
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG STUDENTS IN SLOVENIA

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study entrepreneurial intention among Slovenian students. In particular, we present some of the findings of The Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey which was carried out in 2016 in Slovenia. Utilizing a sample of 1031 Slovenian students, we used structured questionnaire to investigate entrepreneurial spirit among graduate and postgraduate students in Slovenia. The results show that only 7,1% of Slovenian students intend to set up their own business immediately after the completion of studies. On the other hand, almost one third (33,2%) of respondents want to get self-employed in the period of five years.

Key Words

Entrepreneurial spirit; Students' survey; Slovenia.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, entrepreneurship is one of the most extensively studied area on the field of social sciences (Jeraj, 2014). Among this, entrepreneurship among students is a very important and fascinating topic which has both economic and social impact. Thus, it deserves attention by researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

In 2003, the Swiss Research institute of small business and entrepreneurship from the University of St. Gallen started the international research Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (with acronym GUESSS) which was carried out among students of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral study programs. Till now, the survey was conducted every second or third year and every year the number of participating countries is increasing. The previous survey in 2013 was carried out in 34 countries and, in 2016, a record 50 countries decided to participate. In 2013 as well as in 2016, Slovenia was involved in the project. The survey was carried out by GEA College - Faculty of Entrepreneurship.

The GUESSS study explores the environment in which students live and their willingness to choose an entrepreneurial career - not only as an alternative to potential unemployment, but also as the first career choice after completing studies. Many researchers found out that environment and environmental factors have a major impact on the intention to start a business (e.g., Ibrahim and Mas'ud, 2016). The aim of this paper is to present some of the findings which we carried out in 2016 GUESSS survey in Slovenia. In particular, we focus on entrepreneurial intention among Slovenian students.

An entrepreneurial intention may be defined as a position to owning a business or becoming self-employed. Entrepreneurial intentions are also considered as a state of mind that defines the attention and activities of individuals against the self-employment scenario, as opposed to the employment scenario (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015). Of course, the categories that define the entrepreneurial intention are far more diverse than can be derived from the above definition. Below we present the categories that were studied in our research.

METHODS

Current research was based upon structured questionnaire as one of the most valuable method of collecting a wide range of information from a large number of individuals. The questionnaire was carefully prepared to achieve goals of our research. Moreover, the questionnaire was pre-tested prior to the start of the official implementation on a pilot sample of students - to make sure that questions accurately capture the intended information.

Potential respondents were students, undergraduates as well as postgraduates. In the survey were included public universities, private faculties, and other privately-owned institutions. The goal for Slovenia was to reach 1000 participants and this goal was exceeded, as 1031 students

participated in the survey. Among all, 575 questionnaires were correctly filled. The survey was conducted from April 2016 to the end of July 2016. Students were able to solve the survey in Slovenian or in English. In this way we also enabled foreign students to participate in the research.

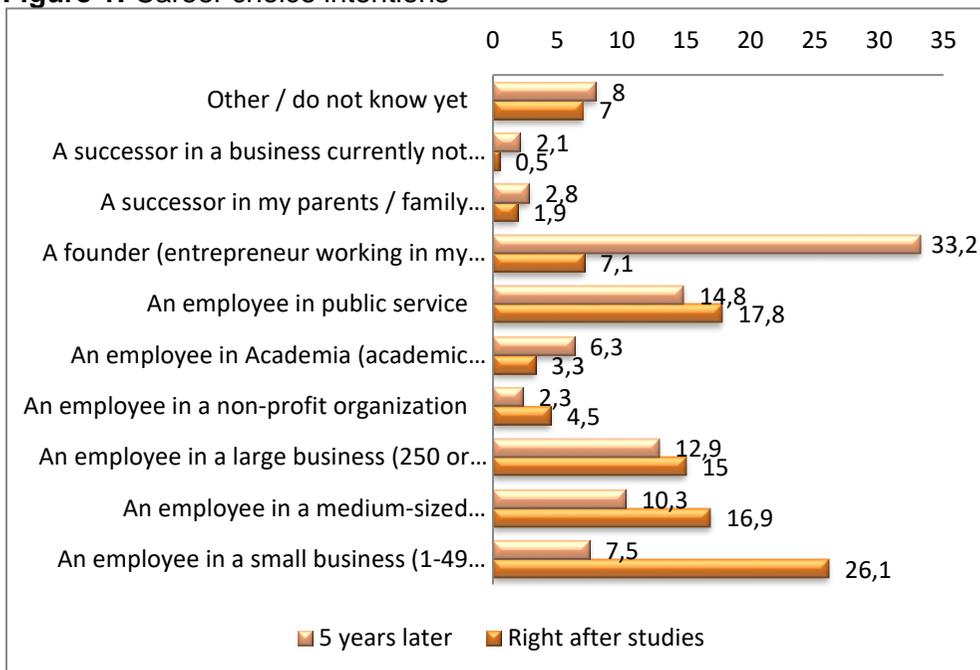
We used the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics 22 and Excel 2013 to analyse the collected data. In the next section we illustrate and discuss the most prominent findings about entrepreneurial intention among Slovenian students which were obtained by means of a questionnaire.

RESULTS

The main task of our research was to study the intentions of students for an entrepreneurial career. In this context, we consider two periods: the purpose of students for an entrepreneurial career in the period immediately after the completion of studies and the purpose of students for an entrepreneurial career after the expiration of five years from the completion of their studies. We decided for the period of five years since it has been shown that this is the average period in which a prospective entrepreneur collects all experiences (e.g., in another company) for the establishment of his own company (Brockhaus and Horwitz, 1986; Zellweger et al., 2011).

Figure 1 shows visual comparison how the respondents answered the question: “Which career path do you intend to pursue right after completion of your studies, and which career path 5 years after completion of studies?”

Figure 1: Career choice intentions



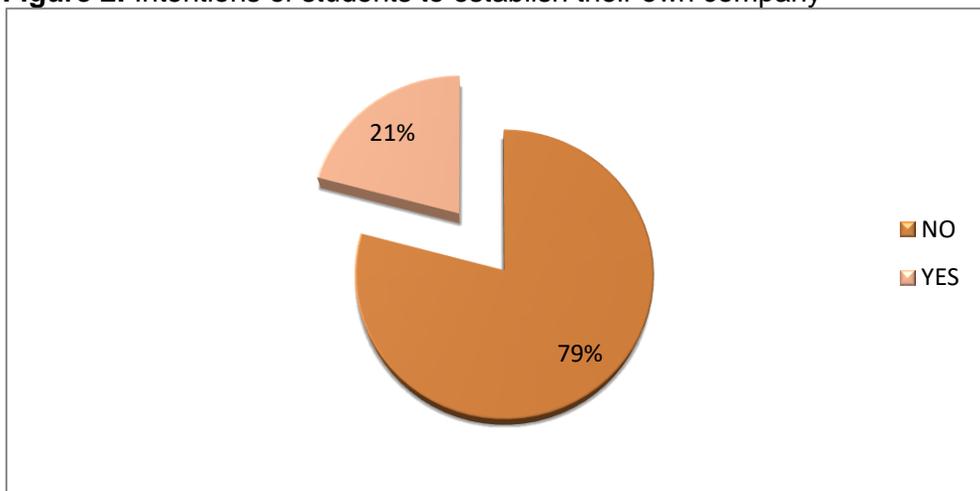
Source: Own survey.

The results show that 58% of students want to work in the economic sector immediately after completing their studies. Of this, most (26,1%) in a small company. Furthermore, 4,5% of respondents are planning to work in a non-profit organization; 3,3% intend to start their career in academic circles; 17,8% of students decide to work in the public sector. More than three quarters of respondents plan to work immediately after completing their studies. 9,5% of respondents think about entrepreneurial career. Of these, the majority (7,1%) intend to establish their own company, while 2,4% will assume the role of successor of the family company. 7% of students were undecided.

The results are somewhat different for the period after five years from the end of the study. There is a noticeable drop in employment in small, medium-sized and large enterprises (the percentage of those willing to work as an employee in small business companies 5 years after completion of studies reduces from 26,1% to 7,5%). On the other hand, the percentage increases with the intention of setting up its own business (from 7,1% to 33,2%). The number of successors in the business is also slightly increased.

The next question in this content was: "Are you currently planning to set up your own business (become self-employed)?" Only 21% of respondents currently plan to start a business. On the other hand, 79% of students answered that they do not intend to do so (see Figure 2). Here we have to point out that this percentage is a slightly higher than the percentage which was derived from the sample of all students in all involved countries. More precisely, overall (all involved countries together) GUESSS result was that 78,1% of students currently do not intend to become self-employed (see also Figure 3).

Figure 2: Intentions of students to establish their own company



Source: Own survey.

In the following, we compare our results with the results in other involved countries. In Figure 3 we can see the percentages of students which intend to set up their own business in the period of five years by countries. We ranked the countries according to this percentage. We also added the percentages of students which intend to set up their own business in the period immediately after the completion of studies.

The first five countries on the scale are Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador and Panama. If we compare just European countries, then Uruguay has the highest rank. On the basis of this data, it can be concluded that in South and Central America the student population is most entrepreneurially active. According to the economic development of these countries, compared to other countries that participated in the survey, it could be concluded that students are more entrepreneurially motivated in countries with relatively low GDP per capita.

The last country on the scale is Japan. Moreover, if we compare just European countries, then Germany has the lowest rank. Based on the above findings, we could conclude that students from economically more developed countries have less interest in entrepreneurship than those living in relatively less developed countries.

DISCUSSION

One of the most important steps in any person's life is "choosing a career". Some want to be employed in a company immediately after graduation to gain experience. But many students may have different ideas about their career in the period of 5 years after the completion of studies.

An analysis of the results show that in Slovenia the environment is relatively stimulating (in all respects) for entrepreneurial thinking and engagement. On the other hand, Slovenian students are less entrepreneurially motivated. The reasons for this situation could be found in the Slovenian state situation and the possibilities offered by the Slovene reality. Here, let us point out that young people in Slovenia live with their parents for extremely long time due to certain reasons, e.g., the relatively low standard, the trend of the problems of the Slovenian labor market, the prevalence of work outside of an employment relationship among young people.

Problems that exist in certain areas cannot be adequately solved by partial measures, but they must be implemented in the form of system solutions that eliminate the causes and not only correct the consequences of the causes. Thus, in order to improve the situation in the field of youth, it would be necessary to create a conceptual plan for young people so that they can (co-)create sufficient conditions for quality standards and further growth in their personal and professional life.

We expect that this research will stimulate and encourage further analysis and positive action in supporting entrepreneurship education among young people in Slovenia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

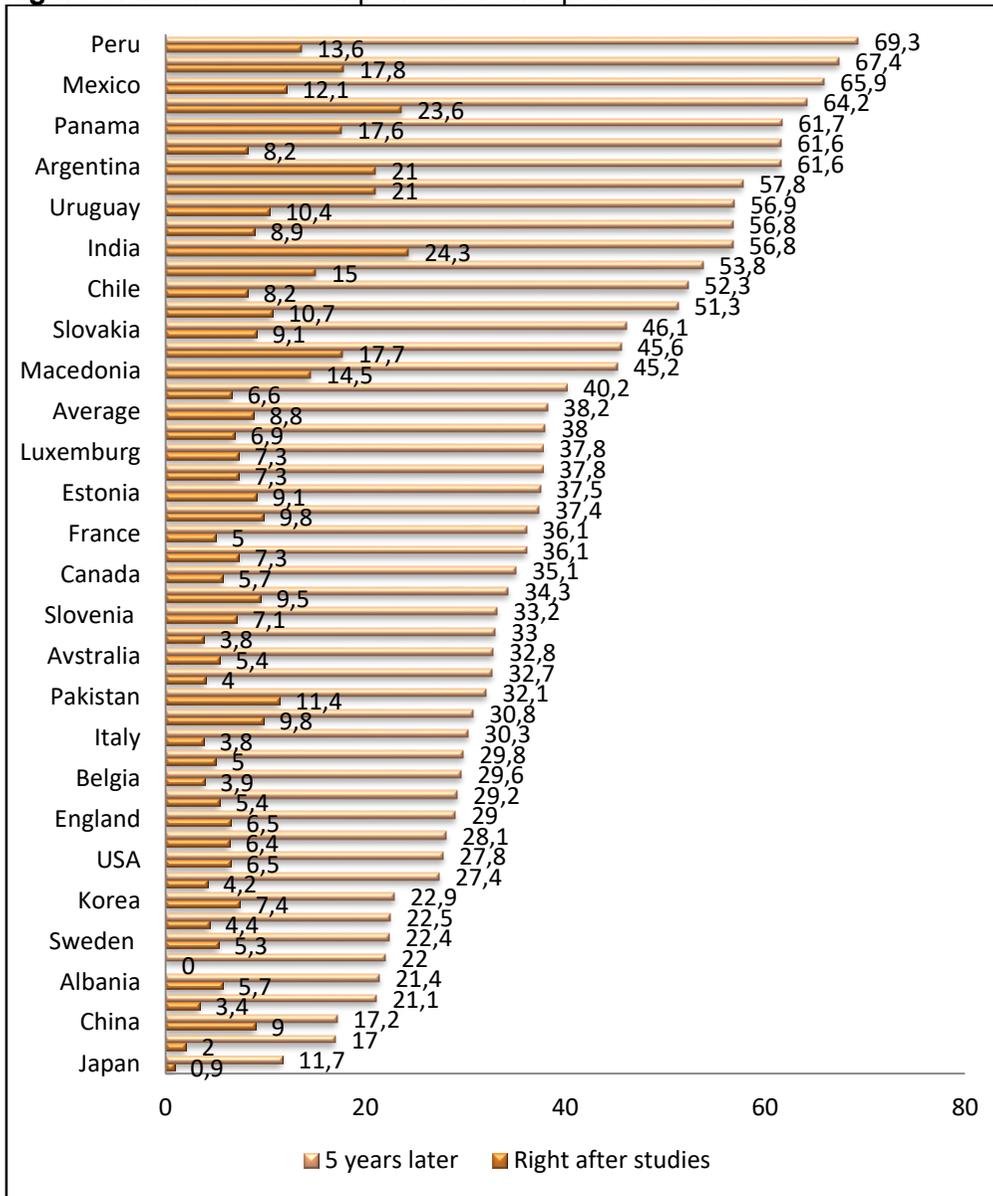
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APPENDIX

Figure 3: International comparison of entrepreneurial intentions



Source: GUESSS survey.