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## The Impact of Selected Attitudes on Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The article aims to examine the impact of selected attitudes on students' entrepreneurial intentions and determine its variability over time.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The survey was conducted among students at Lublin University of Technology. In the first (2016-2017), 517 people participated, and in the second (2022-2023) - 382. Both surveys used the same research tool - a survey questionnaire. The statistical methods used were regression analysis and covariance analysis.

**Findings:** In both surveys, attitudes toward: own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs and change were important for forming entrepreneurial intentions. Attitudes toward money and competition do not affect the intention to start own business. It was found that even though the level of intention changes, the impact of attitudes remains relatively constant.

**Practical implications:** Conclusions from the research can be used to design activities in higher education institutions aimed at shaping positive attitudes toward own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs, and changes to increase students' interest in becoming entrepreneurs.

**Originality/Value:** There are few replication studies in Poland to determine the attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions of successive generations of students growing up in a similar environment. The presented research fills this gap.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship, attitudes, student research.

**JEL codes:** L26, M13.

**Paper type:** Research article.

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## **1. Introduction**

One aspect of entrepreneurship research is entrepreneurial intentions, understood as the belief in the intention to create a business venture (Łuczka and Gano, 2022; Rachwał and Wach, 2016). A very important issue in this regard is the factors that influence entrepreneurial action, since entrepreneurship is the result of the interaction of various determinants.

Learning about them, especially those causing the formation of entrepreneurial intentions and their subsequent actual implementation, should make it possible to create the right conditions for the formation of new business entities.

The problem of creating new entrepreneurs particularly affects students who, completing their education, are facing the prospect of choosing a professional activity form. Therefore, this is a group that potentially includes future entrepreneurs.

In the past decade, research among Polish students was conducted in specific academic centers (Arent and Walczyna, 2018; Gano and Łuczka, 2020) or have had comparative international studies (Kraśnicka *et al.*, 2014). Selected models of entrepreneurial behavior were also tested (Kurczewska, 2013).

There are relatively fewer replication studies conducted in the same place and on successive groups, allowing us to determine the attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions of the next generation of students growing up in a similar environment. One example is the research of Łuczka and Rembiasz (2016). The presented research results on the influence of selected factors on students' entrepreneurial intentions fill this gap to at least some extent.

One of the two research goals presented is to investigate this relationship. The second is to determine the variability over time of the adopted model, which allows verification of the original results' reliability and therefore contributes to building a theoretical foundation in the relationship between attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions. To achieve the intended research goal, two questions were posed:

*How do the selected (included in the model) attitudes affect entrepreneurial intention formation?*

*Does the influence of attitudes on entrepreneurial intention change over time?*

The article is divided into five parts, with the introduction being the first part. This was followed by a literature review of determinants of entrepreneurial intent and key research findings in this area. The third section presents the assumptions made and the research and statistical methods used. The fourth section presents the research results. The last part contains a discussion of the results and research conclusions.

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## 2. Literature Review

The basis of contemporary models and theories on factors affecting entrepreneurial intentions are: The Entrepreneurial Event Model by A. Shapero and L. Sokol and the Theory of Planned Behavior by I. Ajzen (Donaldson, 2019; Kurczewska, 2013), which have been repeatedly verified in different countries, on different respondent groups and over different time periods (Cater *et al.*, 2022; Liñán and Fayolle, 2015).

Comparisons of both models were also made (Krueger *et al.*, 2000) and integrated models combining both theories were studied. This enabled a more complete understanding of the process leading to entrepreneurial intention development and the identification of mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurship.

In research on the factors shaping entrepreneurial intentions, there have also been modifications to the models indicated (Hanage *et al.*, 2024; Overall *et al.*, 2018; Stabingis and Raupelienė, 2023) or a focus on one or a select determinants group (Cera *et al.*, 2020; Lukić *et al.*, 2024; Tomy and Pardede, 2020). The factors analyzed included attitudes, understood as the predisposition to react favourably or unfavourably regarding the chosen subject (Robinson *et al.*, 1991).

This issue is reflected in the economic-psychological model of entrepreneurial intention determinants by Davidsson (1995). It includes and examines, among other things, general attitudes toward change, competition, money, achievement and autonomy.

In an entrepreneurial intention context, attitudes towards entrepreneurship were also examined (Botsaris and Vamvaka, 2016; Ferreira *et al.*, 2012; Liguori *et al.*, 2020; Liñán and Chen, 2009). Most of the results obtained showed the existence of positive relationships between the attitudes studied and entrepreneurial intentions.

Among those surveyed, attitudes toward other entrepreneurs were also found (Bosma *et al.*, 2012; Brunel *et al.*, 2017; Wyrwich *et al.*, 2016), correlating with having positive role models. They are important in arousing interest in entrepreneurship and transferring knowledge about it (Godsey and Seborá, 2010).

Attitude toward other entrepreneurs is also related to the general opinion of entrepreneurs, their roles and activities, which can support the decision to choose the same career (Norena-Chavez and Thalassinós, 2022a; 2022b).

The study of attitudes in the entrepreneurial intention context is related to motivational processes and individual mechanisms underlying career choices and behavior (Liguori *et al.*, 2020). These decisions are intentional and conscious (Sesen, 2013), meaning that entrepreneurial behavior can be predicted based on intentions (Bazan *et al.*, 2020).

The search for and analysis of entrepreneurial intention determinants are therefore crucial in entrepreneurship research (Murugesan and Dominic, 2013). Simultaneously, career decisions reflect a process in which attitudes and intentions evolve as a result of knowledge, beliefs, experience (Krueger *et al.*, 2000) and education (Schneider *et al.*, 2021).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Assumptions**

According to the research purpose and starting from the models proposed by Davidsson (1995) and Austrian researchers (Schwarz *et al.*, 2009), the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Attitudes toward: one's own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs, change, money and competition have a significant and positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions (H1).
2. The influence of attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions changes over time (H2).

Based on the assumptions made, an entrepreneurial intention model was built with the form:

$$IP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times P1 + \beta_2 \times P2 + \beta_3 \times P3 + \beta_4 \times P4 + \beta_5 \times P5 \pm E$$

where: IP – entrepreneurial intentions, P1 – attitude towards own entrepreneurship, P2 – attitude towards other entrepreneurs, P3 – attitude towards change, P4 – attitude towards money, P5 – attitude towards competition.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

The first survey of attitudes and intentions was conducted in 2016-2017, and the next in 2022-2023. The research was quantitative in nature. Diagnostic survey method was used, using the same research tool. Entrepreneurial intentions were assessed based on three items, while attitudes were evaluated in 11 items. Responses were scaled using a five-point Likert scale indicating attitudes toward the given statement. Results analysis was conducted based on composite indexes, developed as the sum of responses to the items creating entrepreneurial intentions and a specific group of attitudes.

Students from three Lublin universities participated in the first survey, including 517 from Lublin University of Technology. The sample selection was purposive and random (Arent and Walczyna, 2018). The repeat survey was conducted only among students studying at a technical university. It involved 382 participants, and the

sample selection was identical to the first survey. In both surveys, a minimum research sample size was established (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

The following statistical methods were used to verify the adopted assumptions: 1) Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient to assess the reliability of the prepared tool, 2) correlation analysis to tentatively determine the existence of relationships between the studied groups of attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions, 3) regression analysis to determine the influence of the studied attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions, 4) covariance analysis (ANCOVA) to verify the assumption of change in intentions and attitudes, and therefore to determine the significance of differences between the results obtained in the two surveys. Calculations were performed using the Statistica Tibco 13.3 package.

### 3. Empirical Results

The prepared research tool was verified using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient. In the case of assessing entrepreneurial intentions, its value was 0.83 in the first survey and 0.75 in the second survey. For attitudes it was respectively: 0.64 in the first survey and 0.60 in the second survey. The results indicate a satisfactory reliability level of the tool.

A correlation analysis was conducted to tentatively determine the existence of relationships between attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions along with their significance. The calculated indicators revealed the presence of significant moderate or weak correlations between the studied attitudes (towards own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs, change, money and competition) and entrepreneurial intentions in both surveys (from 0.099 to 0.402 in the first and from 0.129 to 0.435 in the second).

The exception is the absence of a significant relationship of attitudes toward competition in the initial survey. Nonetheless - due to adopted assumption regarding model comparison in two studies - it was decided to include this variable in further analyses.

The next step was to verify assumptions about the impact of the attitudes surveyed on entrepreneurial intentions. As a result, the following coefficients were obtained to describe the analyzed relationship.

$$IP_{2017} = 3,369 + 0,421 \times P1 + 0,265 \times P2 + 0,143 \times P3 + 0,035 \times P4 + 0,005 \times P5 \\ \pm 2,487$$

$$IP_{2023} = 2,308 + 0,416 \times P1 + 0,228 \times P2 + 0,152 \times P3 + 0,030 \times P4 + 0,173 \times P5 \\ \pm 2,161$$

In both surveys, the model proved significant (survey one:  $F(5.511)=25.831$   $p<0.000$ , survey two:  $F(5.376)=25.401$   $p<0.000$ ), with all predictors together explaining respectively: 19.39% ( $R^2=0.194$ ) and 24.26% ( $R^2=0.243$ ) of the dependent variable. Entrepreneurial intentions were significantly influenced:

- in the first survey attitudes toward: own entrepreneurship ( $\beta=0.421$   $t=6.756$   $p<0.000$ ), other entrepreneurs ( $\beta=0.265$   $t=4.319$   $p<0.000$ ) and change ( $\beta=0.143$   $t=2.330$   $p<0.020$ ),
- in the second survey, attitudes toward: own entrepreneurship ( $\beta=0.416$   $t=6.321$   $p<0,000$ ), other entrepreneurs ( $\beta=0.228$   $t=3.869$   $p<0.000$ ), change ( $\beta=0.152$   $t=2.171$   $p<0.031$ ) and competition ( $\beta=0.173$   $t=2.893$   $p<0.004$ ).

The Durbin-Watson d test (first survey - 1.959; second survey - 2.005) indicated a relatively good fit of the regression models in both surveys.

To determine the significance of the differences between the calculated regression coefficients in the two surveys, and therefore whether the survey year affected the obtained results of the analysis (which was considered equivalent to a change in the effect of attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions), covariance analysis was conducted (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Model parameter evaluation

Specification	Param.	Std. Error.	t	p
Intercept	3.429	0.541	6.337	0.000
Attitude towards own entrepreneurship	0.429	0.046	9.416	0.000
Attitude towards other entrepreneurs	0.235	0.047	4.965	0.000
Attitude towards change	0.143	0.046	3.090	0.002
Attitude towards money	0.025	0.045	0.549	0.583
Attitude towards competition	0.087	0.046	1.896	0.058
Year of study	0.258	0.132	1.950	0.051

*Source:* Own elaboration.

Entrepreneurial intentions were significantly influenced by three of the five attitudes surveyed towards: own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs and change. The year of the survey did not significantly differentiate the analyzed impact. An overall assessment of the fit of the covariance analysis model indicated its significance ( $F=24.037$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

The lack of a demonstrated effect of the survey year on the results enabled the construction of a combined model of the attitude effect on entrepreneurial intentions:

$$IP = 3,944 + 0,436 \times P1 + 0,162 \times P2 + 0,148 \times P3 + 0,031 \times P4 + 0,085 \times P5 \pm 2,367$$

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#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that in both surveys conducted, attitudes toward own entrepreneurship were the most important for intention formation, while attitudes toward: other entrepreneurs and change were less important, although also important.

Neither attitudes toward money nor competition significantly affect the intention to start own business. Therefore, the hypothesis about the influence of selected attitudes on students' entrepreneurial intentions (H1) was only partially confirmed.

Attitude toward self-entrepreneurship positively influences entrepreneurial intentions. Preference to be an entrepreneur most significantly influences the intention to start own business. It provides autonomy and, therefore the opportunity to implement ideas faster and more fully than full-time employment. This conclusion coincides with the findings of earlier surveys on intentions and their determinants (Rachwał and Wach, 2016; Schwarz *et al.*, 2009).

Positive influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions is also affected by attitudes toward other entrepreneurs, albeit to a lesser extent. On the one hand, this is the result of the changes in opinion about private entrepreneurship that have taken place in recent years in Poland and the appreciation of its role in the country's socio-economic development (Rachwał and Wach, 2016).

On the other hand, positive examples of entrepreneurs operating in the respondents' environment provide a certain role model for those facing their career choice (Bosma *et al.*, 2012; Brunel *et al.*, 2017; Wyrwich *et al.*, 2016), therefore encouraging imitation.

The third determinant significantly influencing the intention to start own business appeared to be the attitude towards change. The lack of a negative attitude towards change, so considering it as new opportunities, chances and opportunities to be seized, is directly related to running own business.

This is especially true for people who perceive paid work as stable and routine. Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, can be considered proactive, oriented to take various actions, including changes, both those originating in the environment and those initiated. The result also corresponds to previous surveys.

The research did not allow for positive verification of the significant impact of the other two attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions. This is somewhat surprising because earning a high income is usually associated with success, power, autonomy, and freedom, often linked to running your own business. Similarly, the phenomenon of competition is inextricably linked to the entrepreneurs' activities. A positive attitude towards both should therefore be reflected in the approach to owning a

business. Changes in attitudes and values that characterize the next generation, including those relating to work and money, can be identified as the reason for the results. (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

A characteristic feature of today's so-called Generation Z (Barszcz, 2020) is the desire to earn a decent income, with money treated as a means to achieve various goals (Uniwersytet SWPS, 2024). Among other things, the ability to be competitive is indicated as a characteristic feature of Generation Z representatives (Ławińska and Korombel, 2023), which is also related to attitudes toward competition.

At the same time, high incomes and competition are associated with performing hired work. Therefore, it can be concluded that both phenomena are not associated by Generation Z representatives as specific, related to running their own business.

The regression analysis indicated that in the combined model, the attitudes analyzed explained only a small part of the respondents' entrepreneurial intentions (21.84%). However, it should be emphasized that entrepreneurial intention formation is a complicated process and is determined by several factors, not only individual ones (Ziemiański, 2017), but also environmental ones (Nowiński *et al.*, 2020; Wach and Bilan, 2021).

Both surveys' results did not support the second hypothesis regarding changes in the impact of attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions (H2). Although the level of intention changes, the impact of attitudes is relatively constant. However, it should be emphasized that the analysis result obtained is at the significance limit level ( $p=0.051$ ).

Further replicated and in-depth research is needed to determine unequivocally whether and to what extent the impact of attitudes on entrepreneurial intentions is changing, including the identification of potential change determinants.

The result of the conducted research and the obtained results should be the design of activities in higher education institutions that, through the formation of positive attitudes towards own entrepreneurship, other entrepreneurs and change, will influence the increase of students' interest in choosing business as a career direction. They should enable students to obtain or improve entrepreneurial competencies and create a climate that promotes and fosters business career choices for students.

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