

ECONOMIC UNIVERSITY'S STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS ANALYSIS

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In this paper the entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes of HSE students studying entrepreneurial disciplines – “Faculty of Business and Management” and an optional subject “Startup from scratch: the practice of business creating”, “Department of Innovation Management” were studied. During the study, a comparative analysis was carried out with the results of a similar study conducted in the city of Yaroslavl in 2017 among students of different faculties. The respondents were divided into 2 groups depending on their gender. It was hypothesized that the results of the study would differ from the results of the compared study, which was ultimately confirmed – most current respondents have a positive attitude to entrepreneurship and expressed a desire to do business. The main conclusion of the study is that the financial situation of the family, the attitude of the “social field” and the university environment together play a decisive role in the student’s attitude to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions. Gender differences were revealed – despite the identical manifestation of the identified key factors, male students are more decisive and more inclined to long-term planning than female students.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intentions, gender differences, business education, students’ entrepreneurial intentions

Under the influence of constant improvement of technology and automation of production, more and more citizens have concerns about their employment. According to the results of an analytical study by the Levada Center, the unemployment expectation index of Russians at the end of 2019 was the lowest in the 21st century – 62/100 as of September 2019 (latest data), not counting the post-crisis period of 2008, when the index fell to 27/100 (the lower the unemployment index, the higher the fear of unemployment) [1].

This problematic situation is exacerbated by the rise in technological unemployment during the growth of cyclical and international labor migration, which leads to a decrease in labor costs. To solve the problems of the tax burden of the budget, for example, in the form of a reduction in the volume of payments of benefits, collection of taxes due to the creation of new jobs, social upheavals, the quality and standard of living in the country and conditions for the realization of individuals, the state is constantly developing programs to support small and medium-sized businesses. Regional authorities are developing similar programs to support small and medium-sized businesses throughout Russia. There is an expert opinion that most of the population of the Russian Federation is financially illiterate, and they are characterized by a tendency to short-term planning. Even students are not an exception [2; 3].

Students have more time and opportunities to master financial aspects, because in Russia professional financial education begins at universities. To develop the level of entrepreneurship, it is first necessary to understand the entrepreneurial intentions of students and the factors affecting these intentions, since in this

status people are determined with their plans for life. Considering the research results showing the presence of certain gender differences in the entrepreneurial intentions of students in general, the purpose of the study was formulated as identifying the specifics of gender differences in the entrepreneurial intentions of students at an economic university. To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set:

1. Study similar research with students at non-economic universities
2. Conduct a survey among students at an economic university
3. Analyze research results and compare with research results
4. Summarize the research results and draw conclusions

As part of the research, a survey was conducted regarding the entrepreneurial intentions of HSE students and their attitude to this type of activity. The peculiarities of perception of entrepreneurial activity of students depending on gender were studied, general patterns and differences were revealed.

Materials and research methods

A cross-national 2012 study was studied by several researchers – Dabic Marina, Daim Tugrul, Bayraktaroglu Elvan, Novak Ivan, Basic Maja [4], which investigated gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions of students from more than 10 countries, with a total sample of 4000 students. The same researchers, already incomplete – Tugrul Daim, Marina Dabic, Elvan Bayraktaroglu, conducted a similar study in 2016, with a total sample of 4281 students [5]. Research results show that there are gender differences in student entrepreneurial intentions. These differences vary

from country to country, but to some extent they exist everywhere. Overall, female students are less likely to have entrepreneurial intentions because they are less self-confident and more stressful about entrepreneurship than male students. In Russia, a similar study was carried out by S.L. Talanov and A.A. Hajibabayeva in 2019 in the city of Yaroslavl, the results of which also indicate gender differences among students regarding entrepreneurial intentions [2]. A 2015 study by G.V. Shirokova, T.V. Tsukanova and K.A. Bogatyreva is aimed at studying the key factors influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of students, among the key factors indicated personal motives, university environment, family and socio-cultural context [6]. In terms of the university environment, it is said that more than 60% of Russian students did not have courses related to entrepreneurship. It points to the lack of support for entrepreneurial intentions of students from universities and concludes that the institutional environment of Russian universities is non-entrepreneurial. This is how the object of this study differs significantly from the already studied one – even though it is also a group of students, this study is focused on students at an economic university, precisely those areas that are focused on business education – this is the “Faculty of Business and Management” and an elective course “Startup from scratch: the practice of business creating” “Department of innovation management” NRU HSE. The administration of the studied areas places great emphasis on the entrepreneurial institutional environment, including in the courses students disciplines with an entrepreneurial theme and encouraging the entrepreneurial intentions of students, which is facilitated by the presence of an actively functioning business incubator. In this research work, the object of the study was also divided into two groups by gender to identify differences in students depending on be-

longing to one of the groups, or, conversely, to show that there are no differences. Thus, given the significant difference in the institutional environment, this study was hypothesized that its results will differ from a specific similar study conducted by S.L. Talanov and A.A. Hajibabayeva in 2019 in the city of Yaroslavl, with another object – students at the Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after I.K.D Ushinsky, Yaroslavl State University named after P.G. Demidov, Yaroslavl branch of the Russian University of Transport. The results of this research will be revealed along the way, by comparison with the ongoing one. During the study, a similar questionnaire was used to clarify the differences. 159 students were interviewed – 88 males and 71 females.

Research results and discussion

First, the personal characteristics of the respondents were analyzed, in contrast to the Yaroslavl survey, where the respondents described the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs, and not their own (See Table 1).

The results show that there are no gender differences in many the given characteristics, however, the men described themselves as people with a higher degree of risk appetite and with a higher self-esteem.

It was decided to find out the degree of involvement of the “social field” of the respondents in entrepreneurship, which P. Bourdieu describes as an environment of social relations, which include parents, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives. According to the theory of P. Bourdieu, expectations are formed considering the opportunities, in this case, for doing business, there is a need to have access to some capital, for example, through “social field” [7]. Therefore, it is important to clarify the entrepreneurial status of the respondents’ relatives, as well as the presence of entrepreneurs among friends (See Table 2).

Table 1

Personal characteristics of respondents, multiple choice, %

Characteristics	Men	Women
Willingness to take risks	69	39
Selfishness	11	14
High self-evaluation	38	22
Openness to novelty	75	70
Ability to defend own point of view	75	69
Long-term orientation when planning	59	54
Sociability	73	73
Sense of responsibility	84	83
Other	2	0

Table 2

Involvement of the “Social field” in entrepreneurship, multiple choice, %

Is engaged in business	Man	Women
Mother	24	20
Father	49	50
Brother	11	11
Sister	4	3
Male friend	37	34
Female friend	8	19
Acquaintance / relative	53	57
None of the acquaintances	18	11

Comparing with the results of the Yaroslavl survey it can be noted that the number of our respondents who have no acquaintances engaged in entrepreneurship is much less – 63 % of the men and 45 % of the women in the Yaroslavl sample do not have such acquaintances. The parents of our respondents are much more involved in entrepreneurship – in the Yaroslavl sample they are engaged in entrepreneurship: for men – 6 % of mothers and 8 % of fathers, for women – 8 % of mothers, 13 % of fathers. However, according to these indicators, gender differences are practically not observed, apart from the number of entrepreneurs among female friends, which are much higher among women.

Further, the respondents’ attitude to entrepreneurship was studied (see Table 3).

Table 3

Attitude of respondents to entrepreneurship, %

Attitude	Men	Women
Negative	0	0
Neutral	15	32
Positive	85	68

The results show that no one has a negative attitude towards entrepreneurship, in contrast to the Yaroslavl survey – 65 % of men and 23 % of women. It is also worth noting that in the other sample, only 19 % of men have a positive attitude to entrepreneurship, but the percentage of women who have a positive attitude is equal to the percentage of this study – 62 %. Thus, it can be seen that in current sample the percentage of men who have a positive attitude to entrepreneurship is much higher than the same percentage among women.

The next step was to study the attitude of the respondents’ parents to entrepreneurship (See Table 4).

Table 4

Attitude of parents of respondents to entrepreneurship, %

Attitude	Men	Women
Negative	4	5
Neutral	25	28
Positive	71	67

We see that there is a certain negative attitude towards entrepreneurship here, but it is incomparable with these indicators of the results of the Yaroslavl survey – 65 % of men and 32 % of women described their parents’ attitude to entrepreneurship as negative. Consequently, the percentage of respondents who described their parents’ attitude to entrepreneurship as positive also differ greatly – 14 % of men and 21 % of women. There are no gender differences in this sample.

Also, the attitude of the respondents’ friends to entrepreneurship was studied (See Table 5).

Table 5

Attitude of respondents’ friends to entrepreneurship, %

Attitude	Men	Women
Negative	3	0
Neutral	14	26
Positive	83	74

A similar picture emerges in this aspect, an insignificant percentage of only male students from present sample noted the negative attitude of their friends towards entrepreneurship, while a significant percentage of students from the Yaroslavl sample included their friends in this group – 60 % of men and 35 % of women. Relative to this sample, it can only be noted a slight preponderance of the percentage of male students whose friends have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Further, the financial situation of the students of current sample was analyzed (See Table 6).

The results of the comparative analysis show that the material situation of the students in this sample is much better than that of the comparable one. Combining the first three categories and designating them as low-income families, it turns out that 29% of men and 40% of women in the Yaroslavl sample attribute themselves to this group, while in present sample this indicator is only 10% among male and 2% among female respondents. 29% of the men in the compared sample said that the family income is enough for current expenses, but not enough for a new apartment, and in this category this indicator exceeds the given indicator of this study (25%), but, due to this, the percentage of men in our sample did not experiencing financial difficulties, significantly exceeds the same indicator of the compared study – 10%.

The opinion of students regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities required for studying entrepreneurship in universities was studied (See Table 7).

There is a certain difference from the compared study – students' opinions on the skills and abilities that need to be studied in universities were studied, and not actually studied in their universities. The skill of saving was the least noted by respondents of both sexes. A larger percentage of males believe that the

skills of independence, sociability, efficiency, prudence and flexibility of actions in changing circumstances should be studied in universities than females. On the other hand, a larger percentage of women than men believe that long-term financial planning skills and economics should be studied in universities. Most of all, students of both genders noted the importance of studying flexibility in action in changing circumstances, establishing contacts and prudence in calculating risks.

Further, the opinions of students regarding the factors that most hinder entrepreneurship were studied (See Table 8).

The results show that the first three factors related to personal abilities were much more often mentioned by students of the Yaroslavl sample – for males – 89%, 86% and 84%, for females – 88%, 39% and 80%, respectively. Also, it can be noted that almost any factor was more often mentioned among the students of the compared study, which was possible due to multiple choice. With regard to gender differences within present sample, it can be noted that male students significantly more often noted the problem of lack of necessary contacts, and female students more often noted the riskiness of entrepreneurship and the lack of support from the authorities. Most often, students of both genders noted the problem of lack of start-up capital and a high degree of risk.

Table 6

Financial situation of students, %

Characteristics	Men	Women
Family income is not enough for quality food	1	0
Family income is sufficient for current expenses, but not enough to buy new clothes	3	0
Family income is sufficient for current expenses, but not enough for the purchase of new household appliances	6	2
Family income is sufficient for current expenses, but not enough to buy a new car	38	47
Family income is sufficient for current expenses, but not enough to buy a new apartment	25	24
Material difficulties are not experienced	27	27

Table 7

Skills and knowledge required for study, multiple choice, %

Knowledge, skills, abilities	Men	Women
Independence	62	48
Sociability	65	53
Building contacts	75	78
Efficiency (rational implementation of ideas in life)	65	57
Flexibility to learn new things	58	60
Long term financial planning	51	62
Prudence in calculating risks	75	64
Economy	56	60
Flexibility in response to changing circumstances	84	78
Saving	18	11

Table 8

The factors that hinder entrepreneurship, multiple choice, %

Factor	Men	Women
Lack of necessary knowledge, skills and abilities	42	40
Lack of contacts	46	26
Lack of start-up capital	55	62
Big risks	45	61
High taxes	30	27
Lack of government support	25	34
Lack of prospects in the Russian Federation	20	17
Other	7	1

At the end, the career plans of the respondents were studied. The students had to answer the question who they want to become in the long term (See Table 9).

Table 9

Career plans of students, %

Answer	Men	Women
Salaried worker	4	13
Entrepreneur	58	32
Combination	27	29
Not clear yet	11	26

There is tremendous variation in student entrepreneurial and career plans. Most of the respondents in the Yaroslavl sample plan to be an employee – 86% of men and 80% of women. Among our sample, the results show that male respondents more often than females answered that they want to become an entrepreneur, and female respondents more often than males answered that they wanted to become employees or had not decided yet.

Conclusion

Summing up, the main differences between the compared studies were emphasized:

1. The percentage of present survey respondents who have acquaintances engaged in entrepreneurship, including parents and relatives, is much higher.

2. The percentage of this survey respondents who have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is much higher.

3. The percentage of respondents to current study whose parents and friends have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is much higher.

4. The financial situation of the families of respondents studied in this research is much better.

5. A smaller percentage of our respondents have a problem with business opportunities.

6. The percentage of respondents showing entrepreneurial intentions is much higher.

Taking into account the entire comparative analysis between this study, the object of which is a group of students at an economic university of curricula focused on business education, and the Yaroslavl study conducted in 2017, it was concluded that the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the study about significant differences in the results of similar studies was confirmed.

In general, the results of the study show that most questioned respondents want to become entrepreneurs or combine entrepreneurship with work – 85% of men and 61% of women. This can be attributed to many factors. According to P. Bourdieu's theory, which has already been mentioned, this alignment can be explained by the specifics of the respondents' "social field", in which everyone has a positive or neutral attitude to entrepreneurship, which may entail a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship on the part of the respondents. On the other hand, according to the results of a 2015 study conducted by G.V. Shirokova, T.V. Tsukanova and K.A. Bogatyreva, who was also mentioned in the work, plays a big role in the university environment, which makes this sample different too – courses related to entrepreneurship are taught in the areas studied, and, in addition, there is a business incubator that competes with global business accelerators. Regarding the gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions of questioned respondents, the results show that male students are more inclined to take risks and are more determined than female students, 26% of whom said they had not yet decided what they would do in the future.

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