teacher training, absence of technologies in schools (Dagué, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b; Focksia et al., 2024; Focksia & Dagué, 2024, 2025). In the face of these challenges, Educational Sciences cannot be content with an analytical posture. They must engage in a dynamic of proposal, innovation and mobilization of local resources. It is in this perspective that their entrepreneurial potential can be considered.

Indeed, the epistemological tension between academic purpose, produce knowledge validated according to scientific criteria and social utility, meet the concrete educational needs of societies, opens the way for a reinterpretation of the role of Education Sciences. This re-reading is particularly relevant in contexts where education graduates struggle to integrate professionally, as shown by the study (Mekondion & Dagué, 2025) on the unemployment of graduates of the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Chad. Far from being a dead end, this situation can become a lever for reinvention, provided that educational knowledge is recognized as resources that can be mobilized in innovative projects.

Thus, Education Sciences can be thought not only as a field of research, but also as a space for the empowerment and operationalization of skills. They allow the development of transversal skills — critical analysis, project management, educational engineering—which can be enhanced in entrepreneurial initiatives. This approach joins the work of Sarasvathy (2001) on effectuation, which values situated action, creativity and adaptation to available resources. It is also part of a logic of social justice, by offering educational actors the means to meet the needs of their communities.

In conclusion, the epistemological foundations of education sciences, far from confining them to an academic posture, predispose them to an openness towards action, innovation and entrepreneurship. In the Chadian context, this openness is not only desirable, but necessary to face contemporary educational challenges and to offer graduates new perspectives, bearers of meaning and transformation.

Educational Entrepreneurship: Concepts and Typologies

Educational entrepreneurship refers to all initiatives that aim to create value in the field of education, by responding to specific needs through innovative approaches. It is not only about creating lucrative businesses, but also about proposing new solutions to educational problems, often outside the traditional institutional frameworks. Fayolle (2004) defines entrepreneurship as an approach of social innovation, in which the individual mobilizes his resources to transform a given situation. Applied to the field of education, this process becomes a lever for transforming practices, structures and representations.

Lackéus (2015) in his report for the OECD entitled Entrepreneurship in education: what, why, when, how, insists on the centrality of value creation in entrepreneurial education. It distinguishes three approaches: educating about entrepreneurship (transmission of knowledge), for entrepreneurship (development of skills), and through entrepreneurship (experiential learning). This typology makes it possible to situate educational initiatives in a logic of active transformation, where learners become actors of their own development.

We can thus distinguish several forms of educational entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship aims to meet educational needs in disadvantaged contexts, by mobilizing local resources and promoting inclusion. It is part of a logic of social justice and empowerment of communities (Bitubi, 2024; Dagué & Mahamat, 2025). Techno-pedagogical entrepreneurship, on the other hand, relies on digital technologies to transform teaching and learning practices. Lebrun (2007) shows that ICT, when integrated into coherent pedagogical systems, can strengthen learners' autonomy and the quality of interactions.

Institutional entrepreneurship involves creating or reforming educational structures: alternative schools, training centers, specialized institutes. Clark (1998) evokes the notion of an entrepreneurial university, capable of reinventing itself to meet the needs of its environment. This logic is echoed in the reflections on educational reform in Chad (Dagué, 2024), which advocate for a refoundation of educational structures based on the needs of the field. Finally, community entrepreneurship values local knowledge and participatory dynamics in the construction of educational projects. It is based on a co-construction logic, where educational actors, families and communities collaborate to define the contents, methods and objectives of education (Mahamat & Dagué, 2025b).

Concrete examples illustrate these types. Internationally, EdTech platforms such as Khan Academy and Coursera have revolutionized access to knowledge by offering free, interactive and personalized content. In Africa, initiatives such as Eneza Education (Kenya) or OpenClassrooms (present in French-speaking Africa) show how digital technology can meet the challenges of accessibility and quality. In Chad, educational consulting firms, alternative schools, or inclusive education projects are starting to emerge, led by actors trained in Education Sciences, often in connection with NGOs, religious institutions, or university incubators. (Dagué et al., 2025; Focksia & Dagué, 2025).

In conclusion, educational entrepreneurship represents a promising path to revalorize Education Sciences in contexts where the professional integration of graduates remains problematic (Mekondion & Dagué, 2025). It allows to overcome academic silos, to mobilize educational knowledge in concrete projects, and to respond to social needs through innovative initiatives. In the Chadian context, this dynamic is not only relevant, but necessary, to make education a real lever for development and empowerment.

Transferable Skills and Mobilisable Educational Capital

Education Sciences offer a set of highly transferable skills towards the entrepreneurial field. These skills are not only theoretical, but are rooted in professional and reflective practices that allow graduates to design, pilot and evaluate innovative educational projects. Among the most strategic, we find the critical analysis of educational devices, the ability to design contextualized pedagogical projects, mastery of training engineering, educational project management, as well as knowledge of public policies in terms (Champy-Remoussenard et al., 2025; Focksia & Dagué, 2025).

These skills are valued in various contexts: creation of educational structures, pedagogical advice, development of digital content, support for teachers, or even the design of distance learning devices. In the African context, they take on a strategic dimension, particularly in the face of the challenges of professional integration for graduates in Education Sciences (Mekondion & Dagué, 2025). Educational entrepreneurship then becomes an alternative path, allowing to mobilize these skills in projects with a strong social impact.

But beyond technical skills, it is a real educational capital that can be mobilized in an entrepreneurial approach. This capital includes the professional network (teachers, researchers, institutions), recognised expertise in a specific field, and academic legitimacy acquired through training and research. Bourdieu (1980) distinguishes several forms of capital: cultural capital (knowledge, diplomas, skills), social capital (networks and relationships), and symbolic capital (recognition, prestige, legitimacy). These forms of capital, when they are recognized and valued in a given field, can be converted into economic capital, that is to say, into resources that can be mobilized to create, finance and sustain an entrepreneurial initiative (Bourdieu, 1980).

The conversion of educational capital into entrepreneurial capital does, however, involve a number of conditions. It is first necessary to have an ability to identify the needs of the field and to respond to them in a relevant manner. This implies a reflexive posture, an active listening to educational communities, and an ability to translate knowledge into concrete solutions. Then, we need a proactive stance, focused on innovation, risk-taking and value creation. Finally, there is a need for institutional and social recognition of the role of the educational entrepreneur, which remains marginal in many African contexts.

Michel Develay (2001), in his work on the professionalization of educational actors, insists on the need to build new competency frameworks based on experience, reflexivity and commitment (Astolfi, 1995; Develay, 2015; Develay & Zakhartchouk, 2023; Roquet, 2012). It shows that professionalization is not limited to the acquisition of technical knowledge, but involves a transformation of identity, an ability to situate oneself in complex environments, and an aptitude to act autonomously and responsibly. This approach is in line with the work of Paquay et al. (2012), who advocate for teacher training focused on the development of transversal and contextualized skills.

In the Chadian context, this dynamic is particularly relevant. Graduates in Education Sciences, often faced with a saturated or poorly structured job market, can mobilize their educational capital to create local initiatives: alternative schools, pedagogical consulting firms, digital training platforms, inclusive education projects. These initiatives, when supported by public policies, partnerships and support mechanisms, can become powerful levers for social and educational transformation (Dagué et al., 2025; Mahamat & Dagué, 2025b, 2025a).

In sum, Educational Sciences are not only an academic field. They constitute a reservoir of skills, knowledge and legitimacy, which can be mobilized in high-impact entrepreneurial approaches. In African societies in search of innovative educational solutions, this educational capital represents a strategic resource, provided that it is recognized, valued and supported.

Obstacles and Levers to Educational Entrepreneurship

Despite its transformative potential, educational entrepreneurship faces several structural, cultural and institutional obstacles. The first is of an academic nature: in many contexts, Educational Sciences are perceived as a theoretical field, more oriented towards the analysis of practices than towards economic or social innovation. This perception, still dominant in some African universities, limits the valorization of acquired skills and hinders entrepreneurial initiatives led by graduates (Mekondion & Dagué, 2025).

The second obstacle is the lack of funding. Educational projects, especially if they are led by young graduates or

community actors, struggle to find financial, logistical and human resources. Support schemes for entrepreneurship often remain focused on technological or commercial sectors, neglecting educational or social initiatives. This situation is aggravated by the lack of financing mechanisms adapted to the realities on the ground, such as educational microcredit or educational innovation funds (Meige et al., 2019).

A third obstacle lies in the weak institutional recognition of the status of educational entrepreneur. In many African countries, including Chad, entrepreneurial paths in the field of education are still marginalized, even invisibilized. Graduates in Educational Sciences are often oriented towards public education, without support towards professional alternatives. This lack of recognition hinders access to support mechanisms, university incubators and support networks (Dagué et al., 2025).

However, several levers can be mobilized to overcome these obstacles. Public policies, when they integrate an educational dimension into innovation and development strategies, can play a leading role. The Pépite plan in France, evaluated by Meige, Gillard and Perrey, shows that institutional support, entrepreneurship training and mentoring can promote the emergence of promising educational projects (Meige et al., 2019). In Africa, initiatives such as educational incubators or public-private partnerships are starting to emerge, particularly in universities engaged in digital reform (Focksia & Dagué, 2025).

Partnerships between universities, NGOs, businesses and local authorities also allow for the pooling of resources and the strengthening of project legitimacy. These strategic alliances facilitate access to funding, complementary skills and experimental fields. They also make it possible to build hybrid projects, both educational, social and economic, which meet the needs of educational communities.

Digitalization constitutes a major lever (Amblard & Rollin, 2010; Boissonneault, 2003; Bolly, 2016; Chéneau-Loquay, 2010; Coen, 2007; Dagué, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b; Dagué et al., 2025; Djimrabei et al., 2025; Focksia & Dagué, 2025; Mekondion et al., 2025). By reducing costs, broadening audiences and facilitating access to content, it offers unprecedented opportunities for educational entrepreneurs. EdTech platforms like Khan Academy (Digital Education Portal, 2025), Coursera (Digital Initiative, 2020), Eneza Education (UNESCO, 2012) or OpenClassrooms (Openclassrooms Portal, 2025) show that techno-pedagogical innovation can democratize access to knowledge and strengthen the autonomy of learners. In the Chadian context, the works of Dagué (2024b, 2025a) and Mahamat & Dagué (2025b, 2025a) highlight that ICTs can improve university governance, promote inclusion, and stimulate pedagogical creativity.

Finally, the growing social needs in terms of education, namely literacy, vocational training, inclusive education, create a demand to which Educational Sciences can respond in an innovative way. These needs, when well identified and translated into concrete projects, can become entrepreneurial opportunities. It is then a question of moving from a training logic to a transformation logic, where education becomes a lever for local development.

The role of universities, institutes, grandes écoles and faculties is central here. They can accompany students in the construction of entrepreneurial projects by integrating innovation training modules, promoting internships in professional environments, and supporting educational incubators. As highlighted by Altet, Paquay and Perrenoud (Altet et al., 2002; Paquay et al., 2012), the training of teachers and educators must now incorporate a reflexive and entrepreneurial dimension to respond to contemporary challenges in education. This professionalization involves the analysis of practices, the construction of skill frameworks, and openness towards complex and changing environments (Astolfi, 1995; Champy-Remoussenard et al., 2025; Clark, 1998; Develay, 2015; Develay & Zakhartchouk, 2023).

In sum, educational entrepreneurship cannot develop without a transformation of representations, devices and policies. It requires institutional recognition, structured support and the valorization of educational skills as strategic resources. In the African context, and particularly in Chad, it represents a path to the future for graduates in Education Sciences,

Conclusion

The analysis carried out throughout this article shows that Educational Sciences, far from being an exclusively theoretical or academic field, constitute a solid foundation for entrepreneurial initiative. They produce critical, practical and professional knowledge that, when mobilized in a logic of social innovation, can meet contemporary educational needs. Far from being limited to the training of teachers or the analysis of educational policies, Education Sciences offer transferable skills: pedagogical engineering, project management, analysis of devices that can be valued in entrepreneurial projects with a high social impact.

This dynamic is particularly relevant in African contexts, where educational challenges are numerous: inequalities of access, lack of resources, low professional integration of graduates. As shown by the work of Mekondion & Dagué (2025), the unemployment of education graduates in Chad calls for a reconfiguration of professional paths, based

on autonomy, creativity, and community engagement. Educational entrepreneurship then appears as an alternative path, capable of mobilizing educational capital—cultural, social and symbolic — in concrete and contextualized initiatives (Astolfi, 1995; Bourdieu, 1980; Develay, 2015; Develay & Zakhartchouk, 2023).

However, for this potential to be fully exploited, it is necessary to overcome the academic silos that hinder innovation. The Sciences of Education must be rethought not only as a field of research, but as a space of empowerment, creation and transformation. This presupposes a re-examination of the aims of training, an openness towards entrepreneurial practices, and institutional recognition of the role of educational actors in local development.

In this perspective, it becomes urgent to rethink the training in Education Sciences to integrate an entrepreneurial dimension. As highlighted by Altet et al. (2002), the professionalization of teachers and educators involves the development of transversal skills, reflexivity in practices, and openness to complex environments. This training must allow future education professionals to design projects, mobilize resources, and respond to the needs of their communities with relevance and creativity.

Several recommendations can be formulated to accompany this transformation. Firstly, the creation of educational incubators within universities and training institutes would support student projects, promote experimentation, and strengthen links between theory and practice. These incubators could host various initiatives: alternative schools, digital platforms, inclusive education schemes, etc. Then, the valorization of student projects in curricula and evaluation systems would contribute to legitimizing entrepreneurial commitment as a component of training. It is not a question of substituting entrepreneurship for academic training, but of integrating it as a complementary modality, carrying meaning and transformation.

Finally, a strengthened dialogue between researchers, practitioners, decision-makers and educational entrepreneurs is essential. This dialogue would make it possible to build common frameworks, pool resources, and promote the emergence of more inclusive and innovative educational policies. It would be part of a co-construction logic, where academic knowledge and field practices feed each other.

Ultimately, undertaking from the Sciences of Education is not a utopia. It is a necessity in a world where educational issues are at the heart of social, economic and cultural transformations. It is also an opportunity for graduates, researchers and practitioners to reinvent their role, create value, and contribute to a more just, inclusive and innovative education.

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