

University Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Comparative Analysis

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Every day entrepreneurs come up with innovative ideas that significantly contribute to the social and economic growth of the global economy. However, only a small percentage of students that every year graduates all over the world decide to start their own business, the majority of them rather find other type of a paid employment. There is evidence that during early 20's, less than 10 % of young population was involved in starting a new venture. Further, only 10 % of European students are interested in establishing their own business within three years after graduation (Israr and Saleem 2018). Individuals may have higher or lower predisposition to start their own business, which is the result of different factors, such as perceived motivation, political and economic factors, education, barriers to entrepreneurship, etc. Therefore, in order to increase the entrepreneurial activity among young people, it is necessary to understand the role of these factors in forming the entrepreneurial intentions of students.

Besides motivational factors (e.g. money, self-actualization, independence, etc.), also the entrepreneurial environment and the perceived barriers may determine the person's intentions to start a new venture. In many countries, a non-adequate entrepreneurial environment is responsible for a low rate of entrepreneurial activity among the population. By identifying which are the major barriers to entrepreneurship perceived by young people, we can shed light on the complexity of the individual's decision process of becoming an entrepreneur.

This study aims to fulfil the need to better understand the factors that determine the entrepreneurial intentions of university students by making a comparative analysis between two generations of students. The purpose of the comparative study is to analyze the differences in motivational factors for entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial environment and the perceived barriers to entrepreneurship between two generations of university students, and to find out how these changes affected their perception of barriers, environment, motives and intentions to start a business. The first study was conducted in 2013, the second in 2020, both with the sample of undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Primorska in Slovenia.

The data were collected with a questionnaire and analysed with the SPSS software. First, descriptive statistics analysis was used to analyse respondents' demographic characteristics. Second, the analysis of the students' evaluation of the motivational factors, entrepreneurial environment, perceived barriers and entrepreneurial intentions was conducted. Afterwards, a comparative analysis of results between year 2013 and 2020 was performed. Since in the last years, major changes happen in the global economy, we expect to identify substantial changes in the students' evaluations of the selected factors, and consequently in their intentions to start their own business.

The study is limited only to students belonging to one university in one country. In future studies, the latter limitation could be minimized by including comparisons between undergraduate and postgraduate students from various fields of study or by conducting cross-cultural research.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, motivational factors, entrepreneurial environment, barriers, entrepreneurial intention, students

References:

Israr, M., Saleem, M. 2018. Entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Italy. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research* 8(2018)