

Research Of Students 'Readiness For Entrepreneurial Activities In Higher Education Conditions

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Abstract

The present article presents a preparation of students for entrepreneurship in conditions of the modern university education. The authors determine specifics of the “Project Factory: From Idea to the Startup” Program implementation and consider the program as a means of building entrepreneurial readiness; as part of the study, the authors determine prerequisites for improving the student’s readiness for this type of activity. The methods used in the article were a set of methods of collection, analysis, interpretation of the information received, qualitative research of individual aspects of students' entrepreneurial readiness: the cases of the SOFT SKILLS competence lab, the case study method. The article presents the results of a diagnostic study with students from the South of Russia, which proves the fact that, the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurial activity can be raised in the conditions of university education. Thus, the system of education should build a unified system for preparing students for entrepreneurial activity.

Key words: professional training, entrepreneurial readiness, startup, research, higher education.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial activity of the young can be an advantage for the development of the economy of any country. A good business idea does not always have excellent potential for its implementation; in fact, according to J.A. Timmons, S. Spinelli, Y. Tan, less than four ideas out of a hundred presented to investors, will receive financial support [1]. S. Shane, E.A. Locke, K.J. Collins in their research note that many young people that have business ideas, have no

abilities to implement them and turn them into a viable product [2]. Consequently, the success of young people in starting a new business depends on their willingness to participate in entrepreneurial activities. A high level of unimproved open entrepreneurial opportunities (market niches), according to B.R. Barringer, R.D. Ireland, is a result of lack of skills of the young required to run an entrepreneurial activity [3]. Ekpe, R.C. Razak, M. Ismail, Z. Abdullah having studied this problem, found out that low commitment in entrepreneurship training affects the success of this type of activity. [4]. N.E. Peterman, J. Kennedy argued that participation in various entrepreneurship training programs has a positive effect on the desire of the young people to make their business dreams come true [5].

Current trends of development of various spheres of society in the Russian Federation put forward special requirements for the training of new type of personnel, as well as for the high-quality preparation of students for entrepreneurial activity. The problem of training personnel in entrepreneurial activity in the context of higher education in its various aspects has been the subject of study of a number of national and foreign scientists. Studies of S. V. Khachin, M. A. Ivanchenko [6], Yu.B. Rubin, M.V. Lednev, D. P. Mozhzhukhin [7], S., E.A. Shcherbakova [8] touch upon innovative approaches to the creation of entrepreneurial competencies among university students. M.G. Minin, V.G. Lizunkov, [9] E.G. Pozdeeva, N.S. Nazarova [10] investigated the problem of readiness of students of technical universities for entrepreneurial activity. Yu.B. Rubin [11] describes the development of higher business education in Russia. A. Jaya, R.A. Barkey, H. Zubair studied the development of entrepreneurial skills [12]. G. Colombo Massimo, Evila Piva described the influence of university education on entrepreneurial activity in their studies [13]. The works of Coelho da Silva, Elaine Cristina [14] are devoted to the development of methodical proposals for the implementation of entrepreneurial education at the university. The impact of higher education on entrepreneurship and the innovative ecosystem is revealed in the studies by Portuguese Castro May, Ross Scheede Carlos, Gomez Zermeno, Marcela Georgina [15]. S. Mazzetto reviews the issues of student project management in his research [16]. Despite quite a large number of studies existing, one can note that the issues of increasing the level of readiness of students in all areas of preparation for entrepreneurial activity at universities are not fully disclosed. In this regard, the purpose of the study was to study the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurial activity.

Methods

A set of methods has been used during the study at the stages of collection, analysis, interpretation of the information received. A complex application of various methods makes it possible to get an idea of the level of students' readiness for such a multi aspect activity as entrepreneurial. In the course of the study, survey methods based on verbal feedback of respondents concerning events and phenomena have been used. The case study method has been used as a method of qualitative research of individual aspects of students' entrepreneurial readiness: the cases of the SOFT SKILLS competence lab. Since the test studies are distinguished by high accuracy, objectivity, and accessibility, during the study didactic tests

have been used (four-stage test "Design, management and preplanning of the implementation of business projects", etc.).

Results And Discussion

Staff training within the higher education system is a priority in the educational policy of many countries, especially in terms of training personnel of new format, capable of creating competitive solutions and products, with their subsequent transfer to various fields of the economy, as well as personnel ready to carry out professional activities in rapidly changing conditions [17]. One of the main objectives of the Program of Strategic Academic Leadership "Priority-2030" approved in May 2021 by the Government of the Russian Federation is "to increase the scientific and technological potential of Russian universities to create new technologies, industries and competitive products." To accomplish this task, it is necessary to "... introduce high technologies into various spheres of public life, commercialize the results of intellectual activity and transfer technologies, as well as open student technology parks, business incubators ..." [18]. The Strategy for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 emphasizes the need "... to create and implement educational programs on the basics of entrepreneurship, project activities ...". This document also states the importance of "... the development of mentoring in the field of business operation with the participation of the business community, universities ...". In this regard, there is a need for "... the development of a new generation of entrepreneurs ..." [19]. Having analyzed these statutory regulations, we can conclude that, at the present moment, the modern system of higher education needs to prepare students and graduates of institutions of higher education for the real entrepreneurial activity. In order to build students' readiness for the entrepreneurial activity, the Program "Project Factory: from Idea to the Startup" was developed. We conducted a study to prove that the Program increases the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurial activity.

The research took place at the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education Southern Federal University. The University has the necessary resources to prepare students for the entrepreneurial activity: services and materials of corporate institutions of the University's partners; a network of interaction between external structures and communities with the University. The sample consists of 124 students of higher educational institutions of the South of Russia (Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education "Don State Technical University", Private Educational Institution of Higher Education "Taganrog Institute of Economics and Management", Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education "Maikop State Technological University", Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education "Southern Federal University"). The research was performed in several stages. On the first stage of the study, we made a primary diagnostics of the level of readiness of university students for entrepreneurial activity. According to the results of the diagnostics of the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurial activity, 7% of students of universities in the South of Russia have a very low level of readiness for entrepreneurial activity, 57% of respondents have a low level, 27% of respondents have an average level, 9% of students have a high level. Analysis of the data obtained allows us to assert that students, participants in the experiment have a low level of readiness for entrepreneurial activity. In the course of the second stage of the study, a four-step Program "Project Factory: From Idea to the Startup" was implemented. The program consists of four steps: idea generation, education, project, and presentation (the start-up presentation). The program is structured in such a way that it allows students, if necessary, to

return to any of the stages passed. 75 students of the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education Southern Federal University with the following field of education: Engineering, Natural Science and Humanities were involved in the second stage of the study, in order to test the program. The students underwent diagnostics, which made it possible to assess the starting level of their readiness for entrepreneurial activity: 11% of respondents showed a high level, 40% showed a medium level, 46% - a low level, 3% showed a very low level. Comparative analysis of diagnostic data of students and surveyed students of universities in the South of Russia, showed similar results. Thus, 46-57% have a low level of readiness for entrepreneurial activity, 9-11% of the students from other universities have a high level. In order to determine the level of their readiness for entrepreneurial activity, the students were asked to undergo repeated diagnostics. The diagnostic results showed that 23% of students who completed the program had a high level of readiness for entrepreneurial activity, 48% had an average level, 24% had a low level and 5% had a very low level. Comparative analysis of the data before and after mastering the program made it possible to record the positive dynamics of the level of building readiness for entrepreneurial activity of university students. The results of the study showed that during the course of mastering the program, the majority of students have developed medium and high levels of the key components of readiness for entrepreneurial activity.

Summary

Based on the data obtained in the study, we can conclude that in order to increase the level of students' readiness for entrepreneurial activity in the conditions of university education, it is necessary: firstly, to develop mechanisms for effective interaction with the industry, business, with the government, as well as tools that allow them to take active participation in the process of professional training of future specialists; secondly, the process of professional training should be arranged in such a way that it would be possible to embed programs into it, the basis of which is project activity aimed at solving interdisciplinary case studies, which allows student teams and students to implement individual educational courses, taking into account professional intentions and employer's requirements; thirdly, for the implementation of educational programs associated with programs of intensive project activities at a university, it is necessary to build an educational ecosystem, which is a set of resources and services of both university and its external partners, allowing them to be used in the course of professional development of a student as a specialist ready for entrepreneurship.

Conclusions

Our research is very important for two main reasons. First, the inclusion of student youth in the learning process on the program suggested and in the course of acquiring knowledge on entrepreneurship will be useful in their career growth and will motivate them to maintain individual entrepreneurship. Secondly, students of the university who wish to implement their business ideas will get the opportunity to upgrade their competencies and to increase the level of readiness to conduct this type of activity. Consequently, this study conceptualizes key components of entrepreneurial readiness required for organizing and developing students' future careers as entrepreneurs. This study reveals the main aspects of the students' readiness for entrepreneurship through project-based learning in the educational ecosystem of the university.

Acknowledgements

This paper is performed as part of the implementation of the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

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