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ANALYSIS OF FACTORS SHAPING ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS

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Abstract: The article is intended to analyse literature resources and research output related to factors which shape entrepreneurial attitudes among students. The sample group was composed of students of the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. The research method was a diagnostic survey. Some significant factors related to soft, hard and business skills were selected based on literature research and afterwards were employed in the survey. The obtained results were confronted with the international authors' recommendations. A significant result of the studies was confirmation of assumptions that shaping of entrepreneurial spirit is an important element in academic education. For this purpose, there is a need to extend the scenarios of classes with activating methods which contribute to the development of competences in the field of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial attitudes, soft competences, hard competences, business competences.

Introduction

The significance of formal education within the process of shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and the creation of conditions for economic growth has been noticed since the middle of 20th century.

During business basics classes, students acquire knowledge in management, respect for values, shaping of ethical attitudes, leadership features, flexible behaviours within a labour market, self-development and the willingness to invest in themselves (The Ministry of National Education, 2017). When it comes to universities, the topics of entrepreneurship are promoted through an institutionalised form of creating and supporting the entrepreneurial spirit: a career office, academic incubators and pre-incubators of entrepreneurship, technology transfer centres, as well as scientific and technological parks. According to Szara and Pierściennik (2011), the idea of academic entrepreneurship is not spread significantly broadly, as only 40%

of students are informed about academic forms which support the entrepreneurial spirit. Despite this, it is believed that the idea of promoting entrepreneurship in academic education is implemented mainly at economics and management faculties.

Therefore, a question arises on how to shape entrepreneurial attitudes among youth if science – education concerning the subject of entrepreneurship ends in middle school? It seems that a significant role in promotion of entrepreneurial attitudes may be played by decision-makers and academics (Papulova, and Papula, 2015). The economic growth of our country and Europe will depend on their awareness related to the significance of education in entrepreneurial attitudes. Hence, a review of literature, studies and analysis of own research was conducted in order to stress some significant factors – according to students – which shape entrepreneurial attitudes.

Examples of definitional perspectives for entrepreneurship are selected in the next chapter.

Entrepreneurship

The term entrepreneurship was first used in the 18th century by the economist Richard Cantillon (1959). The author treated entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon in which there are groups of landowners, entrepreneurs and employees (Brzozowska, 2016). According to this author, entrepreneurs were those persons who were capable of profiting from price difference on the markets (Karlof, 1992). The term was permanently introduced in literature on the subject by Jean-Baptiste Say (1960) – he believed that entrepreneurs "transfer the capital from the area of lower profitability into the area of higher capacity and profit" (Say, 1960).

Plenty of various definitions and classifications have been developed since then, for example, regarding classical and neoclassical schools, human personality features or a functional approach (Głąb, 2014), depending on the possessed competences.

Entrepreneurship is most often considered from the management concept perspective. Jeffrey and Stevenson described entrepreneurship as seizing opportunities to create something valuable based on knowledge resources (Kłoskowski, Bagiński, 2018). In this context, attention is drawn to the knowledge management perspective, where current information and the latest knowledge pose one of the key components which contribute to the development and perseverance of an enterprise, such as the innovation approach (Lewis, and Churchill, 1983; Grey, and Ring 2011). This concept is related to scientific thinking, businessmen, marketing practices characterised by seeking difference, individualism and openness to transformation. According to Drucker (1992) and Schumpeter (1962), entrepreneurship is characterised by innovation, not imitation. Targalski (2006) notes that this view may be disagreed with in relation to entrepreneurship in less developed countries, where imitation of the concept of benchmarking-based management may be the key to business development. Chomiak-Orsa

(2013), Januszewski (2014), Mellor (2011), Moczydłowska and Pacewicz (2007), Nowicki and Ziora (2013) draw attention to innovation combined with the use of new technologies. New technological processes may contribute to combating problems, thus catching up with or even outperform the competition.

In turn, Chipeta and Surujlal (2016) and Schermerhorn (2008) distinguished entrepreneurial behaviours which are to be characterised by dynamic behaviours, manifested in risky conduct and creativity, as a feature conducive to development. While Bae (et al., 2014), Bąkała and Sankowski (2015), Bizon (et al., 2013), Neck and Greene (2011), Sołtysiak (2013) and Turek (2014), on the other hand, prove the importance of formal education, contributing to the development of predispositions and entrepreneurial qualities. They point to some modern educational forms, such as: e-learning and educational methods: business games, brainstorming, case simulator, case studies, IT systems which support the enterprise management processes (Enterprise Resource Planning), learning through action.

Factors shaping entrepreneurial attitudes

Various approaches to entrepreneurship present some qualities and predispositions to be followed by an entrepreneur.

According to the classification by Bartnicki (2002), the qualities of an entrepreneurial person are: initiative, creativity, risk-taking, tolerance of uncertainty, social skills, skilful solving of problems, flexible thinking and acting, the need for achievements, imagination, developmental vision, independence, learning to learn, leadership, consequence. According to Sudolenland (2008), these are the level of aspirations, ambitions, a strong need for achievements, diligence, perseverance, risk, exploitation of motivators, independence, material benefits. Glab (2014) enumerates: consequence, success and profit orientation, the skill of dealing with crisis situations, mental resilience, the skill of transforming stress into value – these are the features that support implementation of entrepreneurial actions. As the main qualities that determine entrepreneurship within a psychological field related to the entrepreneur's personality, Chomiak-Orsa and Szewc (2015) included: dynamism and activity, the skill of perceiving needs and improving ideas, creativity, the ability to use opportunities, the ability to adjust to changing conditions, readiness to take risks, innovation and motor skills. Neck and Greene (2011) mention soft competences developed by teachers among students: living with uncertainty, identifying opportunities, entrepreneurial thinking, creating, decisionmaking, developing empathy, business design, culture, work-life balance, social responsibility and making use of failures. According to the authors, the most important aspects of shaping entrepreneurial attitudes are practice, education – learning based on actions, simulation and games, design and reflexive thinking.

Some qualities and behaviours can be shaped, acquired within the course of education, internship, traineeships or other activities which do not necessarily need to be of an economic nature. As research suggests (Feder, 2017), 37.2% of youth believe that "entrepreneurship can be learned", but at the same time, 33.6% of respondents say that "it can be learned, but it requires plenty of years of work". On the other hand, an important argument in favour of starting a business is the prospect of obtaining higher income (61.4% of respondents) than in other forms of economic activity (Feder, 2017). According to the 2016 report "Survey of entrepreneurship among youth" (Feder, 2017), 38.4% of the respondents noticed educational gaps and lack of experience in entrepreneurship. These educational obstacles did not pose an obstacle to business planning for more than half of the respondents. Students (69%) and adults (61%) have similar opinions (Kajstura, 2016). While the most important feature that should distinguish an entrepreneur is "ingenuity" (83.9%), and the success factor is "ability to organise oneself" (74.2%) and "creativity" (73.8%). According to 76.8% of respondents, an entrepreneur is a person who "can deal with every situation" (Feder, 2017).

Students' entrepreneurship can be related to undertakings not necessarily connected with running a business. At the beginning, these can be some non-commercial activities: organising social campaigns and initiatives, voluntary work, participation in projects and involvement in non-governmental organisations. Each form of student activity that adopts a social character can pose a starting point for the shaping of qualities related to entrepreneurship, such as: willingness to act, cooperation and interpersonal communication, ability to plan tasks and manage time, showing initiative, making decisions, dealing with various situations, task creativity. As proven by surveys, all student activities are highly appreciated by employers (55% of respondents provided an affirmative response – Sołtysiak, 2014).

The next chapter includes an attempt to determine some significant – according to students – features and attitudes, based on the author's research.

Significant factors which shape entrepreneurial attitudes in own research

While analysing the classification of entrepreneurship qualities, a certain repeatability can be observed. An attempt to select some qualities that are important for entrepreneurial attitudes can be made in this context.

There are some personality qualities, soft competences, hard competences, business competences and social competences which can be treated as crucial factors that contribute to the shaping of entrepreneurial attitudes. Based on some selected features and behaviours, certain factors for development of a research tool for studies among students were selected. The research method was a diagnostic pole, while the research tool was a survey questionnaire. The survey was conducted in May 2018, by electronic means (an online questionnaire), among

the population of intramural and extramural students of the Faculty of Management at the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. Sampling was intentional, and the number of respondents was 59 students. The five-stage Likert scale was adopted to survey the opinions of significant features.

The article presents a research problem: there are some significant factors which shape entrepreneurship attitudes among students. The questions included in the survey questionnaire related to the following notions:

- qualities and predispositions that an entrepreneur should have,
- conditions which contribute to the opening of a company,
- planning to start up an economic activity.

The factors were grouped in terms of soft competences, hard competences and business competences. In relation to the features that an entrepreneur should have, Table 1 presents those soft competences which are most often treated as important characteristics.

Table 1. *Soft competences contributing to economic activity*

Soft competences	% of answers
Assertiveness	83.05
Stress resistance	83.05
Communication skills	83.05
Creativity	79.66
Flexibility	76.27
Discipline	72.88

Source: Own research.

As regards students' opinions on soft competences which contribute to economic activities (Table 1), all answers received a very high priority. It can be concluded that the respondents are aware of how important it is to improve and acquire soft competences. The indications do not add up to 100%, because it was possible to select more than one answer. According to a study by Ripollés (2011), the most important competences related to the 'soft' side of entrepreneurship are creativity and social skills.

On the other hand, Table 2 presents hard competences significant for performance of economic activities.

Table 2. *Hard competences contributing to economic activity*

Hard competences	% of answers
Improvement of knowledge and skills (trainings, formal and non-formal education)	81.36
Digital competences	76.27
Knowledge of institutional forms of supporting entrepreneurship	67.80
Higher education	25.42

Source: Own research.

It can be noted that the "improvement of knowledge and skills" factor (trainings, formal and non-formal education) received the highest priority when it comes to significance of hard competences. Welsh, Tullar and Nemati (2016) prove that participation in entrepreneurial classes exerts a certain influence on attitudes and motives that contribute to entrepreneurial behaviours. High digital competences and knowledge about institutions supporting entrepreneurship are also categorised as high.

The author noticed a gap in students' knowledge related to institutional forms of support for entrepreneurship. Bearing the above-mentioned information in mind, as well as the possibility to obtain European funds and a small percentage of drawdown by small and medium-sized enterprises (55% of SMEs never applied for EU funds – Comarch study and dotacjomat.pl, 2014), the subject called "Obtaining European Union funds" was introduced into the curriculum concerning the major of Management. The scenarios of classes allowed the students to obtain knowledge about the possibilities to obtain EU funds and about other sources of financial support for entrepreneurship.

Moreover, it was noted that only one in every four respondents (25.42%) expressed the opinion that having higher education is conducive to achieving entrepreneurial goals.

Table 3 shows managerial competences, which, according to graduates of business schools and practitioners, are perceived as very useful in professional work (Teach, and Govahi, 1993; Mitchekmore, and Rowley, 2010).

Table 3. *Managerial competences contributing to economic activity*

Managerial competences	% of answers
Quick assessment of a situation	100.00
Openness to change	79.66
Ability to make decisions	77.97
Organisation of tasks	77.97
Analysing the business environment	77.97
Entrepreneurship	76.27
Dealing with real economic problems	72.88
Generating ideas	71.19
Ability to adapt to new tasks	62.71

Source: Own research.

According to the respondents, it is the "quick assessment of a situation" that is the most important feature of an effective manager. The success of economic activities depends on their efficiency in assessing the internal situation and the environment. The remaining features were also noted highly.

The last notion raised in the article is acquisition of information about the factors which contribute to economic activities (Table 4).

Table 4. *Factors contributing to economic activity*

Factors	% of answers
The idea for the company	93.22
A belief in the success of your business	86.44
Knowledge of the possibilities to obtain sources of financing	84.75
Knowledge about running a business	83.05
Having a network of business contacts	77.97
Having own financial resources	71.19
Low risk of failure	69.49
Limitation of red tape	67.80
Knowledge about institutions supporting entrepreneurship	67.80
Stress, time and effort are mobilising	47.46

Source: Own research.

It was observed (Table 4) that the most important factor is, first of all, to "have the idea for the company" (93.22%). Equally important are: positive approach to your undertaking (86.44%), knowledge of possibilities to obtain additional sources of financing (84.75%), as well as the knowledge about running a business (83.05%). The remaining features also received some high indications. In the case of the "stress, time and effort are mobilising" factor, less than one in two students (47.46%) found it mobilising for business activities.

Conclusions

Globalisation, the changing environment, technological development contribute to increasing opportunities for entrepreneurs and enterprises. Economic activity is related to risk; however, skills and predispositions, possessed and developed competences and acquired knowledge may exert some significant impact on the achievement of business successes.

Own research in the field of desired competences related to the shaping of entrepreneurial attitudes and recommendations from other researches prove that adequate features were selected for research – the proper choice is also confirmed by a high percentage of students selecting factors that shape the entrepreneurial spirit.

It is assumed that the following hard skills are significant for entrepreneurial attitudes: improvement of knowledge and skills, IT competences, knowledge about institutional forms of support to entrepreneurship. These assumptions are confirmed by the European research conducted by various organisations (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, EU Expert Groups). Development of entrepreneurship competences and business knowledge in the "art" of being entrepreneurial is a key element of university education for the development of nations (Ripollés, 2011; Sanchez, 2013). Research by Bae (et al., 2014) shows a statistically significant correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship-

related knowledge and skills (R = 0.237), as well as positive perception of entrepreneurship (R = 0.109) and intentions (R = 0.137).

On the other hand, the soft skills which contribute to entrepreneurial spirit, according to the respondents, include: assertiveness, stress resistance, communication skills, creativity, flexibility, discipline.

According to research by Sanchez (2013), these are the feeling of one's own effectiveness, but also proactivity, willingness to take risks, the need to succeed, ambiguity, a proactive approach and response to changes that contribute to entrepreneurial attitudes. The author notes that there is not much information on the impact exerted by competence and the intentions of students on entrepreneurial spirit. This results from various approaches to competence analysis (Hayton, and Kelly, 2006; Mukhtar, and Redman, 2004). The author's approach to shaping entrepreneurial attitudes is dictated by an attempt to identify skills and knowledge that can be developed and acquired through appropriate scenarios of classes. This should be not only the transfer of knowledge, but also an appropriate message introducing some modern educational form, e.g. e-learning, IT systems supporting enterprise resource planning, as well as education methods based on actions: business games, brainstorming, case simulators, case studies.

Future research should focus on the triangulation method in order to obtain richer knowledge on academic knowledge resources in terms of factors contributing to entrepreneurial attitudes of students at numerous universities. The value of the article is the additional information on some important factors that shape entrepreneurial attitudes among students in relation to competences conducive to both the entrepreneurial behaviours and education methods which are important for practical education.

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