

PROBLEMS IN DECISION-MAKING BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Purpose: The main purpose of this work is to analyze the attitudes, intentions and actions of young people in relation to educational programs on entrepreneurship.

Design/methodology/approach: The survey of respondents was conducted through popular social networks in the region by filling out a questionnaire on the Internet. The sample group consisted of 179 people aged 17-35 years.

Findings: Young people who refused to take part in an educational program on entrepreneurship, as a rule, have no ideas or projects for business and are characterized by zero entrepreneurial activity. Respondents from this group, in comparison with others, have a poor understanding of the goals and objectives of startups, and are also less likely than others to choose an intensive training program. All this may indicate that the real reason for the refusal of young people to participate in paid training programs may be a lack of motivation and a clear understanding by respondents of their vision of themselves as an entrepreneur.

Research limitations/implications: The limitations of this study are related to the fact that the survey was of a regional nature for the target group of 17-35 years. In this regard, its results cannot be generalized. The results we have obtained provide a reasonable basis for further research on barriers to youth entrepreneurship.

Practical implications: The research results are qualitatively, analyzed feedback from young people on the problems of low entrepreneurial activity which can be used to develop government measures to stimulate the private sector. In addition, the results provide a reasonable basis for further research on the role and relationship of financial and educational barriers to youth entrepreneurship.

Social implications: The results of the research allow us to revise the measures of youth policy aimed at increasing entrepreneurial activity through the formation of sustainable behavioral entrepreneurial intentions.

Originality/value: This study is an independent and comprehensive analysis of the low activity of young people in educational programs in the field of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial education, youth entrepreneurship, start-up.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Due to the changing market environment nowadays, enterprises are forced to intensify the competition. Universities, which constantly have to adapt to the changing conditions on the educational services market, are in the same situation. Maintaining and improving the quality of education or even a competitive position on the market of higher education and, above all, gaining cooperation between universities and enterprises is a desirable feature for mutual benefit. The requirements of the modern market pose many new challenges for all its participants. One of such challenges is a thorough understanding of the needs and expectations of current and future entrepreneurs as consumers of educational services.

Young people play a unique role in the development of entrepreneurship, because they are characterized by high tolerance to entrepreneurial risk, they easily make the decision to open their own company, they quickly shape entrepreneurial intentions in the implementation of innovative projects. The constant development of technology, lifestyle changes, migrations and crises (social, economic, financial ones) mean that young entrepreneurs need new strategies and business models. Understanding the motives, expectations and attitudes of modern youth towards business will allow for the development of effective approaches to the implementation of entrepreneurial education as a sought-after service on the market.

One of the important elements of testing educational services in the marketplace and identifying consumer needs are free or contract free youth business education programs (e.g. Founders ConnectED, Modern Business Management, Open Company, MetLife LifeChanger etc.). Practical and theoretical knowledge gained during participation in such projects is useful in taking up various types of challenges, including those related to running your own business. Participation of young people in entrepreneurial education programs allows for obtaining such benefits as: readiness to take and risk assessment, adaptation to changing environmental conditions, ability to work in a team, perceiving opportunities and the ability to use them, drawing correct conclusions by associating facts, searching for and introducing innovative solutions, analysis of the situation.

The analysis of young people's attitudes and intentions towards entrepreneurship, as well as understanding the main barriers to starting their own business, allows to develop an effective strategy of involving young people in the entrepreneurial environment. One of the most important issues in this field is the question of how young people decide to participate in entrepreneurship education programs. The lack of a conceptual solution to this problem inhibits the effective creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and consequently leads to low entrepreneurial activity among young people.

2. Literature background

Potential entrepreneurs often do not know the conditions that must be met to start a business. They also don't know what entrepreneurship is and what knowledge they need to be successful in business.

Entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary issue, which in the literature on the subject is defined in various ways depending on the field of science. The multitude and variety of definitions, the lack of precisely defined research principles and theoretical concepts mean that it does not meet the criteria qualifying it to be a separate science. Nevertheless, entrepreneurship as a discipline uses the achievements of many sciences, such as economics, mathematics, management and sociology. As emphasized by A. Kurczewska, in the literature on the subject, there are three directions of defining entrepreneurship: the first is focused on the effects, the next one indicates entrepreneurial situations and processes, and the last one describes entrepreneurial skills (Kurczewska, 2013). Each of the faculties includes activities in which there are competences and skills allowing for the introduction of new solutions. Entrepreneurship can be defined as effective thinking, but also as independent decision making, which is often associated with risk.

The European Commission in 2006 (Recommendation..., 2006) and 2018 (Recommendation..., 2018) identified entrepreneurship as one of the eight key competences in the lifelong learning process. According to the recommendations of the Council of the European Union of 22 May 2018, competences in the field of entrepreneurship include the ability to use opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for other people. Entrepreneurship is based on creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving, taking initiative, persistence and the ability to act together to plan and manage projects of cultural, social or financial value (Recommendation..., 2018).

In 2016, at the request of the European Commission, the project "EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework" was implemented, which establishes a set of entrepreneurial competences for the needs of the education system (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Within the EntreComp, entrepreneurship is defined as a transversal core competence and as "the ability to act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into financial, cultural or social values for others".

According to EU documents, knowledge and understanding of project planning and management approaches, which embrace both processes and resources, are essential to mastering entrepreneurial competences. (Recommendation..., 2018)

The authors of the Polish literature on the subject indicate that the preparation, implementation and control of specific projects mean the use of development opportunities and the creation of innovative initiatives (Klimek, Klimek, 2010; Nowak, Musiał, 2005; Sobiecki, 2003). K. Kacuga interprets in his work from the point of view of management "a project is a planned scope of activities within a specified period of time to achieve the set goal (...)

a project is a problem for which a solution has been planned" (Kacuga, 2008, p. 13). The most important issue, however, is to plan its beginning and end, assuming an appropriate distribution of all planned activities in time, in order to create a unique result or product or service (Kowalik, Tsimayeu, 2022, p. 279).

Project is one of the leading components of entrepreneurship and effective project planning and management is one of the main skills that a successful entrepreneur must possess. Therefore, entrepreneurship education programs very often focus on transferring knowledge in the field of project management.

A well-designed entrepreneurial training is needed to advance the development of the youth in this regard. Many researchers emphasize that there is a need to provide aspiring entrepreneurs the necessary knowledge and skills for development of business start-up (Giacomin et al., 2010). Lee et al. (2005) state that starting a business without the necessary knowledge involves high risk, even when one has strong entrepreneurial intentions. Also, Rudawska (2019) confirms that education is one of the factors which is crucial for shaping future entrepreneur.

According to Linan (2007) the role of entrepreneurship education may be very relevant throughout the whole entrepreneurial process which leads to start-up. It acts upon different elements of that process. It helps to develop intention and its antecedents, to develop creativity and opportunity recognition skills, specific local knowledge, network contacts.

It has also been recognized that there are different kinds of entrepreneurship education seeking separate objectives. Linan (2007) classifies them into four categories depending on objectives: entrepreneurial awareness, start-up and continuing education and education for entrepreneurial dynamism. The purpose of the first category would be to increase the number of people having enough knowledge about small enterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship, so that they consider that alternative as a rational and viable option. The second type would be focused on preparation to be the owner of small business, the third on improvement of existing entrepreneur's abilities. Education for entrepreneurial dynamism would try to promote dynamic entrepreneurial behaviours after the start-up phase.

The most common is «education for start-up», which is usually based on the elaboration of a business plan. Most courses and programmes concentrate on the business plan and could then be considered as «education for start-up». This category helps those individuals already having a high level of intention, and having identified a viable business opportunity, to take the specific steps to start their venture. However, there is a majority of people who have not even considered becoming entrepreneurs. This is especially true in some areas where entrepreneurial activity is lower and entrepreneurship is not a socially valued career option.

Many researchers emphasize the importance and necessity of entrepreneurial education (Valerio et al., 2014; Kew et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2009), pointing out that young people with entrepreneurial skills and competencies are more motivated and more successful at opening new business.

3. Methodology

The research was based on the results of a survey conducted in the form of a questionnaire among people aged 17 to 35 years. The research was nonexperimental and was conducted in 2019 as part of the preparatory activities of the business education program "Gorki Startup Jump". In 2019, 10751 people of this age group lived in the place of the survey (Gorki district, Mogilev region), which was 23.53% of the total population of the region (NSC, 2020). The survey sample of the study was 204 people (0.45% of the total population of the region), which was a sufficient size for a regional study (Kramer, 1994).

The aim of the research was to evaluate respondents' attitude, intentions and barriers to become an entrepreneur in the future. A special role in the research was assigned to the problems of entrepreneurial activity among young people. A questionnaire containing 19 questions, including 15 closed and 4 open questions, was used as the main tool for collecting information. The questionnaire had 14 main questions related to various aspects of business activity and 5 questions related to the demographic profile of the respondents. The main 14 questions of the questionnaire can be divided into three parts: (1) Entrepreneurship: "attitude-intention-entrepreneurial activity", (2) Barriers to entrepreneurship, (3) Business education program. The results presented in the article relate to the third part of the questionnaire. The first and second parts were investigated earlier (Bilewicz, Tsimayeu, 2021). At the same time, in these studies we also present the results of the analysis of the relationships between all parts of the questionnaire. This allowed us to get more information about possible problems of entrepreneurial activity of young people.

The survey of respondents was conducted through popular social networks in the region (Vkontakte, Instagram, Facebook) by filling out a questionnaire on the Internet. The research was anonymous in order to guarantee the sincerity of the answers. The actual survey sample of 204 respondents was formed from representatives of the target group aged 17-35 years who accepted the invitation to participate in the survey. Only 179 out of 204 questionnaires were selected for the research (response rate – 87.74%). The remaining 25 questionnaires were excluded due to incomplete or incorrect completion of the questionnaires.

Statistical processing and analysis of the information received from the respondents was carried out in SPSS Statistics. To measure the level of reliability and internal consistency of the survey questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, which is 0.66. This is a satisfactory value of Cronbach's alpha when evaluating the psychometric properties of surveys related to the measurement of respondents' motives, attitudes, and intentions in the future ($\alpha > 0.60$).

4. Empirical Results

The analysis of the demographic profile of the respondents showed that the majority of them were women – 66.5% (Table 1). Our study sample was divided into three age groups (between 17-24, between 25-30 and between 31-35 years old). The age composition was distributed with a preponderance towards the youngest group of 17-24 years old – 86.6%.

Table 1.

Demographics (N = 179)

Indicators	Structure, %	
	Gender	Male
Female		66.5
Age	17-24	86.6
	25-30	11.2
	31-35	2.2

Note. Own study.

The analysis of the results of the youth survey showed that the main barrier to their development as entrepreneurs is the lack of financial resources. At the same time, 62.1% of respondents noted a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge (analysis of potential consumers and markets, evaluation of the effectiveness of business projects) (Bilewicz, Tsimayeu, 2021). This may indicate that the foundation of the barrier associated with a lack of finance may partly lie in the area of entrepreneurial literacy and business education, which could provide young people with knowledge about preparing high-quality business projects for investors or banks.

An analysis of the answers to the question about readiness to take part in an educational project to develop your business idea under the guidance of an experienced expert showed that most of the respondents (114 people, 63.6%) want to participate and undergo such training. Almost a third of respondents were undecided with the answer (29.1%). This may indicate that these respondents have never thought about the possibility of their participation in such programs before. The number of respondents who refused to participate in the educational project was 7.3% (Table 2).

A distinctive feature of the research is that in the questionnaire, young people were asked not only to confirm their desire to participate in a business education program, but also to indicate their intentions to invest their time and money in such an education format. An analysis of the responses received shows that the most intensive training program (3 times a week for 1.5 hours) was supported by only 15.6% of respondents who would like to be trained.

To assess the respondents' intentions to invest their money in the development of their own business, young people were asked about their willingness to pay for education. The results of the responses show that only 36.8% of respondents who want to take part in an educational program are ready to pay for it. The remaining answers indicate that the majority of young people (43.9%) have doubts about making a decision. At the same time, 19.3% of respondents categorically refused to pay for participation in business education programs.

Table 2.
Business education program

Questions	Structure, %	
Would you like to take part in an educational program to develop your business idea under the guidance of an expert? (N = 179)	Yes	63.6
	No	7.3
	Doubt	29.1
How much time are you willing to devote to studying under the program? (N = 114)	3 or more times a week for 1.5 hours	15.6
	2 times a week for 1.5 hours	31.8
	1 time a week for 3 hours	14.5
	No answer	1.7
Are you willing to pay for entrepreneurial training? (N = 114)	Yes	36.8
	No	19.3
	Doubt	43.9

Note. Own study.

It should be noted that the issue with the payment of the educational program was of the nature of a hypothetical event and did not have a specific amount. In this regard, the respondents' unwillingness to pay or doubts about this issue may be due not only to the respondents' lack of money, but also to the lack of motivation for young people to study and not willingness to invest even an insignificant amount for themselves.

For a more detailed study of the characteristics of groups of young people who have different attitudes to payment, we conducted an additional analysis of them (Table 3).

Ready to pay for training (36.8%). Among the people who have confirmed their willingness to invest in their education, most often you can meet women aged 25-30 years who already have their own idea or project for business and have received special training related to entrepreneurship. As the main barrier to starting a business in a group, the most common answer is lack of knowledge. Representatives of this group more often than other groups choose the most intensive training program (4.5 hours per week).

Not ready to pay for training (19.3%). In the group of respondents who categorically refused to pay for participation in the educational program, most often you can meet men aged 25-30 years who do not have their own ideas or projects for business and have not yet done anything to become an entrepreneur. As the main barrier to starting a business in a group, the most common answer is lack of knowledge. This group contains the smallest number of supporters of the most intensive training program (4.5 hours per week) and the smallest number of respondents who correctly answered the question "What is a startup?".

Could not give an exact answer (43.9%). The largest group were respondents who could not give an unambiguous answer and doubt the readiness of paid participation in the business education program (43.9%). In this group, representatives of the oldest (31-35 years old) and youngest (17-24 years old) age groups can be found more often than others. With the highest probability in this group we will meet people who have already tried themselves as an entrepreneur. This is the only group in which you can meet respondents who have no barriers to starting a business. At the same time, in this group it is equally possible to meet young people who, as the main barrier to starting a business, indicated all the reasons at the same time (lack

of knowledge, finances and time). This group contains the largest number of respondents who correctly answered the question "What is a startup?".

Table 3.

Respondents' willingness to pay for training and their entrepreneurial activity (N = 114)

Questions and Indicators	Answer options	Structure, %				Total
		Are you willing to pay for entrepreneurial training?				
		Yes	No	Doubt		
Gender	Male	33.33	25.64	41.03	100	
	Female	38.67	16.00	45.33	100	
Age	17-24	36.73	18.37	44.90	100	
	25-30	42.86	28.57	28.57	100	
	31-35	–	–	100.0	100	
Do you have any ideas or projects that you would like to implement in business?	I do not have	21.62	27.03	51.35	100	
	I have	26.32	15.79	57.89	100	
	In development	50.00	15.52	34.48	100	
What actions did you take to become an entrepreneur and grow your business?	Not undertaken	30.51	22.03	47.46	100	
	Taken	40.00	–	60.00	100	
	Training undertaken	43.75	18.75	37.5	100	
What are the reasons that prevent you from developing your business idea and building your business?	Lack of knowledge	38.98	20.34	40.68	100	
	No finances	34.09	19.32	46.59	100	
	No time	37.78	22.22	40.0	100	
	No barriers	–	–	100.0	100	
What is a startup?	Correct answer	33.33	21.33	45.33	100	
How much time are you willing to devote to learning in an educational program?	Most intensive program (4.5 h/week)	46.43	25.00	28.57	100	

Note. Own study.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

As a result of our research, we found that the group of respondents who refused to pay for training is characterized by a lack of ideas or projects for business and zero entrepreneurial activity. Respondents in this group, compared with others, have a poor understanding of the goals and objectives of startups, and also less often than others choose an intensive training program (4.5 hours per week) as part of a business education program. All this may indicate that the real reason for refusing to pay may be the lack of motivation and a clear understanding of the respondents' vision of themselves as an entrepreneur.

The results obtained by us confirm the existing studies of other authors who claim that entrepreneurial intentions do not always turn into actions (Ozaralli and Rivenburgh, 2016; Veciana et al., 2005; Franco et al., 2010; Zwan et al., 2010; Shirokova et al., 2015).

This reflects the presence of barriers that could not be overcome (Lalit Sharma, 2018) (Krueger, 2008). Research tends to indicate that barriers explain a significant percentage of the variance in behaviour (Lien et al., 2002). Strength of perceived barriers is known to negatively

impact the entrepreneurial intentions of students (Pruett et al., 2009). Researches have also found that perceived barriers negatively influence the entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intentions of students (Malebana, 2015; Kebaili et al., 2017).

According to Linan (2007) the entrepreneurial process could be considered as made up of three essential elements: individuals having the intention to become an entrepreneur; the environment in which they are embedded; and the opportunity upon which the venture will be based. Only an adequate combination of these three elements may lead to a potentially successful business-creation attempt.

The results obtained by us correlate with the results obtained by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – 2021 (GEM, 2022). Data analysis shows that the high prestige of an entrepreneurial career of 54.7% (Entrepreneurship as a Good Career Choice Rate) in Poland is accompanied by the presence of a population with a sufficiently high level of knowledge and opportunities to organize their business 60.13% (Perceived Capabilities Rate) and 72.54% (Perceived Opportunities Rate). At the same time, only 2.85% (Entrepreneurial Intentions Rate) of respondents in Poland aged 18-64 years intend to open their own business within the next 3 years.

In addition to the lack of motivation, the reason why people do not plan to become entrepreneurs is the fear of failure, which is 43.48% in Poland (Fear of Failure Rate) (GEM, 2022). In our study, this may apply to 43.9% of respondents who do not have an unambiguous answer related to participation in a paid educational program. In addition, the fear of failure is highly likely to affect 60% of respondents who have already tried themselves as an entrepreneur, but could not confirm their participation in a paid educational program.

The results obtained cannot completely exclude the influence of a financial barrier in making a decision to participate in a paid educational program. At the same time, previous studies conducted among these respondents (Bilewicz, Tsimayeu, 2021), as well as the results obtained by us (27.03% of respondents who have no ideas and 22.03% who have not done anything before to become entrepreneurs refused to take part in a paid training program), suggest that young entrepreneurs often overestimate the lack of finance as a serious limitation and underestimate other factors, such as personal business skills and training. At the same time, the experience of young people who have realized themselves as entrepreneurs shows that they were able to achieve a modest start with the help of their own savings and the help of their loved ones. External financing was crucial for them only when it came to growing and maintaining their business (Kew et al., 2013).

The obtained results create prerequisites for further research, which provide for a deep factor analysis of the main barriers to youth entrepreneurship through the prism of education. As for the recommendations and policy implications, it can be stated that in order to increase the level of entrepreneurial activity among young people, the most effective will be the implementation of measures aimed not only at obtaining new knowledge in the field of business education, but also at the formation of sustainable behavioral entrepreneurial intentions.

The limitations of this study are related to the fact that the survey is of a regional nature and was conducted among a group of 17-35 years old. Therefore, its results cannot be generalized to other territories and age groups. Despite the regional nature of the studies conducted, as well as the existing limitations, their results can be used to continue similar studies in order to identify patterns and trends of entrepreneurial activity.

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